Using the Media to Achieve Reproductive Health and Gender Equity
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Preface by Werner Haug
Director, Technical Division
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

“Because everyone counts”

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programs to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

For over 40 years, UNFPA has sought to improve reproductive health in the developing world, with a special emphasis on women’s empowerment, gender equality, and HIV prevention.

UNFPA works to help governments worldwide to develop evidence-based programs and policies, based on solid data and best practices in the field.

UNFPA’s work is guided by key principles, as documented in the landmark Cairo Programme of Action, which continues to guide governments and the international community and contribute to our work to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The Cairo Programme of Action calls for “...greater and more effective use of the entertainment media, including radio and television soaps operas and drama, folk theatre and other traditional media to encourage public discussion of important but sometimes sensitive topics related to the implementation of the present Programme of Action.” (ICPD Programme of Action, Article 11.23)

This publication is designed to aid UNFPA’s partners to more effectively use the media, especially entertainment programs, to help audience members achieve reproductive health and gender equity. The various chapters present best practices in the field of entertainment-education for social change.

We encourage media practitioners to make use of the wealth of knowledge presented in this compilation to build a better world for us all.
Every day, more than 225,000 people are added to the planet. Every day, approximately 100 other species go extinct.

These figures, as terrifying as they are, mask the human suffering that is at the heart of the global population crisis. All over the world, women suffer disproportionately from a lack of information about family planning, reproductive health services, and the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Every year, 343,000 women die from pregnancy and childbirth – a figure equal to the number of the American soldiers killed in the Civil War, World War I, the Korean War and Vietnam combined. Most of the women who die are in their teens and early twenties, forced by their societies into bearing children too young and far too frequently. Data from demographic surveys worldwide make it clear that non-use of family planning often results from misinformation and male opposition – exactly the types of barriers that entertainment-education programs can most effectively overcome.

Population Media Center, Inc. (PMC) is a nonprofit international nongovernmental organization working worldwide to promote use of effective communication strategies for promoting behavior change to encourage family and reproductive health.

In 2005, UNFPA commissioned PMC to develop a training guide for journalists and media personnel in how to develop effective behavior change communication programs employing entertainment-education techniques.

As a companion piece to that training guide, this manual documents best practices from different communication strategies aimed at improving reproductive health, gender equity and mitigation of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. To develop the manual, PMC held a seminar of researchers, writers, producers, and program managers who are using entertainment-education in various contexts worldwide to compare obstacles and lessons learned and to share best practices in use of the approach. The papers that were presented during that seminar were compiled into the present document.

We encourage you to make use of the wealth of knowledge presented in this compilation to use mass media to promote positive social change.
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CHAPTER 1

Sex, Soap, and Social Change: Theories Underlying the Sabido Methodology

Kriss Barker
Population Media Center

Photo by Ephraim Okon
1. INTRODUCTION

The Sabido methodology is a proven approach to developing effective mass-media serial dramas. However, unlike typical “soap operas,” Sabido-style serial dramas are not used to sell sex or soap, but rather, social change.

In this chapter we explore the Sabido methodology and the reasons why this theory-based approach to behavior change communication has been so successful. How do Sabido-style serial dramas differ from “soaps” and how does the Sabido methodology differ from other entertainment-education approaches? Why do audiences from the Philippines to India, from Tanzania to Ethiopia, and from Mexico to Bolivia find these dramas irresistible – and much more than merely educating in an entertaining way? And what does the future hold for the application of the Sabido methodology to rethinking the very foundation of comprehensive behavior change communication programs?

Miguel Sabido:
“Entertainment With Proven Social Benefit”

Miguel Sabido was Vice President for Research at Televisa (Mexican television) during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. While at Televisa, Sabido developed a theoretical model for eliciting pro-social attitudinal, informational, and behavioral change through commercial television programming. He called this model “entertainment with proven social benefit.”

Between 1975 and 1981, Miguel Sabido produced six social content serial dramas in Mexico. During the decade 1977 to 1986, when many of these Mexican soap operas were on the air, the country underwent a 34 percent decline in its population growth rate. As a result, in May 1986, the United Nations Population Prize was presented to Mexico as the foremost population success story in the world.

Thomas Donnelly, then with USAID in Mexico, wrote, “Throughout Mexico, wherever one travels, when people are asked where they heard about family planning, or what made them decide to practice family planning, the response is universally attributed to one of the soap operas that Televisa has done. ... The Televisa family planning soap operas have made the single most powerful contribution to the Mexican population success story.”

2. RESULTS

Mkwaju is a truck driver along the national routes in Tanzania. Although Mkwaju is married, he has many ‘girlfriends’ along his route – he is quite the sexual athlete. Tunu, Mkwaju’s subservient wife, stays at home to care for their children. She is becoming more and more frustrated with her husband’s antics, especially the way he squanders his earnings on women and alcohol. She finally decides to take things into her own hands, and starts her own small business, selling vegetables in the market. The business does well, thus giving Tunu the self-confidence to leave Mkwaju. Mkwaju contracts HIV as a result of his high-risk lifestyle, and eventually develops symptoms of AIDS. In an act of compassion, Tunu cares for him until he dies. But, his legacy lives on through his son, Kibuyu, who is beginning to follow in his father’s footsteps. He regularly smokes marijuana with his friends on the outskirts of the city, and steals money from unsuspecting passers-by. Will Kibuyu suffer the same fate as his father? Or, will he learn from his mother how to succeed in life? (Haji, 2004)

The above excerpt from Twende na Wakati (“Let’s Go With the Times”), a radio serial drama broadcast twice weekly over Radio Tanzania, demonstrates the power of the Sabido methodology. The program was evaluated using an experimental design, pre- and post-intervention measurements of dependent variables, and measurement triangulation using an independent data source to provide more definitive evidence of the effects of the strategy on behavior change (Rogers et al., 1999). It was the first evaluation of an entertainment-education program to apply all three of these evaluation components on a national level.
2.1 Results of *Twende na Wakati* (Tanzania)

Beginning in July 1993, Radio Tanzania broadcast *Twende na Wakati* twice weekly during prime time (at 6:30 p.m.) for 30 minutes. However, the radio station at Dodoma (in the central region of the country) did not broadcast this program, and instead broadcast locally produced programs at this time, thus serving as the comparison area in the field experiment. The Dodoma area received all other elements of the national family planning program, including several other radio programs. Then, in September 1995, after 2 years of broadcasts, Radio Tanzania began broadcasting *Twende na Wakati* in the Dodoma area, starting with the first episode (Haji, 2004).

By the end of 1993, *Twende na Wakati* was the most popular radio program in Tanzania. An independent study of the impact of the program showed significant impacts on attitudes and behavior (Rogers et al., 1999). (For a more thorough discussion of the findings of this program, see Chapter 8 of this manual).

2.2 Results of *Yeken Kignit* (Ethiopia)

More recently, Population Media Center (PMC) produced a radio serial drama in Ethiopia using the Sabido methodology for behavior change communication. The program, *Yeken Kignit* (“Looking Over One’s Daily Life”), was broadcast in the Amharic language over Radio Ethiopia in 257 episodes between June 2, 2002 and November 27, 2004.

An independent evaluation of the impact of the program was conducted through a baseline survey in May 2002 and a post-broadcast survey in December 2004. Findings from this study show significant results in terms of family planning and HIV/AIDS knowledge and practice. In most cases, there were significant differences in these knowledge and behavior change measures between listeners and non-listeners of *Yeken Kignit*, showing that the program had a differential effect on knowledge and behavior between listeners and non-listeners. (For a more thorough discussion of the findings of this program, see Chapter 8 of this manual).

3.0 THE SABIDO METHODOLOGY: AN EMPIRICAL AND REPRODUCIBLE APPROACH TO ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION

*Twende na Wakati* and *Yeken Kignit* produced impressive behavior change results because they were designed using the Sabido methodology, which uses elements of communication and behavioral theories to reinforce specific values, attitudes, and behaviors (Nariman, 1993). The results from Tanzania and Ethiopia demonstrate that the design of the serial drama is crucial to achieving successful behavior change. Sabido-style serial dramas achieve results because they are developed using an empirical and reproducible approach to behavior change communication via mass media. In fact, every detail of a Sabido-style serial drama is developed according to a theoretical and empirical research-based formula in order to reinforce a coherent set of interrelated values that is tied to specific pro-social behaviors. The Sabido methodology is also a replicable methodology that, although formularized, is still adaptable to the individual values and cultures of each country where it is used (Singhal et al., 2004). The pioneering research of Dr. Ana Cristina Covarrubias in 1974 was the foundation for a series of research studies which have further proven the effectiveness of this methodology over a 30-year period.

The Sabido methodology is based on theoretical and social research that is used to develop mass media serial dramas based on the realities that people in the audience face daily. These dramas communicate at the emotional level as well as the cognitive level, and further establish the conditions for social learning to take place. Sabido-style serial dramas portray role models who realistically learn to live more fulfilling personal and interpersonal lives (Singhal et al., 2004).

The major tenet of the Sabido methodology is that education does not have to be boring – and that entertainment can be educational. Sabido originally termed his approach “entertainment with proven social benefit.” Since then, many communication professionals and scholars have applied the term “entertainment-education” to the Sabido
approach. However, the Sabido methodology is more effective than other forms of entertainment-education.

Let us begin by defining entertainment-education, and then explain how the Sabido methodology differs from other entertainment-education strategies.

“Entertainment-education is defined as 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, shift social norms, and change overt behavior” (Singhal & Rogers, 2002; Singhal et al., 2004).

Singhal further defines entertainment-education as a “performance which captures the interest or attention of an individual, giving them pleasure, amusement, or gratification while simultaneously helping the individual to develop a skill or to achieve a particular end by boosting his/her mental, moral or physical powers” (Singhal & Rogers, 2002). A common goal of entertainment-education programs is to entertain and educate audiences in order to catalyze social change in a socially desirable manner.

Since the 1980s, the entertainment-education strategy has been used in over 200 health intervention programs in over 50 countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia, dealing mainly with reproductive health issues such as HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning, environmental health, teenage pregnancy prevention, and gender equality (Singhal & Rogers, 2002).

Entertainment-education comes in many different sizes and shapes:
- Single films and videos have been important in Asia and Africa where they are shown from video vans as well as on national media.
- Variety shows are increasingly popular with youth in developing countries – many of these programs engage young people directly in content and production (Kiragu et al., 1998).
- Television and radio spots often include entertainment-education through short narratives or through use of familiar characters (Kincaid et al., 1996; Underwood, 2001).
- Locally, street theater, community radio, indigenous storytellers, drama contests, and community rallies with local performers incorporate and/or adapt national entertainment-education productions (Valente et al., 1996).
- Popular songs and music videos, which are inspired by the role modeling techniques used in Sabido-style serial dramas, have been developed in many countries.

Many of these entertainment-education programs have attracted large audiences and have brought about major audience effects in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior (Singhal et al., 2004). However, although they certainly produce results, these various entertainment-education programs have not demonstrated the same magnitude of effects or cost-effectiveness achieved by Sabido-style programs, such as Twende na Wakati and Yeken Kignit (Figueroa et al., 2002).

4. WHAT MAKES SABIDO-STYLE PROGRAMS SO DIFFERENT FROM OTHER FORMS OF ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION?

Successful use of the Sabido methodology hinges on two key factors: (1) use of the serial drama format, and (2) rigorous adherence to the theories underlying the methodology. Also, most entertainment-education programs are devoted to sending messages, whereas the Sabido methodology uses characters as vicarious role models to demonstrate the desired behaviors. The use of these vicarious role models is a critical element of successful application of the Sabido approach.

4.1 Use of the Serial Drama

First and foremost, the Sabido methodology requires the use of serial drama. Serial dramas continuing for several months or years are an extremely powerful form of entertainment-education that can influence both specific health behaviors and related social norms. Why?

- Serial dramas capture the attention and the emotions of the audience on a continual basis.
- Serial dramas provide repetition and continuity, allowing audiences to identify more and more closely over time with the fictional characters, their problems, and their social environment.
- Serial dramas allow time for characters to develop a change in behavior slowly, with hesitations and setbacks that occur in real life.
- Serial dramas have various subplots that can introduce different issues in a logical and credible way through different characters, a key characteristic of conventional soap operas.
- Serial dramas can build a realistic social context that will mirror society and create multiple opportunities to present a social issue in various forms (Coleman & Meyer, 1990).

By modeling the process of change gradually, serial dramas are less likely to result in backlash or negative reactions by the audience than programs that try to bring about behavior change too quickly. Ideally, Sabido-style serial dramas should continue for at least 120-180 episodes (over the course of two or more years).
Serial dramas can present different perspectives and stimulate audience questioning and discussions that can lead to both individual health behavior change and to a change in social norms (Singhal & Rogers, 2002; Singhal et al., 2004; Johns Hopkins University, 1997; Figueroa et al., 2002; Kincaid, 1993; Kincaid, 2002; Netherlands Entertainment Education Foundation & Johns Hopkins University, 2001). As Phyllis Piotrow, former director of the Center for Communication Programs at Johns Hopkins University states, “Of all the formats for entertainment-education programs which have been adapted, developed, tested, or contributed to, serial drama – on television where possible, or on radio when access to television is limited – has proven to be a highly effective format to promote long-term changes in health behavior and to influence the social norms that can reinforce such change” (in Singhal & Rogers, 2004, page 43).

4.2 Theories Underlying the Methodology

Second, the Sabido methodology is based on various theories of communication and psychology, each of which plays an essential role in the development of a Sabido-style serial drama (see Table 1). The application of these theories is critical to the success of the Sabido methodology in achieving behavior change.

The different theories that guide the development of Sabido-style serial dramas provide the methodology with a foundation for the structure and design of messages, settings, characters, and plots – a foundation that is based on formative research. The theories also provide a framework for articulating hypotheses for summative (evaluation) research on the impact of the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Function in Sabido-Style Soap Opera</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Model (Shannon and Weaver)</td>
<td>Provides a model for the communication process through which distinct sources, messages, receivers, and responses are linked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Theory (Bentley)</td>
<td>Provides a model for characters, their interrelationships, and plot construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archetypes and Stereotypes (Jung)</td>
<td>Provides a model for characters that embody universal human physiological and psychological energies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Learning Theory (Bandura)</td>
<td>Provides a model in which learning from soap opera characters can take place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept of the Triune Brain (MacLean) and Theory of the Tone (Sabido)</td>
<td>Provide a model for sending complete messages that communicate with various centers of perception.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Theories Underlying the Sabido Methodology (Source: Nariman H. Soap operas for social change. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993.)

4.2.1 Communication Model: Shannon & Weaver, 1949

Shannon and Weaver’s Communication Model has five basic factors, arranged in a linear format. The components in this model are: Source, Transmitter, “Noise,” Receiver, and Destination (Shannon & Weaver, 1949).

Figure 1. Shannon and Weaver’s Model of Communication
Sabido adapted Shannon and Weaver’s linear diagram to form a communication circuit that depicted the circular nature of the communication process (see Figure 2). He then applied this circuit to a serial drama. In the case of a commercial soap opera on television, the communicator is the manufacturer of a product, the message is “buy this product,” the medium is the soap opera, the receiver is the consumer, and the response is the purchase of the product and television ratings.

**Figure 2. Sabido’s Circular Model of Communication**

![Figure 2](source: Nariman H. Soap operas for social change. Westport, CT: Praeger; 1993.)

In the design of a social content serial drama, Sabido left the communication circuit of a commercial serial drama intact; however, he added a second communicator, a second message, a second receiver, and a second response. These additions to the communication circuit did not impede the function of the first communicator, which is still the product manufacturer, as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Additional Circuit for a Social Content Soap Opera**

![Figure 3](source: Nariman H. Soap operas for social change. Westport, CT: Praeger; 1993.)

4.2.2 Dramatic Theory: Bentley, 1967

Bentley’s dramatic theory describes the structure and effects of five genres of theatre (tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, farce, and melodrama) (Bentley, 1967). Among these genres, melodrama presents reality in a slightly exaggerated sense in which the moral universes of good and evil are in discord. Sabido, originally a dramatic theoretician himself, employed Bentley’s structure of the melodrama genre as a basis from which to design characters and plots. “Good” characters in Sabido-style serial dramas accept the proposed social behavior, and “evil” characters reject it.

Plots are then constructed around the relationships between good and evil characters as they move closer to or farther away from the proposed social behavior. Their actions encourage the audience to either champion or reject these characters accordingly.

The tension between the good and evil characters evoked by the melodrama places the audience between the forces of good and evil.

But, in a twist of the typical audience role in melodrama, where audience members simply watch or listen to the battle between good and evil, Sabido inserted the audience into the heart of the action – by representing audience members through a third group, one that is uncertain about the social behavior in question. These “uncertain” characters are intended to be those with which the target audience most closely identifies. It is also these “transitional” characters who will guide the audience members through their own evolution toward adoption of desired behavior changes.

Although the three groups of characters in Sabido-style serial dramas are exaggerated as is the case in melodrama, they are modeled on real people within the target audience and the perceptions these people might have regarding the social value and behavior being presented.

4.2.3 Archetypes and stereotypes – Theory of the Collective Unconscious: Jung, 1970

Jung’s theory states that there are certain scripts or stories with familiar patterns and characters that people play out throughout history. These universal scripts or stories appear in myths, legends, and folktales around the world. Jung posited that these universal scripts or stories are the “archetypes of a collective unconscious” and share common characters such as “Prince Charming,” “the mother,” and “the warrior.” Jung further suggests that these archetypes are expressions of a primordial, collective unconscious shared by diverse cultures (Jung, 1970).
Sabido used the archetypes described in Jung’s theory as a basis for developing characters that embody universal psychological and physiological characteristics to address themes within the serial drama. Through these characters, the viewer finds an archetypical essence of him or herself that interacts with the social message. Sabido portrayed these archetypes as positive or negative stereotypes, representing the societal norms of the target audience.

Sabido-style serial dramas rely on extensive formative research to identify the culture- or country-specific versions of these archetypes and to identify local archetypes that represent the pro-social values (or the antithesis of these values) that will be addressed in the serial drama. If the formative research upon which the serial drama is based is done properly, the scriptwriters will be able to develop archetypical characters with which audience members will be able to identify. The formative research is used to develop a grid of positive and negative social values that these positive and negative characters will embody.

4.2.4 Social Learning Theory: Bandura, 1977 and Social Cognitive Theory: Bandura, 1986

Social Learning Theory, as articulated by Stanford University psychologist Professor Albert Bandura, explains how people learn new behaviors from vicariously experiencing the actions of others. Bandura postulates that there are two basic modes of learning: people can either learn through the direct experience of trial and error and the rewarding and punishing effects of actions, or through the power of social modeling. Trial-and-error learning by direct experience is not only tedious but harmful when errors produce costly or injurious consequences. So, many people will short-cut this process by learning from the successes and mistakes of others. This short-cut, called vicarious learning, or modeling, is a key tenet of Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977).

According to Social Learning Theory, people not only learn in formal situations such as classrooms, but also by observing models. In fact, the largest portion of learning to adapt to society takes place through such observational learning. The models used in this observational learning can be people in real life or characters in mass media (such as television or radio).

A key to the use of Social Learning Theory in Sabido-style serial dramas is use of appropriate models that are visibly rewarded (or punished) in front of the audience, in order to convert the values that are being promoted by the serial drama into behavior. Social Learning Theory postulates that positive rewards have a vicarious effect upon the observer (in this case, the audience) and can motivate audience members to practice similar behavior(s). Punishing a role model for practicing a socially undesirable behavior likewise provides a vicarious experience for the observer and can inhibit his or her practice of the same behavior. This adoption is called modeling because it is based on the role model’s conduct. Through modeling it is possible to acquire new forms of behavior and to strengthen or weaken certain behaviors. In Sabido-style serial dramas, characters “teach” audience members via modeling so that they are able to make a recommended response.

Sabido determined that three types of characters are fundamental to successful modeling by audience members. The first two types of characters are positive and negative role models. They embody positive and negative behaviors concerning the social issues addressed in the serial drama (and are based on Jung’s theory of archetypes and stereotypes, described above). These characters will not change during the course of the serial drama, but are repeatedly rewarded or punished for their behaviors. The consequences of these positive or negative behaviors must be directly linked to the behavior in question. For example, a truck driver character that is practicing at-risk sexual behavior should suffer from a sexually transmitted infection or even contract HIV, but should not be the victim of a traffic accident.

The third type of character is the “transitional character.” These characters are neither positive nor negative but somewhere in the middle. These transitional characters play the pivotal role in a Sabido-style serial drama, and are designed to represent members of the target audience. The transitional characters’ evolution toward the desired behavior is that which the audience members will use to model their own behavior change.

For example, in Sabido’s first social content serial drama, Ven Conmigo (“Come With Me”) which dealt with adult literacy, transitional characters were specifically chosen from specific
sub-groups (e.g., the elderly, young adults, housewives) who represented the key target audiences for the national literacy campaign in Mexico. One of the main transitional characters was a grandfather who struggled to read the many letters he received from his favorite grand-daughter. In a cathartic episode, he graduates from literacy training, and is finally able to read his grand-daughter’s letters, albeit with teary eyes. In the year preceding the broadcast of Ven Conmigo, the national literacy campaign had registered 99,000 students. Following the broadcast of this episode (and the epilogue which provided information about registration in the literacy campaign), 250,000 people registered for literacy training. By the end of the serial drama, 840,000 people had registered for the literacy program – an increase of almost 750 percent from the preceding year.

Bandura also developed a related theory, Social Cognitive Theory, which explains that behavior change can only occur when an individual feels sufficiently empowered to change (Bandura, 1986). If an individual feels that the society, culture, religion, or his/her deity (or “Fate”) dictates individual behavior and its consequences, there is little that communication can do to impact behavior change. For example, if a woman perceives that Fate has determined the number of children she will ultimately bear during her childbearing years, even a well-conceived family planning communication campaign will have little effect in motivating her to plan or space her pregnancies – she feels that this decision is not hers to make. In this case, the woman’s perception of self-determination must be addressed first.

Bandura termed this perception of self-determination “self-efficacy.” The more self-efficacy an individual perceives, the more confident he or she will be to make decisions that affect his/her life and circumstances.

Research has shown that Sabido-style serial dramas can increase self-efficacy among audience members. According to Rogers, the Sabido-style serial drama Twende na Wakati produced a marked increase in listeners’ self-efficacy with regard to family size in Tanzania (Rogers et al., 1999). In fact, the series title, which means, “Let’s Go With the Times” was defined in several episodes as “taking charge of one’s life.” Positive and transitional role models in Twende na Wakati exemplified such self-efficacy and were rewarded in the storyline for taking charge of their lives by adopting a family planning method, or by otherwise taking control of, and responsibility for, their reproductive health and that of their partner(s). Negative role models like Mkwaju, who lacked such control, were punished by events.

The content of Twende na Wakati that dealt with self-efficacy had a marked effect on listeners’ beliefs, and, indirectly, on their family planning behavior. For example, married women in the 1995 survey who believed they could determine the size of their family were much more likely than others (51 percent vs. 16 percent) to use a family planning method (Rogers et al, 1999).

4.2.5 Triune Brain Theory: MacLean, 1973 and Theory of the Tone: Sabido, 2002

The Sabido methodology is based on conveying a holistic message that is perceived by audience members on several levels of awareness. Sabido began his career as a theater director and dramatic theoretician. In his work in the theater, Sabido discovered that actors can have different effects on their audiences by channeling their energy through three different body zones. If actors focused their energy behind their eyes, the tone of the production would be conceptual. If the actor focused energy in the base of the neck, the tone of the production would be emotive. If the actor focused energy in the pubic area, the tone of the production would be primal (Sabido, 2002). Sabido instinctively understood that in order to motivate or persuade, it is necessary to provide a complete message that speaks to these three levels of perception.

Sabido’s “tonal theory” describes how the various tones that are perceived by humans can be used in drama. In this theory, the producer/director serves almost the same function as an orchestra conductor, who can evoke different tones from each instrument in order to create various harmonies or tones within the body of the music and thereby
inspire different moods among the audience. Although the theory is quite complex, it can be summarized by saying that for Sabido, the “tone” is the human communication form to which the receiver gives a tone according to his/her own genetic and acquired repertoire, thus making the “tone” the foundation of human communication (Sabido, 2004). The theory has one main hypothesis: it is possible to change the tone of communication by hierarchically ordering its flow elements in a specific manner. This general hypothesis is organized into twelve sub-hypotheses, which allow us to take this abstract idea and apply it to day-to-day communication.

At first, Sabido lacked a theoretical explanation for what he was observing. He eventually discovered Paul MacLean’s Concept of the Triune Brain, which presents a model of human brain structure with three levels of perception – cognitive, affective, and pre-dispositional (MacLean, 1973).

Thus, MacLean’s theory gave Sabido the scientific basis he needed for focusing on the emotional (second zone) and instinctive/impulse (first zone) as the basis for his serial dramas, with the third (cognitive zone) used primarily to reinforce the first and second zones’ messages in the drama.

5. SUMMARY

The world is facing unprecedented change, including the interrelated concerns of global warming, deforestation and species extinction, collapsing fisheries, fresh-water shortages, rising energy costs, rising food costs and food shortages, poverty, poor health, political unrest and instability, and inability of many of the poorer countries of the world to keep up with growing demand for schools and government services. An overriding element of many of these problems is the net growth in the world’s population by 80 million per year. Unplanned and often unwanted childbearing is a major factor in the growth of the world’s population by the equivalent of a new Egypt every year.

Changing social norms on issues as sensitive and personal as human reproduction is not easy. Human behaviors are often rooted in long traditions that may once have been adaptive but that no longer are. There is now, however, a great body of evidence, including the data given in this chapter, that change is possible. (Also see Chapters 8 and 9 in this manual for a more thorough discussion of results.)

The Sabido methodology for development of mass-media entertainment-education serial dramas is unique in that it is designed according to elements of communication and behavioral theories. These confirm specific values, attitudes, and behaviors that viewers can use in their own personal advancement, and for the betterment of the world.
NOTES

1 Between 1975 and 1981, Miguel Sabido produced six social content serial dramas in Mexico.

- *Ven Conmigo* (*Come with Me*) provided specific information about a study program offered by the Secretary of Public Education in 1975. Role models were used to motivate viewers to register for literacy classes.
- *Acompáñame* (*Accompany Me*), Sabido’s second entertainment-education soap opera, contained a family planning message (broadcast from August 1977 through April 1978). Role models were used in this serial drama to motivate women to use contraceptive methods, and to show wives how to negotiate contraceptive use with their spouses.
- *Vamos Juntos* (*Let’s Go Together*) promoted responsible parenthood and the active development and integration of children in the family and in society (July 1979 through March 1980). Role models were used in this program to teach parents about family integration behaviors and family life planning.
- *El Combate* (*The Struggle*) promoted an adult education program launched in several communities outside of Mexico City (April through September 1980). Behavior models were used in this program to inform rural audiences how to dispel the myth that adults cannot go back to school.
- *Caminemos* (*Going Forward Together*) tackled the theme of sex education for adolescents (September 1980 through April 1981). Role models in this program were used to model responsible sexual behavior for teenagers.
- *Nosotros las Mujeres* (*We the Women*) ran from April to October 1981. Through the effective use of role modeling, this program was designed to counter traditions associated with machismo and to encourage women to become aware of their important role in the family and society.

In 1997-98, Sabido produced one additional social-content serial drama before retiring from Televisa in 1998:

- *Los Hijos de Nadie* (*Nobody’s Children*) addressed the issue of street children. This program used role models to change opinions among audience members about the “silent conspiracy” surrounding the problem of street children in Mexico.

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CHAPTER 2

Evolution of the Sabido Methodology of “Entertainment-Education”

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1. INTRODUCTION

What we know today as the Sabido methodology, or “Entertainment-Education,” was not born miraculously one day. It started as a childhood dream, conceived almost 50 years ago, when I understood that the housekeepers at my house in Mexico literally believed everything they saw in Mexican telenovelas (“soap operas”).

The methodology was further developed during my studies at the School of Philosophy at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), when my teacher Luisa Josefina Hernandez taught me that in order to direct a theatrical play, I needed to establish a theoretical framework that allowed me to formulate a hypothesis about the effect my directing would have on the public.

2. THE EARLY YEARS

I was a young, elitist writer with a scholarship from the Mexican Writers’ Center, an institution as removed as it could be from the telenovelas industry, yet I decided to introduce myself to Ernesto Alonso – the great producer of Mexican telenovelas – and asked him to teach me how to write telenovelas. He generously accepted, and with other colleagues from the Center, we wrote a series of short stories titled “A Guide in the Shadows.”

We discussed the scripts as if they were to be published in the Mexican Literature Journal. When the series was broadcast, we noticed with surprise that Alonso had changed our “poetic” title to “The Mummies of Guanajuato.” As an explanation, he gently said: “Your title was not commercial enough, and I need to keep my ratings.”

That experience taught me a lesson that shaped my career: if you want to reach large populations and show them how to take advance of a public infrastructure to solve a serious social problem, you have to do it in a “tone” that they enjoy.

Benito Juarez’s character without losing ratings or causing a drop in sales. Benito Juarez is one of the most important historical heroes in Mexico.

My Theory of the Tone (Sabido, 2002) came out of my work in theatre. As a stage director, I discovered that actors and actresses “move” the energy within their bodies and by doing so, the “tone” of their performance changes the “tone” of the scene. For many years I tried to understand the phenomenon of the “tone” by observing the factors of the communication flow from an organizational perspective.

One day, I realized that the tone is given by the “receptor” (in this case, the audience) according to the stimuli sent by the “organizer of the emission-flow” (in this case, the actor). Years later, at the first Communication Conference, I met Dr. Wilbur Schramm. We became friends immediately. He told me that the receptor makes whatever he wants with the message sent by the transmitter – that the message received is ultimately determined by the receptor (the one receiving the message) and not by the transmitter. This added significantly to my own understanding of the “tone” and of communication processes in general.

La Tormenta was a great international success and indicated that a commercial telenovela could be used to educate the public about history and historical figures. The program received all kinds of awards, books about Benito Juarez (the main character) rapidly sold out in book stores, and all of Mexico recognized and praised Jose Carlos Ruiz, the actor who played Juarez.

I wrote two other historical telenovelas that also achieved great success, while showing that audience members were identifying with characters in the programs. The success of these early programs indicated that we could maintain commercial success while reinforcing a value in the audience (in this case, national pride and shared cultural heritage). Thus, I called these first telenovelas “social values reinforcing” because they were designed to reinforce a value in society without promoting a specific behavior in the audience. However, the success of the programs did not offer any concrete proof that we had actually reinforced a value in the audience – perhaps we had merely rendered historical characters more likeable and acceptable to audience members through our programs.

By then I had decided to dedicate part of my professional life to identify a social use of the commercial telenovela that I defined as “a commercial soap opera that achieves a social benefit without sacrificing the rating and sales.”
3. A RESEARCH COMPONENT

I still didn’t have any real proof of the “social benefit” effects of the programs. This need for evidence slowly led me towards the research field. I am not a researcher, but I knew that I needed research to prove the social change effects that I was seeking. I started to study research methodologies, and tried to learn all I could about surveys, Chi Square tests, and so on.

I was lucky that Emilio Azcarraga Milmo, President of Televisa in 1973, also wanted to know more about the effects that the telenovelas were having on the audience, and thus named me Research Director at Televisa. I didn’t understand at all when the researchers in my division would talk about things such as the “size of the sample” or “regression analysis” – these were all foreign concepts to me. I studied more just so I could do my job.

I gathered a team of young researchers led by Dr. Ana Cristina Covarrubias. When I described my budding theoretical framework to her, she suggested we also include Albert Bandura’s Social Learning Theory in the framework. This was the missing link in the chain. With the addition of vicarious role modeling (a basic tenet of Social Learning Theory) to the framework, we could corroborate if the value had been reinforced in the audience, and could confirm the hypothetical behavior change in the audience by numerically measuring an increase in demand for a service. In other words, we could model a behavior (such as enrollment in adult literacy classes) and confirm if audience members had modeled this behavior by tracking actual enrollment in adult literacy programs around the country.

At that point, the methodology had just two principles:
1. Telenovelas can reinforce a value in the audience.
2. Telenovelas can also provoke a specific social behavior.

The methodology proposed the use of the commercial telenovela’s structure that has proven to be successful in reaching large audiences. In the case of a commercial telenovela, the communicator is the manufacturer of a product, the message is “buy this product,” the medium is the telenovela, the receiver is the consumer, and the response is the purchase of the product and increased television ratings (see Figure 1).

The first step in the Sabido methodology is to introduce a second communicator (Figure 2), such as a government entity who provides the service we want to offer (e.g., adult literacy classes, family planning services, adolescent sexual education, etc.).

The second step is to request this government entity to define the targeted populations for these messages, that is, the social group(s) we want to adopt a specific behavior. For example, in family planning, a primary target group is women of reproductive age, and a secondary target group is men (their sexual partners). A third target group might be mothers-in-law, aunts, neighbors, etc. – people who by talking about the topic and bringing it to the public agenda, help to break the “taboo” surrounding family planning.
Then we design the characters (based on formative research) to represent these targeted populations/groups in the most realistic way, and write a regular commercial telenovelas around these characters.

4. THE LATIN AMERICAN TELENOVELA

It may be useful here to describe more in detail the structure of a Latin American telenovela, and explain how the Sabido methodology is applied within this structure. First of all, it should be noted that a Latin American telenovela is very different from an American soap opera. The main difference between an American soap opera and a Latin American telenovela is that the latter has a beginning, a middle and an end (see Figure 3), while the American soap opera is an endless river of stories that is only over when the ratings go down.

There is a remote past that happened 20 or 25 years ago. During this remote past, “secret” events happened to the main characters, which influence their current actions, and provide the basis for the numerous “cliffhangers” needed to maintain suspense and keep the audience coming back for more.

A Latin American telenovela normally runs for close to a year and is comprised of approximately 240 one-hour chapters (episodes). Each episode needs eight important cliffhangers and Friday’s cliffhanger has to be especially powerful to cause the audience to tune in the following Monday. So, telenovela scriptwriters have to develop nearly 2,000 cliffhangers during a normal season just to maintain ratings.

The current status quo (the “present”) is threatened by the secrets of the remote past. The current status quo is broken in the first chapters by a trigger: a murder, an inheritance, an unwanted pregnancy, etc. In most Latin American telenovelas, this current order includes a main character, who leads the primary plot of the story. The trigger, which happens in the life of the main character, disrupts the current status quo, and initiates a process of disorder in which the protagonist will suffer one, two, or three changes of fortune.

Figure 3. Structure of the Latin American Telenovela
In most cases, parallel to this first plot, there will be a second plot in which a second protagonist will undergo one, two, or three important changes of fortune.

Between the two plots, there are minor characters (such as drivers, maids, gossipy neighbors, etc.). These characters, who seem unimportant at the beginning of the telenovela, lead a third plot, which should ideally not constitute more than 30 percent of the air time. Figure 4 shows how these characters pass through a process of five stages.

**Figure 4. Stages of Transitional Characters**

A. At first they suffer a lot because they have a problem they do not know how to resolve the problem. The problem can be related to illiteracy, family planning, domestic violence, fear of getting pregnant, etc.

B. In the second stage they hear about services (infrastructure) that can help them solve their problem. However, they doubt that the services will really be able to help them resolve the problem (and doubt in their own ability to change the situation).

C. In the third stage, they timidly seek these services and learn to use them, while greatly enjoying the process and receiving positive rewards.

D. In the fourth stage, a terrible crisis appears and the characters are obliged to stop using the infrastructure.

E. In the last stage, the characters again seek the services and ultimately achieve their objective, and in doing so they obtain a symbolic reward that has an important meaning for members of the target group (audience).

These characters are called “transitional” characters because they follow this process of transitioning from suffering, to doubt, to attempts to change the situation, to failure – but ultimately, they change their behavior and are victorious in resolving the problem that caused them so much suffering at the beginning of the story. It is precisely these audience groups that entertainment-education is trying to reach, and thus, these “transitional” characters become the role models for our target audience.

The first two plots are responsible for the ratings, and we discreetly use them to reinforce the positive and negative value we are addressing, while the third plot is used for the vicarious education (modeling) of the target groups.

The transitional characters should represent the audience segments we are targeting in terms of: age, sex, socio-economic status, the way they dress, the way they speak, their fears, their aspirations, etc. They must be carefully designed through formative research to be as realistic as possible.

If these characters are designed properly, the target audience will develop para-social relationships with them, and the role modeling process described in Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) can occur.

If the targeted groups identify themselves with the transitional characters, they will then copy the behaviors of these characters. These behavioral changes can be measured, such as an increased demand for services (family planning services, literacy classes, etc.).

5. **THE SOCIAL CONTENT TELENOVELA**

I presented Emilio Azcarraga Milmo with an idea to design, produce, and evaluate a telenovela that, in addition to reinforcing a value in the audience, promoted a positive social behavior. He agreed, but warned me that if the ratings dropped, the program would be taken off the air immediately.

In 1974, I produced the first social content telenovela, *Ven Conmigo* (“Come With Me”), to promote adult literacy. The program achieved extremely high ratings and motivated almost one million adults to enroll in literacy classes.

However, despite the success of the program, I realized that the impact of *Ven Conmigo* would disappear in a few years. In order to really achieve sustainable social change, it would be necessary to develop a strategy around which other media would interact, using the telenovela as its axis. Ideally, this axis would involve not just one, but two or three telenovelas as the cornerstone of the behavior/social change strategy.
The communication types fall into “intellectual,” “emotional,” and “pulsional” categories.

**Intellectual media** are media with mainly an intellectual trend, and include examples such as classroom lectures (micro-communication), where the emitter receives immediate and personal feedback from the receptor; medium-size communication such as a cable program, where the receptor receives intellectual information that might prove useful, but does not interact directly with the emitter; and macro-communication, such as a network TV newscast.

**Emotional media** are media with a mainly emotive trend. At a micro-level, an example would be an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, where there is immediate feedback. At the medium-size communication level, examples include romantic comic books or photo-novellas. At the macro-communication level, examples include telenovelas and radionovelas, which are ideal vehicles to present identification characters to mass audiences.

**Pulsional media** are media with a mainly pulsional trend. At the micro-communication level, an example is a spelling bee, which represents healthy competition that is also educational; examples of medium-size pulsional communication include cheerleading and dancing contests between high schools which promote respect for the body; and at the macro-communication level, the Olympic Games or World Cup soccer that promote healthy competition on an international scale.

The nine types of communication can then be classified into two categories:

1. Strategies that reinforce a value in society: such as respect; acceptance and non-discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS; and breaking the taboo of not speaking openly about sexuality – or to display before the eyes of society a problem they might not want to see, such as street children.
2. Strategies that shape personal behavior: women who learn how to use family planning, adults who go back to school, diabetics who learn to respect their bodies through exercise and diet, etc.

Fortunately, Emilio Azcarraga Milmo authorized not only the production of the telenovelas, but also other programs on radio and TV, and paid for the research that fully proved the results of the strategy.

Between 1973 and 1981, I produced six telenovelas addressing themes of family planning, family harmony, responsible parenthood, adolescent sexuality, and sex education for adolescents. During the decade 1977 to 1986, when these Mexican soap operas were on the air, the country underwent a 34 percent decline in its population growth rate. As a result, in May 1986, the United Nations Population Prize was presented to Mexico as the foremost population success story in the world.
6. THE WEBNOVELA

I left Televisa in 1999. Since then, I have been working on my own as a freelancer, aiming my attention at medium-sized communication through theatre for teens, street sketches and most particularly through a medium for which I foresee an enormous future: the Webnovela. At one-fifth the cost of a regular production, a Webnovela can reach the same audience numbers as a telenovela over the Internet. The Webnovela can also be easily transformed into professional videotape to be used in medium-sized communication channels, such as through cable TV.

This format is particularly useful in regions where there are several languages, such as in Central America, where seven varieties of Mayan are spoken, or in India or the Philippines where numerous languages are spoken. It could also be very useful in African countries where physical archetypes are shared among diverse ethnic groups, but dialects and languages differ. This format could also be used to link into “chat rooms” where relevant information is provided on the subjects that are addressed.

7. CONCLUSION

In 1967, when I proposed the “social use of commercial television,” many people laughed at me. Forty years later, and thanks to the efforts of many people around the world, awareness that commercial media can be used for social benefit without harming ratings has been created. In other words, we have proven that entertainment-education really works.

The meeting to develop this “best practices” manual ends the first 30-year stage of the use of entertainment-education. Research during these three decades has proven without a doubt that entertainment-education can lead to beneficial change at the individual and societal levels. Now, it is time to gather research from Mexico, India, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Zambia, St. Lucia, Zimbabwe, the United States of America, and many, many other countries where entertainment-education has been used to put together a corpus of proof.

This corpus should then be provided to broadcasting associations, such as the OTI (Ibero-American TV Organization), the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association, and the African and Asian Broadcasting Associations. These associations can then share this information with the licensees of media, so that they will understand that this methodology will not lower their commercial ratings. Licensees (broadcasters) could then order their professional producers and scriptwriters to learn to use the third plot for positive social and individual change. Scriptwriters will find the methodology very useful for they will have more material for their cliffhangers.

This corpus of proof should also be taught at schools of communication, so that students can be champions of this approach throughout their careers.

UNFPA and other multilateral agencies could recommend that this methodology be used in their communication programs worldwide to contribute to the solution of social problems.

There is a need to create a new role in entertainment-education, the Liaison Advocate, who would serve as the liaison between government, the licensees (for macro communication), cable TV operators/owners (for medium-sized communication), and civil society (for micro-communication), using face-to-face methods.

We are one step away from being able to change the world. Let’s take it!
NOTES

1 For practical purposes, there is a structural difference between a telenovela and a soap opera.
2 Los Caudillos ("The Chieftains") in 1969 and La Constitución ("The Constitution") in 1970. These telenovelas were broadcast on Televisa.
3 When Patrick Coleman from Johns Hopkins University first heard this name, he said: “That sounds like Latin American verbiage, it should be called ‘entertainment-education.’”
4 Co-written with Celia Alcantara.
5 Pulsional: Term coined after the four drives studied by Nobel Prize winner Irineus Einsbenfeld – search for food, fighting, fleeing and mating.
6 Between 1973 and 1981, Sabido produced six social content serial dramas in Mexico:
   • Ven Conmigo ("Come with Me") provided specific information about a study program offered by the Secretary of Public Education in 1975. Role models were used to motivate viewers to register for literacy classes.
   • Acompáñame ("Accompany Me"), Sabido’s second entertainment-education soap opera, contained a family planning message (broadcast from August 1977 through April 1978). Role models were used in this serial drama to motivate women to use contraceptive methods, and to show wives how to negotiate contraceptive use with their spouses.
   • Vamos Juntos ("Let’s Go Together") promoted responsible parenthood and the active development and integration of children in the family and in society (July 1979 through March 1980). Role models were used in this program to teach parents about family integration behaviors and family life planning.
   • El Combate ("The Struggle") promoted an adult education program launched in several communities outside of Mexico City (April through September 1980). Behavior models were used in this program to inform rural audiences how to dispel the myth that adults cannot go back to school.
   • Caminemos ("Going Forward Together") tackled the theme of sex education for adolescents (September 1980 through April 1981). Role models in this program were used to model responsible sexual behavior for teenagers.
   • Nosotros las Mujeres ("We the Women") ran from April to October 1981. Through the effective use of role modeling, this program was designed to counter traditions associated with machismo and to encourage women to become aware of their important role in the family and society.
In 1997-98, Sabido produced one additional social-content serial drama before retiring from Televisa in 1998:
   • Los Hijos de Nadie ("Nobody’s Children") addressed the issue of street children. This program used role models to change opinions among audience members about the “silent conspiracy” surrounding the problem of street children in Mexico.

REFERENCES


CHAPTER 3

A Brief History of Entertainment-Education for Behavior Change

David O. Poindexter

Photo by Katie Elmore
1. PRECURSORS TO ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION: THE 1950s AND 1960s

1.1 In the United States

A number of attempts/experiments to use television and radio for entertainment and education in the United States were made about 10 years after television had become a national mass medium.

In 1958, the Methodist Church produced a series titled Talk-Back. Each episode consisted of a 13-minute drama, designed and written to focus on major problems faced by American families. Following the drama, in each market where the series ran, a panel of professionals and experts discussed the problem of the day and offered various possible solutions. The series was telecast during the Sunday morning “ghetto” time slot, the time allotted to religious programming. Church groups throughout the viewing areas then continued the discussions for a second half hour after the program was broadcast. Although this was not scientifically evaluated, it was generally judged to be a successful application of entertainment to help solve personal and group problems.

During this period, a widely acclaimed program, titled V.D. Blues with the theme song “Don’t Give a Dose to the One You Love Mos’” and hosted by Dick Cavett, was telecast on the Public Broadcast Network. Because it had been heavily promoted, it garnered a sizable audience, and there was anecdotal evidence that it made a significant impact, particularly among young Americans. The program was broadcast a number of times, and videos of the program were widely distributed to high schools.

CBS took another approach in the 1960s with the program The National Driver’s Test, which was designed to educate Americans about highway safety. Materials for the test were widely distributed by gasoline service stations across America. The response dumbfounded programmers at the station. The network was absolutely inundated with completed tests. In a day prior to computers, I personally saw the large room where CBS had to set up a small army of typists to process the flood of tests received. Because of its success, it was followed by a number of other “tests” to educate Americans about health and other issues. None, however, was as successful as The National Driver’s Test. Gradually the genre petered out.

During this period, entertainment as a way to educate children was being created. Most successful in this regard was The Children’s Television Workshop created by Joan Ganz Cooney. Its premier accomplishment is Sesame Street, which is still being produced today. Characters from the program such as Kermit and Big Bird have become icons for children. Sesame Street has since been trans-created into other languages for broadcast in eleven countries. The formula for this program worked widely. However, the formula did not provide a theoretical framework to enable it to be extended to other age levels.

At about the same time, Fred Rogers applied entertainment effectively to childhood education and emotional development when he created the widely heralded children’s program, Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood. However, absent Mr. Rogers, the formula would not travel.

Also during this period, the Lutheran Church developed Davey and Goliath, a cartoon series intended to use entertainment to provide religious education to children. The series is still in reruns in many places.

1.2 On the International Scene

In the mid-twentieth century, the British government, faced with a serious agricultural situation, went to the BBC with the plea: “Please teach the people how to grow food.” The government wanted to promote improved agricultural practices for farmers and to enlist the rest of the country in a cooperative effort. Rather than do an agricultural education program which would have had a miniscule audience, the BBC instead launched a radio serial drama called The Archers: An Everyday Story of Country Folk. It was launched January 1, 1951, airing every weekday evening with a Saturday morning rebroadcast of the week’s programs. Its initial design called for 60 percent entertainment and 40 percent education.

Although it was based more on intuition and less on a social science methodology, The Archers turned out to be an enduring success. Now, 55 years after its premiere, and long after the arrival of television, the British public is still addicted to The Archers.

Given that the serial was not based on a reproducible methodology, it was not possible to replicate the success of The Archers elsewhere. Two spin-offs of the show did work, but only because of the professional talents of those who energized them.

Nigeria, previously a food exporter, found itself hemorrhaging money to import food. The problem stemmed from city-centric government policies (originating in the then capital city of Lagos) that incited rural people from across the nation to abandon farming and migrate to the cities. To counter this, Vincent Maduka, Director-General of the Nigerian Television Authority, created Cock Crow at Dawn, a program to motivate people to leave the cities and return to the farms, thus restoring Nigeria’s agricultural base.
In Jamaica, Elaine Perkins created a family planning radio serial titled Naseberry Street. Although this program was not extensively evaluated, research evidence indicates that the serial made a positive contribution to encourage family planning use in Jamaica.

2. COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

During this period an attempt to marry media to development programs began to emerge. This began with what was known as Project Support Communication. By and large Project Support Communication was seen as meeting the need for augmenting a development project by providing informational materials to potential users of the project. In general, this form of education was largely devoid of entertainment value.

Project Support Communication evolved into Development Support Communication when it became clear that a “project” was generally only one component of a national development effort. With that understanding, communications started being designed to support a nation’s overall development effort. A center for this was the Development Support Communication Center in Bangkok set up by Erskine Childers. Again, entertainment was only a minor part of what was primarily an informational, and to a lesser extent, a motivational strategy.

During this period, advertising was only a bit player. In the late 1960s, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) sent Emerson Foote, founding partner of the advertising agency Foote, Cone and Belding, to India to explore possibilities and to make recommendations. Unfortunately, his mission went nowhere: India at that point had no functional national television and only one radio channel. Most significant was that India’s broadcasting at that time was run as a government service and carried no advertising.

In the late 1960s in Mexico, the commercial television network, Televisa, hired a young theater director, Miguel Sabido, to write the first of what became a series of wildly successful – both in audience impact and audience ratings – series of historical telenovelas designed to teach the Mexicans about their cultural history. These telenovelas were the precursors to Sabido’s social-content telenovelas, as well as of his social science-based communication methodology.

In the mid 1980s, Richard K. Manoff carried out some campaigns, mainly in the fields of agriculture and nutrition. Although these were strictly advertising campaigns, they did include some entertaining elements (Manoff, 1985).

2.1 Communication Center of the Population Institute

In the United States in the 1970s and early 1980s, I worked at the Communication Center of the Population Institute (PI) using entertainment television to draw attention to the various aspects of the population issue. This resulted in a number of episodes addressing population issues in the top-rated prime time US television programs of the day, including

- the character “Meathead’s” vasectomy on All in the Family;
- an on-air editorial by Mary Richards on the Mary Tyler Moore show;
- Maude’s abortion two-parter on the Maude series;
- a discussion of condoms on MASH at a time when the very word was taboo; and
- a made-for-television movie about women’s rights titled, I Love You: Goodbye.

These are only indicative of a large volume of top-rated US television shows that focused attention on a spectrum of aspects of the population issue.

It should be stated that in doing our work, the Communication Center of PI was not seeking in any way to play the role of the broadcaster. Instead, we were pioneering a totally different profession: that of energizing and providing support to broadcasters to enable them to focus their professional abilities on “slice of life” dramas and comedies designed to reach and impact the behaviors of vast numbers of viewers.

2.2 A Replicable Methodology is Born

Worldwide, the major money for communications related to population and development programs was provided by USAID via contracts with implementing organizations. At that time, USAID’s contracts were only with universities. However, many in the communication business wondered if any major corporation or other enterprise would go to a university to get its products or services sold. In fact, at a meeting to discuss implementation of a USAID-funded project in India, those in attendance were dumbfounded when one scholar grandly announced that the solution to India’s population growth problem was direct mail advertising!
With that as background, the Population Institute, later succeeded by Population Communications International, and finally by Population Media Center, began to search for a methodology that would deliver results in the developing world.

We at the Communication Center of Population Institute were confident that we could accomplish the necessary job in the United States, based on our track record with US television. At the same time, we had no confidence that what had worked in the United States would work overseas. What was needed was both an international equivalent of the US networks (to get the word out), and a strategy that would produce successful entertaining (but educational) programs.

We searched the world for answers. After a long search, we found what we were looking for right next door in Mexico: a methodology brimming with possibilities for application throughout the developing world. In fact, we not only found a methodology – we found the methodologist, Miguel Sabido.

We arrived in Mexico in September 1977 where we met Miguel Sabido, and were introduced to the world’s first family planning telenovela, Acompáñame (“Accompany Me”), which had initiated its nine-month run only one week earlier.

We were also introduced to Sabido’s emerging social content broadcasting methodology. Both the underlying social science-based methodology and the results it was achieving on the air stirred great excitement. However, the real excitement was the positive impact that Acompáñame was having on family planning use in Mexico.

From that time on, I was a frequent visitor to Mexico. Miguel Sabido and I became fast friends and collaborators. My role was to help keep Televisa in the social content telenovela broadcasting business, as well as to serve as a support person for Sabido as he continued to expand and develop his methodology.

At the same time, I was searching for some kind of an international equivalent to the US broadcasting networks in order to apply the strategy that we at the Population Institute had so successfully employed with American television programming. For a time I thought that the Broadcasting Unions, such as the Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union, might hold promise. However, I soon abandoned that route. Two other organizations held promise and were of help: The International Institute of Communications, which was key to the work in Indian television; and the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association, which helped to open doors in Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Namibia, India, Pakistan, and St. Lucia.

After seeing video from the Sabido productions and spending a day with Miguel Sabido, the Communication Center’s Advisory Committee at Population Institute mandated us to begin to explore using the Sabido methodology in other countries.

3. THE SABIDO METHODOLOGY: A WORLD TOUR

3.1 First Stop: India

The first application of the Sabido methodology outside of Mexico was in India. The resulting program, Hum Log (“We People”), resulted in a national television fever. Its ratings were, on some evenings, as high as 90 percent.
In the words of Harish Khanna, then Director-General of national television: “Hum Log created national television in India.”

The overwhelming success of this first use of the Sabido methodology outside of Mexico convinced those who doubted that it would work. For example, Sabido’s researcher at Televisa had asserted categorically that “absent the genius of Miguel Sabido, the methodology will not travel,” and that it was “hopeless to expect it to do so.” Fortunately for the world, he was wrong.

The success of the program also overturned J.T. Klapper’s verdict that “mass media cannot modify human behavior; all it can do is to reinforce existing behavior” (Klapper, 1960).

The success of the program in India was also astonishing, given that the Sabido methodology was being transferred from high-tech Televisa, to impossibly antiquated Indian television. At the time of the transfer, the Indian television company, Doordarshan (a Hindi word meaning “vision from a distance”) was operating with one-inch, three-quarter-inch, half-inch, and quarter-inch video tape - all of it incompatible.

Perhaps the greatest impediment to successful application of the Sabido methodology outside of Mexico was my insistence that we should abide by the judgment of the Indians as how best to proceed. What we learned was that the transfer of the methodology was a methodology in and of itself, and that the recipients, no matter how great their grasp of their own situation and culture, should not be expected to know how best to apply the Sabido methodology to their own situation.

In fact, the only operative contact between Miguel Sabido and the Indians so far as Hum Log was concerned was a briefing in Mexico City conducted by Miguel Sabido for the Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of India. Much more important were two pamphlets Sabido and his associates had written: Towards the Social Use of Soap Operas and A Handbook for Reinforcing Social Values through Daytime T.V. Serials. A large part of the reason for Hum Log’s success was the fact that its writer poured over these pamphlets so studiously that he actually reduced them to tatters.

### 3.2 Next Stop: Kenya

The second application of the Sabido methodology was in Kenya. In 1983, a team of four Kenyans traveled to Mexico for a week-long training workshop conducted by Miguel Sabido and members of his staff at Televisa. With two of the Kenyans, Tom Kazungu and Greg Adambo, the training “took.” They were responsible for the two programs that demographers credit for having the greatest impact on changing Kenyan fertility behavior. On radio, Tom Kazungu’s Ushikwapo Shikamana (“When Given Advice, Take It”) had a substantial impact throughout rural Kenya. On television, Greg Adambo’s Tushauriane (“Let’s Discuss It”) was arguably Kenya’s most popular TV program to date.

Westoff (1995) and Hammerslough (1992) pinpointed the radio programs in Kenya in the mid-1980s as the cause of the reduction in fertility.

### 3.3 China

In 1985, I received an invitation to consult with authorities of China’s State Family Planning Commission. However, I had just started a new organization, and did not have sufficient funds to make the trip at that time.

Finally, by 1989 I had found sufficient funds to allow William Ryerson and me to make an exploratory visit to China. What followed was a mutual educational process on the part of the westerners and of the Chinese.

In 1994, we conducted a training workshop in Beijing for some of China’s outstandingly talented drama professionals. Facilitators during the training included Virginia Carter of the United States, Kimani Njogu of Kenya, Miguel Sabido of Mexico, Bill Ryerson, and me.

A magical moment occurred during one of Miguel’s sessions in the workshop. The head writer (one of China’s finest) – in what was virtually an epiphany – suddenly completely understood the methodology that Miguel was describing. Right there and then, the top-quality serial drama, Jhanguo Baixing (“Ordinary People”), was born. The program has since run its course and appears to have made a solid contribution to China’s national family planning program.

### 3.4 Tanzania

Beginning in 1993, Radio Tanzania went on the air with a twice weekly radio serial titled Twende na Wakati (“Let’s Go With the Times”). It was the result of an agreement

The serial was preceded by an intensive formative research effort consisting of a 4,800-person quantitative survey (each interview of more than one hour in length), a series of 160 focus groups, and a literature review.

Training of Tanzanian artists was conducted in Kiswahili by a two-person team consisting of Tom Kazungu and Kimani Njogu, both Kenyans.

In the run-up to Twende na Wakati, a great deal was learned about how to transfer the Sabido methodology to a new country, culture, and situation. Further, for the first time, a sophisticated research design and effort was married to the entire project. More money went into the research than was used to produce and broadcast the program.

Just before the program premiered in July 1993, a 2,750-person quantitative study was carried out to provide a baseline against which behavior modifications could be charted.

The research design blacked out the center section of the country so that people in that section could not hear the program. While the serial was being broadcast, the central area listeners heard a music program on the same frequency, guaranteeing they would not hear the serial. This employment of a “comparison area” field design enabled researchers to isolate the effects of the serial drama. This appears to be a first in a national broadcasting research effort. This effort was under the direction of Professors Everett M. Rogers and Peter Vaughan of the University of New Mexico. The actual research was carried out by a group of young professionals from the Population Family Life Education Programme of the Government of Tanzania under the direction of Ramadhan Swalehe (Rogers et al., 1999; Vaughan et al., 2000).

One year into the broadcasts, a second 2,750-person quantitative survey was done. A third survey was done at the end of the second year. These surveys continued for 5 years. However, by the end of the second year there was adequate evaluation information to mark this entire effort as one of the most significant in social communication history.

Although a large spectrum of issues was targeted, the central focus of the broadcasts was on increasing the practice of family planning and reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS.

By the end of the second year, 82 percent of the male listeners in the treatment area of the study self-reported that they had changed their sexual behavior because of the serial, either by adopting monogamous behavior, or by using condoms.

Although it was not possible to confirm the claims of monogamous behavior, the team monitored the distribution of condoms in the broadcast and comparison areas. The comparison area had received another family planning serial drama using a different methodology, and like Twende na Wakati, benefited from an “Ask the Doctor” program, as well as all of the programs of the government’s National AIDS Control Agency. The increase in condom distribution in the comparison area was 16 percent after 2 years, which is quite laudable. However, in the treatment area, the increase in condom distribution was 153 percent – almost ten times the increase in the comparison area. Similar dramatic results accrued in terms of family planning use as well.

During the course of the broadcasts there were a number of other methods employed to secure evaluative data. Focus groups were convened almost continuously, thus providing not only evaluation data, but considerable material for serial writers. There was also clinic intake data, family planning use, Demographic and Health Survey data, analysis of listeners’ letters, and more.

At the end of the country’s 4-year UNFPA contract, upon careful evaluation, the only program within the contract to be continued was the radio serial. The drama continued for more than a decade.

### 3.5 India

One page of poster-letter from Lutsaan, including the signatures and thumbprints of 184 community members, pledging not to give or accept dowry.
Following a second training for a team from India in December 1986 held in Mexico City, producer Roger Pereira of Bombay undertook the creation of a second Sabido-style television soap opera. This program, *Hum Raahi* (“Co-Travelers”), went on the air in January 1992. It dealt with the status of women, with particular attention paid to age of marriage, age of first pregnancy, gender bias in childbearing and child rearing, equal educational opportunity, and the right of women to choose their own husbands. Within 4 months, *Hum Raahi* was the top-rated program on Indian television. The estimated audience was 230 million viewers.

In the series, a servant girl dies in childbirth at age 15 after being forced into an arranged marriage at age 14 by her parents. Following that key episode, the other characters lament what is happening to the young women of India and the tragedy of early marriage and pregnancy. A Rockefeller Foundation-funded study showed that viewers, contrasted with non-viewers, changed significantly in their attitudes regarding the ideal age of marriage and the acceptability of women in the work place – two issues that were central to the program’s story line.

In the second half of the 1990s, Population Communications International (PCI) and All India Radio developed a radio serial for the Hindi belt of India. As Mahatma Gandhi taught the world, India lives in its villages – more than 600,000 of them. Although television had made sizable inroads in the country following the ragingly popular *Hum Log*, there were vast village areas where television had yet to penetrate, but where the reach of All India Radio (the world’s largest national radio network) was solidly ensconced. That is why a serial drama designed for villages in India was targeted for radio.

At that time, in the four southern states of India the total fertility rate was below 2.5 children per woman. In the north of India in the Hindi-belt, the fertility rate was more than twice that rate. Gender equity issues were also woefully ignored in the north. PCI and All India Radio produced and broadcast a radio serial drama focused on this large area with the primary unmet need. The drama was called *Tinka Tinka Sukh* (“Happiness Lies in Small Pleasures”). The program ran for one year and generated a flood of mail (approximately 180,000 letters) to the station and to the actors. One letter in particular drew much attention. A multi-color, poster sized letter, master-minded by the tailor in the village of Lutsaan in Uttar Pradesh (India’s largest state), was signed by a sizable share of the village inhabitants. The letter declared that, because of *Tinka Tinka Sukh*, the villagers had come to understand the evils of dowry for the first time. The letter asserted that henceforth the signatories would refuse to either accept or give dowry. The letter went on to state that for the first time, the villagers understood that girls could learn just as well as boys. Further, the writers asserted, they now believed that girls should be educated just as boys are and that henceforth in this village they would be. Beyond that, the letter writers stated that they had now come to understand the importance of small families, and that they believed husbands and wives should discuss this together and agree upon it.

These three new understandings are revolutionary for village India. Further, the assertion of the need for husbands and wives to discuss matters together underlines one of the most important findings to come out of summative research on Sabido methodology serials. A solid indicator of changed behavior is what results from spousal communication on matters of vital, often sensitive, importance. That the serial achieved this level of understanding was most heartening.

Subsequently, the serial was trans-created for play in four additional states. One of these spin-off serials, solidly linked to a state-wide service delivery institution, was found to have made a positive contribution in India’s most benighted state of Bihar.

### 3.6 St. Lucia

On the Caribbean Island of St. Lucia, PCI partnered with RARE Center for Tropical Conservation in a radio serial designed to reinforce the concept of marriage and responsible parenthood, and to undergird the island nation’s family planning programs. Titled in the island’s operative Creole language, *Apwé Plezi* (“After the Pleasure [Comes the Pain]”), the serial was broadcast from February 1996 to September 1998.

Under the direction of Dr. Peter Vaughan, the program’s effects were assessed through analyses of data from nationally representative pre-broadcast and post-broadcast
surveys, focus group discussions, and other qualitative and quantitative sources. Among 1,238 respondents to the post-broadcast survey, 35 percent had listened to *Apwé Plezi*, including 12 percent who listened at least once per week. The results showed that the program made a contribution to national programs and objectives. For example, 16 percent of post-broadcast respondents knew a slang term for condoms that was coined for the radio program, and the proportions of respondents who considered it acceptable for husbands to have sex partners outside their marriage declined from 27 percent at the pre-broadcast survey to 14 percent at the post-broadcast survey. Compared with non-listeners, regular listeners were more likely to trust family planning workers (83 percent versus 72 percent) and considered a significantly lower number of children the ideal (2.5 versus 2.9). Fourteen percent of listeners reported having adopted a family planning method as a result of listening to the program (Vaughan, 1977; Vaughan, 1998; Vaughan & Rogers, 1996; Vaughan & Rogers, 1997a; Vaughan & Rogers, 1997b).

*Apwé Plezi* was produced by Rare Radio. Since 1996, Rare Radio and its partners have produced more than 700 episodes of radio serial dramas. Two of its longest running programs are *Apwé Plezi* and *Changing Tides* (in the Western Pacific). Rare Radio also produced a regional radio serial drama, *Coconut Bay*, which was broadcast in Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent.

4. SOCIAL MERCHANDISING – ANOTHER EFFECTIVE METHODOLOGY

In 1984, I made an exploratory trip to Brazil. I soon discovered that, in Latin America, the rubric out of New York that “Macy's doesn’t tell Gimbel's how to sell merchandise” was all the more operative between Latin America's two mass giants, Televisa in Mexico and TV Globo in Brazil. No one in Brazil wanted to hear a single word about Televisa. What they declared was, “We are the best there is, so if we decide to do something, we will use our own methods.”

At the time I first traveled to Brazil, the average family size was about four children - a formula for economic, educational, ecologic, and civil disaster. TV Globo earned income with what it called “Commercial Merchandising.” For a substantial fee, marketers of products or services could have information about, and promotion of, their products or services written into the body of a serial drama script. The commercial writers at TV Globo were sufficiently skilled and the writing was done seamlessly without the audience noting the insertion.

When TV Globo made the decision to include population/family planning themes and messages in their serials, they translated their “commercial merchandising” methodology
into “social merchandising.” Their first attempt was so successful, that they moved wholeheartedly into social merchandising.

A key reason for the success at TV Globo is the fact that a highly-qualified Brazilian professional, Marcio Schiavo, developed a unique office and program to support the creative people at TV Globo.

Testimonial to the validity and impact of Brazil’s enormous success with the social merchandising strategy is the fact that during the 16 years the strategy has been applied, the average family size in Brazil has fallen from approximately 4 children per woman to the current 2.3 per woman. TV Globo’s serials have played a major role in this change as evidenced by a research unit at the University of Sao Paolo. The unit, devoted to analyzing the serial dramas of TV Globo, asserted that TV Globo’s social merchandising programs were a principle cause of the dramatic change in Brazil’s fertility patterns.

It is worth noting that TV Globo is one of the largest marketers of programs worldwide. These programs, which have so positively impacted Brazil, have doubtless made positive impacts when telecast in countries to which they have been sold.

5. OTHER FORMS OF ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION

Johns Hopkins University’s Population Communication Services program (PCS) developed several sizable programs using popular music and popular music stars. In the latter part of the 1980s in Mexico, PCS developed a pop song/video featuring two of Mexico’s extremely popular young stars – Tatiana and Johnny. The message of the song Cuando Estemos Juntos (“When We’re Together”) was to delay the onset of sexual relations among young people. Although the song was wildly popular with youth, researchers were able to identify only minimal behavior change results from this effort.

A second program in the Philippines made one young women into a star. PCS used Lea Salonga, who later starred in Miss Saigon on Broadway, to sing several pop songs about teenage sexuality and reproductive health. However, there is little evidence that these popular songs actually changed adolescent behavior. Today, the Philippines has one of the highest fertility rates in Southeast Asia.

6. ADDITIONAL LESSONS LEARNED AND OBSERVATIONS

- Management and creative people must always be jointly involved in any project. Sometimes efforts have been made to interact with one without the other. Inevitably failure will result.
- Based on the principle that influence flows downward like water, it is essential in any initiative that one start at the top. When you have the most senior decision-maker on board, it is much more likely that the inevitable snarls and snafus that will arise will be easily and quickly resolved.
- Whenever one moves into a new area or arena, it is essential to know personally, or have persons available to you, who intimately know the territory. Such “advisory” individuals are a must.
- If at all possible, when energizing a project in a new territory, it is important to have control of the funding. On a number of occasions individuals serving in an advisory capacity, but without control over funding sources and disbursements, have seen projects descend into disaster or worse.
- Years of experience have made clear that projects work best when all of the stakeholders have been identified and involved. Semi-annual meetings of such persons have proven to be a useful adjunct.
- In all cases, both formative and evaluative research must be married to a project. Absent such, projects can neither be adequately prepared nor adequately evaluated. Decades of experience have taught professionals in the field how best such research can be designed and developed.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER 4

Social Cognitive Theory and Media Production

Albert Bandura
1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I will briefly present the major principles of social cognitive theory, and the guidelines they provide for constructing effective media productions.

2. ACQUISITONAL FUNCTIONS (MODELS OF LEARNING)

There are two basic modes of learning. We learn through direct experience, and through the power of example. Experience is a tough teacher. Trial-and-error learning is tedious and hazardous when errors produce injurious consequences.

Much of what we learn is through the power of modeling. Smart people learn from their successes and mistakes. Smarter people learn from the successes and mistakes of others. We shortcut the tedious and sometimes hazardous trial-and-error learning by using social modeling.

A major advantage of modeling through the media is that it can reach vast populations simultaneously in widely dispersed locales. New ideas, values, and styles of conduct are now being rapidly spread worldwide via the media. After decades of experience with this, we now have a lot of information on how to enhance the instructive and motivating power of modeling through the media.

Miguel Sabido creatively translated these modeling principles into engrossing and influential serial drama formats to produce society-wide changes in attitudes and behavioral patterns. This format informs people, enables them with strategies and sustaining self-beliefs, and motivates them for personal and social change.

3. MOTIVATIONAL AND SELF-REGULATORY FUNCTIONS

It is one thing to learn new styles of behavior. It is another to put them into practice. There are several motivators for adopting new lifestyles. They include:

- Beliefs of personal efficacy (self-efficacy) to exercise control over events that affect one’s life
- Outcome expectations of the costs and benefits of given styles of behavior
- Aspirations about the future one seeks to achieve and the explicit plans and strategies for realizing that vision
- Perceived Impediments where perceived personal, social, and institutional barriers to success also have an impact on self-motivation

4. SELF-EFFICACY

Among the mechanisms of self-influence, none is more central, or pervasive, than beliefs of personal efficacy. By self-efficacy I mean people’s belief in their ability to influence events that affect their lives. This core belief system is the foundation of human motivation and accomplishments.

Belief in one’s personal efficacy is the foundation of action. Unless people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act, or to persevere

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Diverse Functions of Modeling

Modeling influences serve diverse functions:

**Instructive Functions.** Models serve as transmitters of knowledge, values, cognitive skills, and new styles of behavior. Observers also develop emotional predispositions towards persons, places, and things that have been associated with modeled emotional experiences. Observers learn to fear that which frightened models, to dislike what repulsed them, and to like what gratified them. Debilitating fears and inhibitions are eliminated by modeling coping strategies and instilling a sense of coping efficacy.

**Motivational Functions.** Seeing others gain desired outcomes by their actions can create outcome expectancies that serve as positive incentives. Observed punished outcomes can create negative outcome expectancies that serve as disincentives for similar courses of action.

**Social Prompting Functions.** The behavior of others serves as social prompts that activate, channel, and support modeled styles of behavior. The fashion and food industries rely on this function. The types of models who predominate within a social milieu determine which human qualities are selectively promoted, from among many alternatives.

**Social Construction Functions.** Televised portrayals of human nature, social relations, and the norms and structure of society shape the public consciousness. They do so at an early age. An example of this is an overheard conversation by youngsters as they were gazing as a reproduction of the Last Supper in an art book. One child asked, “Why are they all eating on the same side of the table?” Another replied, “Cause they’re watching television.” Media representations gain influence because people’s view of reality depends heavily on what they see, hear, and read rather than experience directly.
in the face of difficulties. Whatever other factors serve as guides and motivators, they are rooted in the core belief that one has the power to effect changes by one’s actions.

### 4.1 Optimistic Efficacy

The realities of everyday life are strewn with difficulties. They are full of disappointments, impediments, adversities, failures, setbacks, frustrations, and inequities. People who are successful, innovative, sociable, non-anxious, non-despondent and tenacious social reformers take an optimistic view of their efficacy to influence events that affect their lives.

Human accomplishments and positive well-being require an optimistic sense of personal efficacy to override the numerous impediments to success. People must have strong belief in their efficacy to sustain the persevering effort needed to succeed.

This functional belief system combines realism about odds, but optimism that one can beat those odds through self-development and perseverant effort.

In his delightful book titled Rejection, John White identifies two distinguishing characteristics of people who achieve success in what they do:
- An unshakable sense of efficacy
- A firm belief in the worth of what they are doing

This internal resource enables them to withstand a lot of adversity. You cannot afford to be a realist if you want to succeed. Given the usual negative social realities – realists forego the effort. Realists abort their efforts prematurely in the face of failure, or, they become cynics about the prospect of producing change.

George Bernard Shaw said, “The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.”

### Sources of Self-Efficacy

People’s belief in their efficacy can be developed in four ways:

**Mastery Experiences.** The most effective way of instilling strong efficacy is through mastery experiences. Successes build a robust sense of efficacy. Failures undermine it, especially in early phases of efficacy development. If people experience only easy successes, they come to expect quick results, and are easily discouraged by failure. Resilient efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort. Resilience is also built by training in how to manage failure so it becomes informative, rather than demoralizing.

**Social Modeling.** The second way of developing efficacy is by social modeling. Models are a source of inspiration, competencies, and motivation. Seeing people similar to oneself succeed by perseverant effort, raises observers’ beliefs in their own abilities. The failures of others instill self-doubts about one’s own ability to master similar activities.

**Social Persuasion.** Social persuasion is the third mode of influence. Realistic boosts in efficacy can lead people to exert greater effort. This increases their chances of success. But effective efficacy builders do more than convey positive appraisals; they structure situations for others in ways that bring success, and avoid placing them prematurely in situations where they are likely to fail. They measure success by self-improvement, rather than by triumphs over others. Pep talks without enabling guidance achieve little.

**Physical-Emotional States.** People also rely on their physical and emotional states in judging their efficacy. They read their emotional arousal and tension as signs of personal vulnerability. In activities involving strength and stamina, people interpret their fatigue, aches, and pains, as indicators of low physical efficacy. Mood also affects how people judge their efficacy. A positive mood enhances a sense of efficacy. A depressed mood diminishes it. The fourth way of modifying efficacy beliefs is to reduce people’s stress and depression, build their physical strength, and change misinterpretations of their physical states.
Efficacy beliefs affect human functioning in many ways.

**Weak Efficacy.** People who have a low sense of efficacy in a given domain
- shy away from difficult tasks, which they view as personal threats;
- have low aspirations and a weak commitment to their goals;
- turn inward on their self-doubts, instead of thinking how to perform successfully under pressure;
- dwell on personal deficiencies, obstacles, and adverse consequences of failure when faced with difficulties;
- attribute failures to deficient capability;
- slacken their efforts, or give up quickly in the face of difficulties;
- are slow to recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks;
- easily fall victim to stress and depression.

**Strong Efficacy.** In contrast, people who have a strong sense of efficacy
- approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered, rather than as threats to be avoided;
- set challenging goals, and sustain strong commitment to their goals;
- concentrate on how to perform successfully, not on themselves and disruptive personal concerns, when they encounter problems;
- attribute failures to insufficient effort, faulty strategies, or lack of knowledge or skill, all of which are correctable;
- redouble their efforts in the face of difficulties;
- quickly recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks;
- display low vulnerability to stress and depression.

Because of the centrality of perceived efficacy in people’s lives, media productions can be used to raise people’s beliefs that they have what it takes to succeed.

There are several ways you can build resilience through modeling through the media:
- You can prepare people for the problems they will encounter by enacting prototypic problem situations and modeling effective ways of overcoming them.
- You can model how to recover from failed attempts and setbacks – to help people to learn how to manage failure.
- You can show people how to enlist social support for personal change.

For example, before the broadcast of a Sabido-style radio serial drama in Tanzania, many women believed they had no control over family size. They thought the number of children they had was predetermined divinely, by fate, or by forces beyond their control. Exposure to the program raised perceived efficacy to control one’s family size.

4.2 Outcome Expectations

People also motivate and regulate their behavior by the outcomes they expect their actions to produce. These expected outcomes take three forms:
- The physical and material costs and benefits of given courses of action
- The social costs and benefits the behavior produces
- Evaluative self-reactions

After people adopt personal standards, they regulate their behavior by evaluative self-reactions. They do things that give them a sense of self-worth and pride, and refrain from behaving in ways that bring self-censure. Evaluative self-incentives operate as strong guides and motivators for behavior.

Unless people see that their personal interests are served by adopting new patterns of behavior, they have little incentive to mount the effort needed to change their ways. Media productions can highlight the personal and societal benefits of the new ways.

4.3 Aspirations

Aspirations serve as another motivating force. Once people commit themselves to valued goals, they enlist the effort needed to fulfill them. Thus, people motivate themselves, and guide their behavior by the goals, aspirations, and challenges they set for themselves. This is an especially robust form of self-motivation.

Goals motivate by enlisting self-investment in activities. Once people commit themselves to certain goals, they seek self-satisfaction from fulfilling them. They intensify their efforts by discontent with substandard performance.

But, most of the goals that people set neither motivate, nor guide behavior because
- they are too general, so they are non-committing;
- they are too distant – there are too many attractions in the present for future goals to control current behavior.

Goals alone have little motivating value unless they are translated into concrete steps that give substance to the vision. Future goals provide direction. But sub-goals influence what one does in the here and now. Sub-goal attainments build a sense of efficacy and self-satisfaction with one’s progress.

The media can model how to translate a vision of a desired future into a set of achievable sub-goals.
4.4 Impediments

There are many impediments to personal and social change. Beliefs of personal efficacy affect how formidable the obstacles appear. People who have a resilient sense of efficacy figure out ways to overcome obstacles to change. Those who distrust their staying power (their “efficacy”) view impediments as insurmountable. They quickly abort their efforts when they run into difficulties.

5. COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

Many of the challenges of life involve common problems that require people to work together with a collective voice to change their lives for the better. The strength of families, communities, organizations, social institutions, and even nations lies partly in people’s sense of collective efficacy; that they can solve the problems they face and improve their lives through unified effort. Social change requires a strong sense of collective efficacy.

5.1 Underminers of Collective Efficacy

The growing globalization and interdependence of social and economic life requires effective collective action at local, national, and transnational levels. As the need for efficacious collective effort grows, so does the feeling of collective powerlessness. Many of the contemporary conditions of life undermine the development of collective efficacy.

5.1.1 Transnational interdependencies

Life is now increasingly shaped by transnational interdependencies. What happens economically and politically in one part of the world, can affect the welfare of vast populations elsewhere. Global market forces are restructuring national economies and shaping the social life of societies. As nations wrestle with the loss of control, the public expresses disillusionment and cynicism over whether their leaders and institutions can work for them to improve their lives.

5.1.2 Technologies

Modern life is increasingly regulated by complex technologies that most people neither understand, nor believe they can do much to influence. Paradoxically, the technologies we create to control our life environment, come to control how we think and behave. For example, the citizens in Eastern Europe, who are dependent on deteriorating atomic plants for their energy, feel powerless to remove this hazard from their lives, even though they acknowledge the grave danger. The devastating consequences of mishaps do not respect national borders.

5.1.3 Bureaucratic control

The social machinery of society is no less challenging. Bureaucracies thwart effective social action. Long delays between action and results discourage efforts at change.

5.1.4 Social fragmentation

Social efforts to change lives for the better require merging diverse self-interests in support of common values and goals. Disagreements among different constituencies create additional obstacles to successful collective action. It is getting harder to create unity within diversity. The recent years have witnessed growing social fragmentation into separate interest groups, each exercising its own power. As a result, it is easier to get people to block courses of action, than to merge them as a unified force for social change. People are now exercising greater factional power, but immobilizing themselves collectively for social changes that can improve the quality of life in a society.

5.1.5 Global problems

The magnitude of human problems also undermines perceived efficacy to find solutions for them. Profound global changes in the form of burgeoning populations and mounting environmental devastation are destroying the interdependent ecosystems that sustain life. Worldwide problems of growing magnitude instill a sense of paralysis; that there is little people can do to reduce such problems. Global effects are the products of local actions. The strategy of “Think globally, act locally” is an effort to restore in people a sense of efficacy so that they can make a difference.

The psychological barriers created by beliefs of collective powerlessness are more demoralizing and debilitating than are external impediments. People who have a sense of collective efficacy will mobilize their efforts and resources to surmount the obstacles to the changes they seek, but those convinced of their collective powerlessness will cease trying even though changes are attainable through perseverant collective effort.

6. USING PSYCHOSOCIAL MODELS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Miguel Sabido adopted the generic modeling principles and creatively applied them to promote individual and society-wide change. His translation of theory into practice was remarkably inventive. The fields of psychology and communications provided some of the basic principles, and Miguel’s ingenuity converted this knowledge into engrossing serial dramas.
**ELEMENTS OF DRAMATIC SERIALS**

The basic principles guiding the construction of the dramatic serials are:

- **Prestigious Modeling.** Culturally admired television models exhibit the beneficial styles of behavior. Social attraction increases the impact of modeling influences.

- **Similarity Modeling.** Characters representing different segments of the viewing population are shown adopting the beneficial attitudes and behavior patterns. Seeing people similar to oneself succeed enhances the power of modeling.

- **Transitional Modeling.** The episodes include positive models exhibiting beneficial lifestyles, negative models exhibiting detrimental lifestyles, and transitional models changing from detrimental to beneficial styles of behavior.

- **Contrasting Modeling.** Contrasting modeling highlights the personal and social effects of different lifestyles. Viewers draw inspiration from seeing others change their lives for the better.

**Deep Involvement.** People get deeply involved in the lives of the models. In a serial in Tanzania, women spotted a negative model at a market and drove him out under a rain of tomatoes. In India, 400,000 viewers sent letters supporting, advising, or criticizing the various models in the drama. In Peru, 10,000 people showed up for a filming of a fictional marriage of two of the characters in the drama.

**Vicarious Motivators.** The benefits of the favorable practices, and the costs of the detrimental ones, are vividly depicted. Depicted outcomes provide incentives for change.

**Attentional Involvement.** Melodramatic and other emotional devices are used to sustain high involvement in the dramatic presentations. Continuing involvement increases the impact of serial dramas.

**Symbolic Coding Aids.** Epilogues and summarization of the modeled messages are used to underscore the importance of social practices that are enacted, and to enhance their recallability.

**Environmental Supports.** It is of limited value to motivate people for change if they do not have the needed resources and environmental supports to realize those changes. Environmental guides and supports are provided to expand and sustain the changes promoted by the media.

**Dual Path of Influence.** In fostering large-scale changes, communications systems operate through two pathways. In the direct pathway, communications media promote changes by informing, enabling, motivating, and guiding participants. In the socially-mediated pathway, media influences are used to link participants to social networks and community settings. These places provide continued personalized guidance, as well as natural incentives and social supports for desired changes. The major share of behavior change is promoted within these social milieus.

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6.1 Enabling Storytelling

Sabido-style serial dramas are not soap operas. In soap operas, characters are endlessly entangled in social conflicts and moral predicaments, and the sleazy side of life. Both Sabido-style serial dramas and soap operas involve storytelling, but each tells different types of stories, serving markedly different purposes. To call Sabido-style serial dramas “soap operas” trivializes their markedly different structure and function. Sabido-style serial dramas are also not superficial media campaigns marketing quick fixes to intractable social problems.

Rather, these serial dramas use the social cognitive model to dramatize the everyday social problems people struggle with, model suitable solutions, and provide people with incentives, support, and strategies for bettering their lives. Sabido-style serial dramas do not simply try to change attitudes. Attitudes often bear weak relation to behavior. When self-interest conflicts with attitudes, people readily find excuses not to act on their attitudes. They justify exemptions to them. The enabling dramatizations further help people achieve changes by linking them to enabling and supportive subcommunities and beneficial human services.

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6.2 Sociocultural Applications

There are many illustrations of how dramatic serials have been used to alleviate society-wide problems.

6.2.1 Literacy enhancement

Miguel’s initial application was designed to improve literacy in Mexico. In an effort to reduce illiteracy, the government
had launched a national self-study program. People who were skilled at reading were urged to organize small self-study groups in which they would teach others how to read with instructional material developed for this purpose. It was a fine idea, but few people took advantage of it.

A prior study revealed three perceived impediments to enrolling in the national program:

- Critical period barrier. Some believed that reading skills could be acquired only when one is young. Since they passed the critical period, they could no longer learn to read.
- Low efficacy barrier. Many others believed that they lacked the ability to master such a complex skill.
- Self-unworthiness barrier. Still others felt that an educated person would have little interest in devoting time to them.

A popular soap opera star played the role of the instructor. She persuades characters representing different segments of the population – adolescents, young adults, middle-aged, and the elderly – to join the self-study group. This diversity builds in assumed similarity. The characters representing the different groups voice the dissuading beliefs, which the instructor corrects as she persuades them that they have the ability to succeed. The programs included humor, conflict, and engrossing discussions of the subjects being read during the literacy training sessions. The episodes showed the models struggling in the initial phases of learning and then gaining progressive mastery and self-pride in their accomplishments.

- Melodramatic embellishments and emotive music gave dramatic intensity to the episodes to ensure high attentional involvement of the viewers.
- As vicarious motivators, the program depicted the benefits of literacy for personal development and national efficacy and pride.
- To facilitate a transfer of change, the series often used real-life settings showing the actors obtaining the instructional material from an actual distribution center and eventually graduating in an actual graduation ceremony. The epilogues informed the viewers of this national self-education program and encouraged them to take advantage of it.

Results:

- Millions of viewers watched this series faithfully.
- Compared to non-viewers, viewers of the dramatic series were much more informed about the national literacy program, and expressed more positive attitudes about helping each other to learn.

- The rate of the enrollment in the national self-instruction program was 99,000 in the year preceding the televised series and 840,000 the year of the series.
- As people develop the competencies that improve their lives, they serve as models, inspirations, and even tutors for others. This concomitant social influence can extend the direct impact of televised modeling. In the year following the series, another 400,000 people enrolled in the self-instruction program.

6.2.2 Family planning

Miguel Sabido’s second serial drama was developed to promote family planning to reduce population growth.

A creative format of contrast modeling portrayed the process and benefits of family planning. The story line centered on the lives of married sisters and their daughters. The positive family life of a small family, whose wife worked in a family planning clinic, was contrasted with that of a married sister burdened by a huge family and the accompanying impoverishment and distress.

Much of the drama focused on the married daughter from the huge family, who herself, was beginning to experience severe marital conflicts and distress over a rapidly expanding family. In an emotional scene, the daughter voices her distress over the course her family life is taking.

Consultation with the aunt served as the vehicle for modeling a great deal of information on how to manage marital discord, machismo behavior, and male resistance to contraception and family planning, as well as how to communicate openly in the family, and escape the many problems experienced by a family overburdened with children.

The young couple served as the transitional models. They were shown gaining control over their family life with the help of a family planning center, and experiencing the accompanying benefits. A priest occasionally appeared in the epilogues, emphasizing the need for responsible family planning.

At the end of some of the programs, viewers were informed about existing family planning services, to facilitate media-promoted changes.

Results:

- Family planning centers reported a 32 percent increase in new contraceptive users, over the number for the previous year.
National sales of contraceptives rose, between 4 percent and 7 percent in the preceding 2 years. They increased by 23 percent, in the year the program was aired.

6.2.3 Family planning and reproductive health

Tanzania provided a unique opportunity to test the effectiveness of serial dramas. The Sabido-style radio serial drama, *Twende na Wakati* (“Let’s Go With the Times”) was broadcast in all but one region of the country. The non-broadcast region served as a control.

Results:
- The broadcast area had a substantial increase in the number of new families adopting family planning methods, compared to the control region. Adoption of family planning methods also increased when the serial drama was later broadcast in the control area.
- There was a dose-response effect. The greater the exposure and involvement in the dramatic series, the more the marital partners discussed the need to control family size and the higher the rate of adoption of family planning methods.
- The fertility rate declined more in the 2-year period of the serial drama than in the previous 30 years, without any change in socioeconomic conditions, and little change in death rate.
- Seventeen segments were included to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. In Tanzania, HIV/AIDS is transmitted heterosexually, often by long-distance truckers, who have sex with prostitutes in truck-stop hubs. About 60 percent of these prostitutes are infected with HIV/AIDS. About a third of the truck drivers are also infected. The common belief in Tanzania was that HIV/AIDS is transmitted by mosquitoes. So, to avoid HIV/AIDS, the truckers were dousing themselves with insect repellent – while engaging in risky sex. The radio serial drama quickly debunked the false belief that mosquitoes transmit HIV/AIDS, or that having sexual intercourse with a virgin cures AIDS.
- There was a substantial increase in condom use in the broadcast area. Listeners also reported a reduction on the number of sexual partners, and sharing of razors and needles, as a result of exposure to the dramatic serial.

Contrast modeling was used in *Twende na Wakati*. The negative trucker model engages in risky sex with multiple partners. A positive trucker model adopts safer sex practices, and cuts back on the number of partners. A transitional model begins with risky practices, and adopts safer ones. The two models, using the safer practices, try to talk their friend into changing his risky ways. He refuses. His wife fears that she will get infected. The community pools its resources to assist the wife to start a business. She splits from her husband, who eventually gets infected and dies of AIDS.

6.2.4 Family size and land inheritance

A Sabido-style radio serial drama in Kenya, *Ushikwapo Shikamana* (“If Assisted, Assist Yourself”) addressed issues of inheritance of land and the impoverishing effect of large families. The contrast modeling involves two brothers. One has a wife, a son, and several daughters. The other brother has multiple wives, nine sons, and even more daughters. They squabble over how to pass on the inherited family farm.

In Kenya, only sons can inherit property. The monogamous brother argues that his lone male heir is entitled to half the land; the polygamous brother insists on dividing the farm into ten small plots, which would keep them all impoverished. This drama serves as a vehicle for modeling the social and economic benefits of family planning.

In another subplot, parents want their young daughter to quit school, be circumcised, and be married off to an arranged partner. Her teacher pleads with the parents to allow her to continue her education, which she desperately desires.

Results:
- Contraceptive use increased by 58 percent, and family size preference declined by 24 percent.
- The more people listened to the program, the more they talked to their spouse about family planning, and the higher the rate of adoption of contraceptive methods.
- Charles Westhoff, a demographer at Princeton, conducted the analyses. After he applied multiple controls for ethnicity, religion, education, rural-urban residence, life-cycle status, and number of wives, his analysis showed that the serial drama remained as a major contributor to Kenya’s declining birthrate and reduction in the rate of population growth.

6.2.5 Women’s status and gender equity

A Sabido-style serial drama in China was developed to address discriminatory gender norms and societal practices. The serial drama showed how educated daughters can be providers for their parents.

The story line addressed arranged marriages, coerced pregnancy, son preference, and women’s self-determination.
The drama graphically portrayed the tragedy and injustice of social practices that force women into arranged marriages they do not want, and preference for sons.

In this serial drama, a father is desperate to receive a dowry payment so he can buy a bride for his son, his pride and joy. He demands that his daughter agree to an arranged marriage to an arrogant man of means. She resists, because she is in love with a musician of modest means. But to spare her younger sister, whom the father targets next, she eventually agrees to the arranged marriage.

As the story unfolds, the daughter gives birth to a girl. Her husband demands she get pregnant again, to bear him a son. She leaves him, marries the musician, and pursues a successful career. She becomes an admired national model for women's personal development and self-determination. This serial drama won six awards, one of them equivalent to an Emmy award.

6.2.6 Dowry and forced marriage

A Sabido-style television serial drama in India addressed the dowry system and forced child marriages to arranged partners. A model family adopts family planning practices and struggles against restrictive traditions to educate their daughters.

The drama centered on three generations of a lower-middle class family, who lived together in the same household. The themes included:
- Familial harmony, amidst differences among family members
- Equal educational opportunities and career options for women
- Gender bias in child rearing
- The detriment of the dowry system
- Choice in spouse selection
- Teenage marriage and parenthood
- Family planning to limit family size
- Community development

Some of the actors personified positive role models for gender equality; others were proponents of the traditional subservient role for women. Still others were transitional models. A famous Indian actor reinforced the modeled messages in epilogues.

Results:
- A random sample of viewers revealed that the televised modeling promoted attitudes supportive of gender equality and limiting family size.
- Viewers reported that they had learned from the program that
  - women should have equal opportunities and a say in decisions that affect their lives;
  - programs advancing the welfare of women should be encouraged;
  - cultural diversity should be respected;
  - family size should be limited.
- Interviews with village inhabitants revealed that the drama sparked serious public discussions about the broadcast themes. These discussions went beyond talk to collective community action to remove inequitable normative practices, and to improve their collective social future. One village sent a large poster letter to the broadcast center, signed by its inhabitants, stating that they will work to eradicate the practice of dowry and child marriages.
- The enrollment of girls in elementary and junior high schools rose from 10 percent to 38 percent.
- In another village, young boys and girls created a self-help action group to promote the changes modeled in the serial drama. Some of the subplots centered on preserving the environment. The serial drama motivated viewers to take collective action to improve sanitation, reduce potential health hazards, adopt fuel conservation practices, reduce pollution, and launch tree-planting campaigns.

These system-level effects illustrate how dramas that address the social problems that people face in enabling ways can build collective efficacy.

NOTES

CHAPTER 5

The Use of Formative Research in Entertainment-Education

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Photo by Wendi Stein
1. INTRODUCTION TO FORMATIVE RESEARCH

The Sabido method for entertainment-education differs from more casual attempts to change public opinion or behavior primarily through its carefully articulated methodology. This deliberate process begins with a thorough process of formative research, which lays the groundwork for the entertainment-education program.

Thomas W. Valente (Valente, 2002, page 57) defines formative research by saying it is “conducted before a program is designed in order to understand a population’s existing knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, values, motivations, norms, expectations, and practices. It ensures that (1) a promotional program is necessary, and (2) the messages created are appropriate for the need identified.” He adds that it is usually qualitative, although it could be, and sometimes is, quantitative.

Similarly, Sood, Menard, and Witte (Sood et al., 2004, page 133) speak of “a method of analyzing target audiences to determine their needs, desires, behaviors, and media usage in order to develop understandable, high-quality, culturally appropriate characters and storylines.”

In designing the fourth series of the popular entertainment-education program in South Africa (Soul City), program planners conducted 18 months of formative research that “included (1) stakeholder consultations, (2) literature reviews, (3) case studies of abused women and abusers, (4) general audience research, and (5) workshops with the National Network on Violence against Women (NNVAW)” (Usdin et al., 2004, page 156).

During Population Media Center’s development of two radio serial dramas in Ethiopia, the formative research focused on “. . .(1) defining the target audiences, (2) understanding the knowledge, attitudes and practices of the target audiences, and (3) ensuring that the issues were dealt with in a culturally relevant and appropriate manner” (Ryerson & Teffera, 2004, page 183).

These introductory definitions and descriptions of formative research identify a number of topics for study prior to the design of entertainment-education programming. We will explore those topics in the sections to follow. Then we will examine some of the tools commonly used in formative research, some of the logistical issues involved in the practical implementation of formative research, and we will conclude by looking at the relationship between formative research and evaluation research.

2. TOPICS OF FORMATIVE RESEARCH

Heidi Noel Nariman, in reviewing the Sabido methodology and its implementation in a number of studies, identifies these areas for formative research: (Nariman, 1993, pages 67 – 69)

- The Social Message
- The Role of Television in Society
- The Public Infrastructure
- The Television Infrastructure
- Format Characteristics
- The Target Audience

Nariman’s categories, with slight modifications, provide a useful beginning view of the topics that can be addressed in formative research.

2.1 The Social Message

The basic message(s) to be addressed by an entertainment-education program is determined outside the research context. It is a policy matter. For example, most of Population Media Center’s programs seek to promote three social goals:

1. Small families
2. Safe sex
3. Raising the status of women

Two of Miguel Sabido’s earliest entertainment-education serial dramas focused on literacy and family planning.

The decision to pursue a particular goal or to address a particular issue with an entertainment-education program may originate within governmental or nongovernmental agencies, or may be largely determined by the donor’s specific interests for issues. The initial identification of the social message or issue is only the beginning. Some of the initial formative research is directed at elaborating and specifying the message, as well as locating it within the culture that will host the programs.

Meena is an animated story about a South Asian girl. The Meena cartoons were developed by UNICEF in 1990 to promote girls’ rights and gender equity. In designing the Meena story lines, formative researchers found the status of young girls had a number of dimensions, even when talking about something as specific as discrimination in food distribution (McKee et al., 2004, page 340).
Climbing a forbidden tree, Meena picks a mango and brings it home to share with Raju. But after peeling the fruit, her mother gives the lion’s share to Raju. ‘Raju has got more than me!’ protests Meena. ‘He always gets more, that’s the way it is,’ her mother replies. ‘He’s a growing boy’ agrees her grandmother, ‘and he works hard.’ Stung at the implications that she doesn’t work hard, Meena challenges Raju to swap chores - and meals - for one whole day. Raju boasts he can easily handle Meena’s workload. But when it comes to getting up at dawn to light the fire and sweep the house, feed the chickens and collect the water, he’s soon worn out - and Meena makes her point. At the next meal, both Raju and Meena are given the same amount of food. (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, 13 minutes, 1993)

Produced by UNICEF, Fil-Cartoons and Ram Mohan Studios.

Key findings from formative research were that discrimination in food distribution was based on both quantity and quality. In poorer areas of South Asia, girls were deprived on both accounts, whereas in richer areas girls received less “quality” food (meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products). Both concepts were incorporated in the film. It was felt that boys “needed” more food because their work is outside and perceived as harder than girls’ domestic work. The story line therefore emphasized both the energy required for girls’ work and the fact that boys and girls, as growing children, have an equal need for, and right to, nutritious food (McKee et al., 2004, page 340).

In discussing the formative research for Aahat, a six-episode, 60-minute television serial drama broadcast in Pakistan in 1991, Piotrow and de Fossard identified one particular cultural element as central to entertainment-education aimed at addressing reproductive health concerns:

The main social norm that affects reproductive health is related to gender. The inferior status of women takes such forms as the lack of equal decision-making power in the family, a prevailing preference for male children (which contributes substantially to higher desired fertility and family size), dowry payments in some countries, property ownership and inheritance laws that deprive women of their own or family resources, lack of education, limited access to health care, and inadequate nutrition (Piotrow & de Fossard, 2004, page 46).

Excerpt from Aahat

Rabia: You are a selfish man, Amir. You care only for yourself.
Amir: I don’t like to hear this rubbish.
Rabia: This is not rubbish. It’s a matter of me and my children’s life. I won’t let them be ruined…. I still have enough strength to take my children and myself away from you.

While the central message to be promoted was reproductive health, the formative research made it clear this issue could not be discussed without addressing the overall context: in this case, gender equality. For example, it would be necessary to address the issue of the status of women in order to have a serious impact on reproductive health. At the same time, the formative research identified a dramatic avenue into the topic of reproductive health: the inferior status of women.

It is important to recognize that formative research, as it functions within entertainment-education programs, needs to be formative, not confirmatory. As McKee, Aghi, Carnegie, and Shahzadi point out, “The formative research approach in Meena is not regarded merely as a tool for pretesting preconceived concepts and images with the target audience. Before the materials are designed, the researchers go to communities to determine their attitudes and perceptions on each issue” (McKee et al., 2004, page 339). Formative research is very much a part of the creative process that results in entertainment-education programming.

2.2 The Role of Media in Society

Since entertainment-education functions through some form of mass media – radio, television, comics, etc. – it can only be effective if the target population can be reached through the medium chosen. Another function of formative research is to determine which media are used by different target groups within the society.

Often this aspect of formative research will involve listener or viewer studies. For example, what percentage of the target population watches television or listens to the radio. Going beyond overall numbers, formative research should also examine who the viewers or listeners are. Specifically, is the target population (e.g., young mothers) reached by the medium in question?
The research typically goes even further. How does the audience use the medium? What do they want to get from it? For example, Vicki Beck reports on an analysis conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of data from two surveys (1999 and 2000) to better understand what US audiences were learning about health from entertainment television shows:

The vast majority of regular viewers (who watch daytime or prime-time shows two or more times a week) consider television their main source of health information. Daytime drama viewers (nearly one out of five respondents) reported television as their main source of health information more often than prime-time viewers (about one-half of all respondents). Nearly half of all regular television viewers reported they learned about health from television shows. Up to one-half of the viewers took some action as a result, with African-American women more likely than others to take action after they heard about a health topic on a television entertainment show. Interpersonal discussion is one important outcome of viewing health information on television shows. Many Healthstyle respondents who were regular viewers said they discussed the health topics with others, and some took action to prevent the problem, told someone else to do something, called for further information, or visited a medical doctor or health clinic (Beck, 2004, page 216).

In a similar vein, esteemed entertainment-education researcher Everett Rogers reports on several studies indicating that large numbers of Americans today seek health information from the Internet. Several of these studies went even further to specify what Internet users want to learn about (e.g., breast cancer) (Rogers, 2004 pages 288 – 289).

This type of information can help entertainment-education programmers to determine which medium to use for each target audience, for each specific issue to be addressed by the program. Such detailed analyses can also guide entertainment-education programmers regarding what topics are most appropriately addressed by any specific medium – or what topics are not appropriate for that medium – for each target audience.

2.3 The Public Infrastructure

Typically, entertainment-education aims to change the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals in a society: increasing use of family planning, reducing spousal abuse, increasing literacy, etc. The target individuals, however, live their lives within particular social structures that may or may not support the intended changes.

If the intention is to increase the use of family planning services, it is important to understand how many family planning service centers exist and where they are located. What are the auspices under which those centers operate: governmental, or private? Are services provided free, or for a charge? To what extent will the centers cooperate with the entertainment-education producers?

If the aim is to increase literacy, what educational facilities are available to support that aim? There is little value in making people want to read if there is no one to teach them or if they cannot afford the classes. Formative research should determine whether the necessary physical and organizational infrastructures are present in the target society.

The relevant infrastructure can also include the support of public officials and other leaders for a given topic or issue. Two aspects of formative research can come together in the interaction with public agencies and individuals. On the one hand, such interactions can determine the level of support for the entertainment-education program goals. On the other hand, such interactions can also provide insights into the different perspectives with which the program content will have to connect. McKee, Aghi, Carnegie, and Shahzadi speak to this in their discussion of the formative research that was used in the development of the Meena cartoons (see Figure 2).

The research process for Meena’s creation was one of the most extensive exercises in formative research in the history of development communication. Over an 11-year period, hundreds of focus groups and in-depth interviews were held with over 10,000 girls and boys, parents, and other community members. Parents can support girls to go to school, but school facilities and good teachers are needed to deliver quality education. Broad involvement of different groups of respondents ensures that multiple perspectives are taken into account to build a consensus of views (McKee et al., 2004, page 339).
2.4 The Media Infrastructure

Since entertainment-education programs are broadcast over the mass media, it is vital that the producers understand the organization of these media in the target society. Sometimes, the media are fully-owned and operated by the government, and sometimes they are run by independent, nonprofit organizations, and other times they function as part of a market economy, supported financially through commercial advertising. Sometimes the media in a given society may operate through more than one of these models.

Formative research will tell the program planners whose support and/or approval will be needed if the programs are to be presented to the public and how such support can be gained. Perhaps government approval will be needed, or commercial sponsors may need to be enrolled in the project. Inevitably, the formative research will also lead to an element of selling the program and enlisting support. In case after case, formative researchers report conducting conferences and workshops with government officials and community leaders, learning about who controls the media, and simultaneously getting those influential people involved in selling the project to others. While market researchers

and political pollsters should always resist sponsors’ requests to combine data gathering with sales pitches, the formative research typically associated with entertainment-education projects may reasonably blur that boundary.

Often, the careful examination of how the media function in a particular society will yield insights that can avoid unpleasant surprises later on. For example, the formative research should provide information relevant to the likely costs of cast members in radio or television dramas. This would be critical for budgeting purposes. A full examination of the subject of salaries, however, may reveal that a successful show will result in the actors becoming celebrities, able to command higher salaries in subsequent years. This kind of insight would also be extremely useful for budgeting.

2.5 Format Characteristics

Although the mass media have played a powerful role in spreading Western culture into non-Western societies around the world, there is a risk of overestimating the homogeneity of media cultures. As Heidi Nariman cautions, “Each country may have its own style of soap opera. An understanding of the
basics of this style allows for the subtle adaptation of its key attributes in order to accommodate the social message. Such attributes include cast, crew, props, emotional pacing, music, costumes, director’s cuts, dialogue, and scheduling” (Nariman, 1993, page 53).

Formative research can be used to help create programming content that appropriately reflects both of the E’s in entertainment-education. McKee, Aghi, Carnegie, and Shahzadi describe how formative research was used in developing both the entertainment and educational elements of the *Meena* series:

Formative research was used to ascertain that each episode of the *Meena* series maintains the delicate balance and dynamic tension between education and entertainment in stories that appeal to both children and adults. Particular care was needed to prevent the film episodes from becoming overloaded with message content, or, alternatively, to ensure that a serious issue was not treated flippantly (McKee et al., 2004, page 339).

2.6 Target Audience

Many of the examples given above reflect on the target audience for a program, including the culture within which they live – the cultural practices that the entertainment-education program is intended to change. There are some other, perhaps mundane, aspects of this area of formative research. What are the demographic characteristics of the target audience, such as sex and age distributions? What are their educational levels, religious affiliations, languages spoken, typical family size, and so forth? The program goals will determine many of the demographic dimensions relevant for measuring. This is only the beginning, however.

Albert Bandura, whose social cognitive theory powerfully influenced the Sabido method, suggests that media can influence behavior both directly and through elements in the social system within which the media consumers live their lives. It is in this latter respect that it becomes essential for entertainment-educators to understand the beliefs, values, and norms of the pre-existing culture. Bandura then describes the beginning stages of research. “In this formative phase, focus groups, representing various constituencies in the society, identify problems of major concern to them and the obstacles they face. These data provide the culturally relevant information for developing realistic characters and engrossing functional plot lines” (Bandura, 2004, page 87).

For example, *Meena*’s creators came to realize they should not refer to the “tradition” of boys being given more food than girls, because tradition was generally regarded as something to be revered and preserved. When *Meena*’s grandmother wanted to assert that something was traditional, she would simply say, “That’s the way it is” (McKee et al., 2004, page 340).

Alternatively, the results of formative research may indicate a lack of conflict with the existing culture. Rasha Abdulla reports on the results of an oral rehydration therapy (ORT) campaign in Egypt: “There were no competing or contradicting messages to the medical and health information provided in the television spots. Furthermore, the campaign did not contradict, in any way, with any religious or social norms that could have impeded its reception” (Abdulla, 2004, pages 308 – 309). In this project, the formative research also determined which containers were available for use by the rural, target population, and helped in the design of the sachets to be distributed, as well as in designing a logo for the product (a mother holding her baby) (Abdulla, 2004, pages 308 – 309).

Formative research on the target audience provides information on what characters should look like, what they should wear, how they should talk and what their villages or cities look like. Some researchers have even recorded village sounds for use in radio programs, or used detailed descriptions of household furnishings to design sets for recording of television drama.

3. FORMATIVE RESEARCH TOOLS

Sood, Menard, and Witte identify several tools available for the purposes of formative research: “surveys, focus group interviews, analyses of demographic/health data, collaborative workshops, field observations, and pilot testing with a sample of the target audience” (Sood et al., 2004, page 133).

Formative research can utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods. In 1988, the Turkish Family Health and Planning Foundation (TFHPF) was the first organization in Turkey to use mass media to educate people about the population problem. Qualitative formative research, including focus group interviews with men and women throughout Turkey, showed that many Turkish women want fewer children, but that lack of adequate family planning information and services, along with the husband’s opposition to use of family planning, pose obstacles to family planning practice (Yaser, 2004, pages 321 – 322).
Other results from TFHPF’s formative research in Turkey revealed that:
1. while 60-70 percent of women are literate, fewer than 30 percent read a newspaper daily;
2. about 85 percent of women listen to their own or someone else’s radio for an average of slightly more than one hour daily; and
3. nearly all women (93 percent) watch their own or someone else’s television set for an average of more than three hours daily (Yaser, 2004, page 323).

In developing the Meena series, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect formative research data on every aspect of the program. McKee, Aghi, Carnegie, and Shahzadi report that “Meena was formulated through formative research over a two-year period – hundreds of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were carried out on the concepts, characters, images, names, themes, and draft storylines” (McKee et al., 2004, page 337).

In Ethiopia, Population Media Center used five different formative research techniques (both qualitative and quantitative) to create two radio serials aimed at supporting small families, safe sex, and raising the status of women:

1. Interviews were conducted with experts in the fields of family planning, sexually transmitted diseases, status of women, culture and environment.
2. A literature review of all relevant studies was done, which led to a report that was understandable by the non-technically trained creative team.
3. Thirty-four focus group discussions were conducted by a local agency, Birhan Research. Excerpts from the discussions were useful in writing the scripts, and the audiotapes were useful for the writers and producers to get a sense of how individuals sound when they talk about certain subjects.
4. A total of 1,020 personal interviews were conducted with a sample of people from different regions, urban and rural, and men and women of different ages and marital status. This included issues related to the influence of the culture on sexual and reproductive decision-making, feelings of self-efficacy with regard to these issues, insight into the interpersonal dynamics of married couples, and other issues. A research agency was commissioned to design the interview questionnaire, using examples from other countries as a starting point and adapting them to the specific cultures of Ethiopia.
5. The producers and writers visited rural villages in order to get a sense of what life is like in those settings, to record village sounds, to learn what topics people discuss, and to obtain a sense of what the clinics and other health/social services are like (Ryerson & Tefera, 2004, pages 183 – 184).

The formative researchers also gathered Ethiopian proverbs that reflect negative attitudes toward women and children, which were used by scriptwriters as a source of material in the entertainment-education dramas (Ryerson, page 184).

At the outset of this section, I mentioned that both quantitative and qualitative techniques can contribute to effective formative research. Within quantitative research methods, there is another distinction reflected in the previous examples that should be identified: hard and soft data, corresponding roughly with behaviors and attitudes. There is a difference, for example, between the percentage of women who are in favor of modern birth control techniques and the percentage who use them. This distinction is evident when we look at the relationship between formative research and evaluation research.

4. RELATIONSHIP TO EVALUATION RESEARCH

Another chapter in this volume will discuss evaluation research, but it is worth noting here the need to coordinate formative and evaluation research.

Often, the formative research will help specify the likely or desired impacts of the program. In the case of encouraging family planning, for example, Population Media Center’s formative research in Ethiopia revealed that condoms were not only provided in family planning centers but also in small shops. As a consequence, some of the radio programs involved the purchase of condoms in such corner shops. In addition, the formative research indicated that simply monitoring the distribution of condoms by family planning centers would miss some of the potential impact of the radio programs.

The formative research can help the evaluation researchers (who may be the same people, of course) to determine the most appropriate evaluation designs for the entertainment-education program: experimental models, correlation studies, and/or the monitoring of longitudinal changes, for example. The formative research may also shed light on the need for additional hard (behavioral) data or soft (attitudinal) data. In some cases, it may be appropriate to evaluate process variables (e.g., audience size) or outcome variables (e.g., reduced birth rates).

Formative research is an indispensable part of the Sabido method for entertainment-education programming. It can mean the difference between making a valiant effort and actually accomplishing something worthwhile.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER 6

Monitoring
Entertainment-
Education Programs

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Rare Radio

Photo by Katie Elmore
1. INTRODUCTION

Adaptive management (AM) is a strategy to learn how to improve interventions, such as entertainment-education (E-E) programs, through the use of formative research, project monitoring, and impact evaluation (Salafsky et al., 2002). Organizations utilizing AM develop research systems as part of a learning strategy to develop insights into their work, continuously assess their assumptions and processes, and adapt their strategies to evolving circumstances (Senge, 2006, Jenks et al., 2009). Figure 1 shows one version of AM that has been widely adopted by the biodiversity conservation community (Conservation Measures Partnership, 2007).

Research is embedded throughout the five steps in AM and corresponds to the three types of research that E-E programs have utilized since their inception (Nariman, 1993; Singhal & Rogers, 1999). Earl Babbie addresses formative research (called situation analysis in Figure 1) in Chapter 5 of this manual, and Arvind Singhal addresses impact research in Chapter 7 of this manual. The focus of this chapter is on monitoring research.

Figure 1: Schematic of the Conservation Measures Partnership (2007) version of Adaptive Management called the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation

Monitoring research is defined here as research that is conducted, analyzed and the results incorporated into feedback to refine the E-E program while the program is being implemented. Monitoring research shares goals and some methods with both formative research and with impact research. A key difference is that monitoring research is conducted in “real time” while the E-E program is being broadcast. Therefore, the results of monitoring research can and should be used to guide programmatic decisions while the E-E program is being implemented. Because most creative teams are not used to working with researchers, great care must be taken by the researchers to present their monitoring findings in a way that the creative team can understand and make use of the information, and not feel threatened by the results. Many E-E programs are long running and in some cases they may be broadcast for many years. The Tanzanian radio drama, Twende na Wakati (“Let’s Go With the Times”) began broadcasting in 1993 and was still on the air some 15 years later in 2008 (Rogers, et al., 1999; Njogu, 2008). The long-running nature of these programs provides ample time for monitoring research to be used to drive program development and makes it especially important that researchers not wait until the conclusion of a program to determine efficacy.

2. GOALS FOR MONITORING RESEARCH

There are four distinct goals for monitoring research:

1. **Process Monitoring**: To determine the timeliness and the quality of each of the planned activities of the E-E program as it is implemented.

2. **Reach/Rating Monitoring**: To measure reach (the number of people that are exposed to the E-E program) and to calculate a rating (the percent of the population that is exposed to the E-E program). It is also important to measure frequency of exposure to E-E programs.

3. **Audience Perception Monitoring**: To determine how audience members are reacting to the characters, the storylines, and to the educational content of the E-E program.

4. **Preliminary Impact Monitoring**: To gain preliminary measure(s) of the impact of the E-E program on audience members’ knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (the so-called KAP variables).
2.1 Process Monitoring

Step 2 of the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) Open Standards (Figure 1) is to write monitoring and operational plans. These plans should establish a schedule for all of the major activities, including such things as:

- Funding milestones
- Training workshops
- Research activities (including formative, monitoring and impact research activities)
- Adoption of important documents, (e.g., memorandum of understandings, values grids, characterizations, story lines, scripts)
- Broadcast milestones (e.g., first episodes produced, first date of broadcast), etc.

Process monitoring is a way to track each of these events in terms of their (1) timeliness of implementation and (2) quality of execution. It is possible to create metrics and indicators for both timeliness and quality, and then score them on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). These scores can be tracked and updated either weekly or monthly to provide a process scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 2001) that allows for a simple and systematic reporting system. An example of such a scorecard is given in Figure 2. As is illustrated in Figure 2, activities can be color-coded so that supervisors can easily see where programs are having trouble and require additional support. Adopting the color scheme of a traffic light, any score of 2 or lower is flagged in red (signaling to “stop and correct”), a 3 is shown in yellow (signaling a warning), and any score of 4 or higher is displayed in green (signaling that the metric is “good to go”).

**Figure 2: Example of a scorecard for an E-E radio program. It is filled in as if the date was January 31, 2009, so some activities have not yet been implemented.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature review completed</td>
<td>1/1/09</td>
<td>± 1 week</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Read and evaluated by Professor X at University Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Expert interviews completed</td>
<td>1/15/09</td>
<td>± 1 week</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Read and evaluated by Professor X at University Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 focus groups conducted and reports written</td>
<td>1/30/09</td>
<td>± 1 week</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Read and evaluated by Professor X at University Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 episodes pretested, report written</td>
<td>3/31/09</td>
<td>± 2 weeks</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Read and evaluated by Professor X at University Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring plan written</td>
<td>1/1/09</td>
<td>± 1 week</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Read and reviewed by team leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinic intake questionnaire developed</td>
<td>1/10/09</td>
<td>± 1 week</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Read and reviewed by team leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinic personnel trained in administering clinic questionnaire</td>
<td>3/15/09</td>
<td>± 1 month</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Average score on test by clinic personnel after they are trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend survey #1</td>
<td>9/15/09</td>
<td>± 1 month</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Read and evaluated by Professor X at University Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend survey #2</td>
<td>3/15/10</td>
<td>± 1 month</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Read and evaluated by Professor X at University Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Responsible Party</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline survey completed and analyzed</td>
<td>3/15/09</td>
<td>± 1 month</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Read and evaluated by Professor X at University Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-program survey completed and analyzed</td>
<td>3/15/11</td>
<td>± 1 month</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Read and evaluated by Professor X at University Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values grid finalized</td>
<td>2/15/09</td>
<td>± 1 week</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Read and reviewed by team leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterization workshop</td>
<td>2/20/09</td>
<td>± 1 week</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Workshop participant evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors trained in workshop</td>
<td>3/15/09</td>
<td>± 1 week</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Workshop participant evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st 4 episodes produced</td>
<td>3/15/09</td>
<td>± 1 week</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Direct observation using score-sheet by team leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 sponsors fund raising SX</td>
<td>4/1/09</td>
<td>± 1 month</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Amount of money donated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOU signed</td>
<td>1/1/09</td>
<td>± 1 month</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Read and reviewed by team leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract signed with radio station</td>
<td>1/15/09</td>
<td>± 1 month</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Read and reviewed by team leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreements finalized with medical partners</td>
<td>3/15/09</td>
<td>± 1 month</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Partner satisfaction survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts signed with creative team</td>
<td>3/1/09</td>
<td>± 1 month</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Read and reviewed by team leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.1.1 Participant evaluations

Many of the activities done to implement an E-E program will be group activities, including such things as training workshops, stakeholder meetings, and review meetings. A standard way to measure the quality of such meetings is to utilize a participant evaluation at the conclusion of the activity. Questions on the evaluation should assess how participants reacted to the content of the presentations made during the meeting, and whether they felt their input was heard and valued. Participants should be given the opportunity to both rate and comment on all aspects of the meeting/workshop in which they participated. There should always be an opportunity for participants to suggest how the meeting/workshop might have been improved, allowing a means to make the next one better. Participant evaluations should be done anonymously with the option for the participant to include their name if they desire.

### 2.1.2 Partner satisfaction surveys

Partnerships are central to the success of most E-E programs and partnership failures can threaten the success of E-E projects. The main reason that partnerships fail is due to a lack of, or poor quality of, communication among partners. The use of partner satisfaction surveys provides a formal means for partners to communicate how they feel the partnership is functioning. Questions in these surveys should provide a means for partners to assess the program, the staff, the administration, the level of communication among partners, and the timeliness and quality of execution of program activities. As always in AM, partners should be asked how the partnership might be improved. These surveys should be administered periodically, perhaps annually. It is usually impossible to guarantee anonymity in partner surveys because of the limited number of people involved, but this can be ameliorated by using a third party to conduct the surveys.

Both participant evaluations and partner satisfaction surveys can be conducted using online survey tools, such as SurveyMonkey (http://www.surveymonkey.com/). These online tools are easy to use, are inexpensive, provide for a greater degree of anonymity for respondents, and allow respondents to participate wherever they can access the Internet. They also reduce the amount of time required and
error rates associated with data input. Most online tools have only minimal data analysis tools, but they are normally adequate for analyzing and reporting on these sorts of evaluations.

2.1.3 Expert reviews

Some technical documents, such as research reports, may require expert and/or peer reviews. The Program Director may need to provide guidance for what constitutes quality in these reports, as it is likely that the experts may never have read reports developed for E-E programs before. The central feature of any report on an EE program is that it provides useful feedback to the E-E program.

2.1.4 Direct observation

Some activities will be best evaluated for quality by direct observation of the activity by the researcher (Fisher et al., 1991), perhaps using a scorecard to assess particular aspects of it. An example of an activity that would be evaluated by direct observation might include recording sessions.

2.2 Reach/Rating Monitoring

For a mass media E-E program to have an impact, it must have a large audience. Further, the audience must (1) be comprised of the key people that the program is designed to reach (the so-called target audience), (2) attend to the program often enough so that they can follow the story line and understand the roles that the characters play and observe the consequences of their actions, and (3) be large enough so that the impact of the program can be measured at the population level.

Reach is defined as the size of the audiences, in absolute numbers, who listen to, read, view or otherwise access the E-E program in a given period of time. When reach is stated as a fraction of a given population (for example “25% of adults living in the broadcast area that ever listen to radio”) it is called a rating (Davis, 1997). For any given viewer, they have been “reached” by the work if they have viewed it at all (for a specified minimum amount of time) during a specified period. Multiple viewings by a single member of the audience in the specified period does not increase reach, but may increase the likelihood of the program having an impact on the audience member (Rogers et al., 1999). Therefore, for E-E programs it is important to measure both reach and frequency of exposure. Typically, frequency is assessed as “the average number of episodes the respondent viewed/listened to in a typical week during a specified period (e.g., the last 6 months).” Most methods to assess reach involve some form of surveying the population. Because surveys are time-consuming and expensive, there are a number of alternatives to reduce the time and cost of conducting them.

2.2.1 Ratings data

Ratings data may be collected by either broadcast stations or by independent research organizations. Ratings data are collected through the use of diaries kept by potential members of the target audience on their listening/viewership habits over a period of time, typically a week. Great care must be taken in selection of the households to ensure that they are representative of the total population of potential audience members. The selected households are asked to maintain a diary, using a structured format that records the time, station, and duration of listening/viewing. Because this method requires active and time-consuming participation by the respondents, remuneration of some sort is often required to encourage full and accurate responses to the diary. However, it is impossible to ensure the accuracy of the diaries or protect against people simply filling in the diaries at their convenience with false information. It is possible to establish an audience ratings system specific to the E-E program, and this method will reduce the time and energy required of respondents to ask them to record their listenership/viewing habits only during the time of broadcast of the E-E program.

A major drawback of most ratings services is that they only sample households that have a functioning radio or TV. Often, E-E programs are targeted to low socio-economic status households, many of which may not have a radio/TV, but whose occupants may listen to or watch the program at a public location or on a friend’s or family members’ set. Thus, ratings data collected in a traditional way may under-represent the size of the audience for E-E programs.

2.2.2 Survey data

In many developing countries, there are no ratings data collected either by broadcast organizations or by independent parties, or such information is only collected in urban centers, whereas the target audiences for many E-E programs are rural. In such a circumstance, it is advisable to use survey data to calculate reach/ratings and frequency of exposure.

There are many organizations that undertake surveys in developing countries for a variety of purposes and reasons. It is often possible to obtain space in the survey questionnaire to ask a few questions about exposure to and frequency of listenership/viewership to the E-E program. Examples of organizations that might offer such an opportunity include omnibus marketing surveys conducted by marketing
companies, national surveys conducted by government agencies and/or other nongovernmental agencies (NGOs), and even Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) in selected countries. DHS surveys are conducted with a great deal of expertise and may include a few questions about the E-E program for free. The major drawback of all of these options is that the E-E researcher will not have control over their timing, and many such surveys will not be truly nationally representative, but may be restricted to one or a few regions of the country, or to urban centers. However, even with these limitations such survey data may provide some useful information.

It is also possible to conduct independent mini-surveys. The advantage of conducting a mini-survey is that the E-E research team can control the timing, location, and content of the questionnaire instrument. This means that the mini-survey can not only include questions to assess reach and frequency of exposure, but also to help to assess audience perception of the program and preliminary impact of the program. The primary disadvantages of conducting a mini-survey are the costs and time commitment of implementing the survey. However, these constraints can be minimized by (1) keeping the sample size small (100 to 200 respondents), (2) restricting the geographic region of the survey, (3) using a convenience sampling method (rather than a more-rigorous probability sampling method), and (4) limiting the length of the questionnaire. All of these restrictions will place considerable constraints on the generalizability of the results, and will make the results incomparable with the larger pre/post impact surveys. However, if there are significant problems with the E-E program, these mini-surveys should help to identify them before the post-campaign survey is conducted at the conclusion of the program.

The frequency with which these mini-surveys are implemented will be constrained by budget and manpower limitations; however, they can be done as time and money allow. Consider undertaking them quarterly or semi-annually and conducting them in different regions each time.

2.2.3 Panel studies

There are two basic options for sampling strategies for these tracking surveys, panel studies, and trend studies (Singleton et al., 1993). Panel studies re-interview the same individual respondents in successive time periods. The main advantages of a panel design are that (1) it automatically controls for demographic and socio-economic factors, so it reduces the sampling error that is inherent in all surveys, especially surveys with small sample sizes, and most importantly (2) it allows the investigator to know exactly which individuals have changed (adopted a family planning method, for example) during the interval between surveys. This allows the investigator to ask the individuals who have changed their behavior about the reason(s) for this change in behavior, and may provide direct causal evidence of E-E program impact. The main limitations of panel designs are that (1) it can be time consuming to relocate individuals, and there may be a high dropout rate as people move or die, and (2) the act of being interviewed may also educate a respondent, and they may begin listening to the E-E drama because of the interview in which they were asked about the program, thereby biasing the reach/exposure data.

2.2.4 Trend studies

Tracking surveys that utilize independent samples of respondents in each survey are called trend studies. The main advantages of trend studies are that the researcher can maintain the same sample size in each survey and respondents are not biased by having been interviewed previously. The main disadvantages of trend studies are the relatively high sampling error, especially if the sample sizes are small, and that the researcher will only know that a certain percentage of people have changed their behavior, but he will not know which individuals have changed behavior.

A chronic problem of survey research is that respondents try to answer questions in a way that they think the interviewer wants them to respond. This can lead to a bias to say “yes” in response to any question about listenership/viewership to a program. One way to test for this bias is by asking both about the E-E program and about a completely fictitious program. In monitoring and impact research for an E-E radio program in Palau, researchers asked both about the E-E program (Changing Tides) and a fictitious radio program (Moon Rises at Dawn). In one tracking survey, listenership to Changing Tides was measured at 42 percent, while 8 percent of respondents reported having listened to Moon Rises at Dawn, suggesting that a more conservative (and likely accurate) assessment of listenership to Changing Tides was 36 percent (Vaughan, 2007).

A consistent finding about E-E programs is that one of their main effects is to stimulate interpersonal communication about the program and its educational content, including with non-listeners/viewers (Vaughan and Rogers, 2000). Even if respondents in a survey have never been directly exposed to the E-E program, they may have been exposed indirectly through discussions with others. Vaughan ( Vaughan et al., 2000) found in an E-E radio drama Apwé Plezi ("After the Pleasure [Comes the Pain]") in St. Lucia that 14 percent of non-listeners knew that Catapult was a brand of condom (a name that had been developed by the E-E creative team and the new Catapult condoms were not yet being distributed in St. Lucia); the only conceivable way these
non-listeners might have known the term Catapult was by talking with Apwé Plezi listeners. Surveys should try to assess whether non-listeners have been exposed to the E-E program through interpersonal communication.

2.3 Audience Perception Monitoring

A fundamental assumption of all E-E programs is that the educational messages developed by the creative team will be correctly interpreted and understood by the audience members. Because E-E messaging is done using Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1994) in which characters provide role models of alternative behaviors and the consequences of these behaviors, the opportunity for misinterpretation by some portion of the audience may be greater than when messaging is more didactic. The misidentification of a negative character as being the positive role model that should be emulated by audience members was first identified by Vidmar and Rokeach (1974) in a study of an American situation comedy, *All in the Family*. The lead character, Archie Bunker, was a bigoted reactionary, but some audience members perceived Archie to be a hero for standing up for the rights of white people. This same phenomenon has been found in E-E programs in Tanzania (Rogers et al., 1999) and St. Lucia ( Vaughan et al., 2000) in which negative characters were perceived by some portion of the audience as being the positive role models. For example, in the St. Lucian E-E radio program Apwé Plezi, Tony, one of the key negative characters who had committed a date rape, led an irresponsible sexual life and had become infected with HIV was initially perceived to be a “morally positive” character by many listeners. Fortunately, early monitoring research was able to identify this problem, and by increasing the (1) severity of Tony’s punishment and (2) the clarity of the link between his behavior and his punishment, this misperception declined over time.

2.3.1 In-depth interviews

The best method for assessing audience members’ perceptions of an E-E program, its characters, story line and its educational content is through in-depth interviews conducted with audience members using the ORID strategy (Archie & Archie, 2007). ORID stands for Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, and Decisional, and it simply provides a way to structure interview guides so that they are thorough and have a logical progression. The ORID approach can be applied to intercept interviews with members of the target audience and/or audience members.

**Objective:** Begin the interview with factual information questions, such as “What are some of the key ideas you understand from listening to the E-E radio drama?” or “Do you recall any specific names of characters that were in the drama?” The idea is to start the interview in a non-threatening and objective manner, and to make sure the respondent actually is a listener to the E-E drama and paid enough attention to it so that they may have been impacted by it.

**Reflective:** The second set of questions are intended to find out what the respondent’s immediate personal reaction was to the E-E drama, and most especially, to assess whether they have had an emotional response to it. The interview guide might ask questions such as “Was there anything in the E-E drama that surprised you?” or “Did anything in the E-E drama make you feel emotional in any way, such as being sad, angry, happy, or proud?” The interviewer would probe for what emotions they felt, and what in the E-E program made them feel that way.

**Interpretive:** The purpose of this group of questions is to understand how the respondent interprets the E-E drama. This is important because sometimes audience members will draw very different lessons from the E-E program than the creative team intended (see above). The interview guide might include questions such as “What do you think the radio drama was trying to say to you?” or “Did you learn anything from listening to this radio drama?” “Tell me what you learned.” This is also where the guide can assess listeners’ perceptions of individual characters with questions such as “What do you think about Tunu; did she do the right thing?”

**Decisional:** The final section of questions is designed to assess whether being exposed to the E-E drama has helped the listener make any decisions, or moved them at all along the stages of the behavior change continuum). This section might include questions such as “What can we do about the fact that Tunu doesn’t want to have a child right now?” or “Does seeing what happened to Mkwaju make you want to do something different in the future?” (Questions should include probes to find out what and why audience members would want to change.)

2.3.2 Focus group discussions

An alternative to in-depth interviews is to utilize focus group discussions as a monitoring research tool. Focus groups have the advantage of enabling a dialogue about the E-E program to be established, and information may emerge from this dialogue that the researcher may not have thought to ask about in an in-depth interview. For example, mixed-gender focus groups conducted in St. Lucia about the radio drama *Apwé Plezi* revealed that women and men had very different perceptions of some of the characters and educational issues that emerged only from the dialogue between male and female participants. Focus groups are normally comprised of 6 to 10 individuals who are similar enough to each other in socio-economic status that no one person will dominate
the conversation or be inhibited from expressing their views by others. Often this means grouping people by sex, age, religion, and other socio-demographic characteristics, but in some cultures it is possible to mix people more freely. A common tactic in focus groups is to play part or all of an episode of the E-E program, and then to design the interview guide to explore the group’s reaction to that particular episode. It is possible to structure focus group interview guides using the ORID approach, discussed above.

Focus groups are often used to pretest E-E programs. Pretesting is vital to the success of any program to make sure that the program will be popular with local audiences. Typically, either a pilot episode is produced or a small number (4 to 5) of full episodes are produced. These are then played in focus groups that represent various target audiences to solicit their reactions. Initially, in the pretest or in early focus groups used to monitor the program after it begins broadcasting, the questions may center primarily on production quality, for example questions would assess the:

- Quality of the recording (sound clarity)
- Quality of the acting
- Perceptions of the music
- Appeal of the story line
- Whether the accents and language sound “local”

Once the creative team is sure that their programs are connecting with audiences at this very basic level, the focus groups can be used to assess more important questions, such as:

- Whether the audience members identify with the characters, or see any of the characters as friends or being like themselves
- Whether the audience is engaging in para-social interactions with the characters
- How they perceive the positive, transitional and negative characters
- Whether the story line is appealing and interesting
- Whether the audience perceives any educational lessons in the program
- Whether the audience understands the link between a character’s actions and their fate in the program

In both focus groups and in-depth interviews, it is possible to employ a variety of techniques, in addition to asking ORID questions, to solicit feedback (Mytton, 1999). These include:

- Role playing in which the respondents are asked to assume the role of a character and act out a certain scene, or to describe how they might react to a situation.
- Reaction to photos, in which the respondents are asked to respond to photos that are shown to them, such as photos of a family planning clinic, or photos of one of the scenes/characters in a television E-E program.
- Reaction to a recording of an episode of the E-E program.
- Sentence completion, in which respondents are given part of a sentence and are asked to complete it. For example “The character Tunu is going to _____ her husband Mkwa.”
- Word association, where respondents are asked to say the first word that comes to their mind when they hear the names of the characters, or the title of the program.
- Obituary writing, where the respondents are asked to write the obituary for one or more of the characters.

2.3.3 Listener diaries

The main drawback of focus groups is that they are work intensive and can be time consuming and expensive to form, conduct, and analyze. An alternative is to recruit people to be dedicated listeners that agree to listen to every episode and maintain a diary that contains their reactions to the program. The researcher should provide them with a guide with a standard set of questions for them to answer about each episode. An example of such a guide is provided in Figure 3. These diaries must be collected regularly (perhaps monthly) and analyzed so that the creative team can use the feedback in a timely manner. The main drawback of this methodology is that the creative team is receiving repeated information from a small set of the same people. These listener diaries may be most useful at the start of an E-E program, and if they are used for very long, the research team may want to recruit a new set of listeners periodically so that they get feedback from a variety of different people. Further, it may
be required to remunerate the listeners to make sure that they are consistent in filling in the diaries. Over time, the research team can amend the diary questions to get specific feedback on characters, the story line, and the educational issues as they are developed.

**Figure 3: Example of a diary guide for listeners. Note, if each program has more than one scene, it may be necessary to ask these questions by scene rather than by episode.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of broadcast (month/day/year): ________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many people listened to the program with you including yourself? _____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1a. Using a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how would you rate the acting in this episode?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1b. Do you have any comments on the acting? Please indicate which actor your comment refers to.

2a. Using a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how would you rate the entertainment value in this episode?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2b. Do you have any comments on the entertainment value? What did you like and/or dislike about the entertainment value of this episode?

3a. Using a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how would you rate the educational value in this episode?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3b. Do you have any comments on the educational value? What did you like and/or dislike about the educational value of this episode?

3c. Did you feel you learned anything new from listening to this episode? If so, what did you learn?

4a. At the end of this episode, were you curious about what was going to happen next?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes-a lot</th>
<th>Yes-a bit</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4b. What do you hope will happen next?

5. How could this episode have been made better? Tell us anything you think the creative team might have done to improve this episode.

2.3.4 Tracking surveys

In the survey work used to assess audience listenership and/or ratings (discussed above), it may also be possible to include a number of questions to gauge audience perceptions in the survey. Questions to consider asking in these surveys include:

- To determine if they perceive the role models (positive, transitional, and negative) appropriately
- To determine how they rate the acting in the episode
- To determine how they rate the entertainment value of the program
- To determine how they rate the educational value of the program
- To determine which characters are most salient
- To determine which educational themes are most salient

2.3.5 Soliciting audience feedback

Audience members can be encouraged to respond to the program by writing letters, calling a phone hotline, sending an e-mail, logging into a website, or otherwise responding to the E-E program. Entreaties to respond can be included
in the E-E program epilogue with self-reflective questions such as "What would you do if you were faced with a situation such as Mkwaju faces now? Write to this address and let us know. We'll read the best response in a future epilogue." While these measures may be constrained in many developing countries by technological or cost limitations, they can also provide a meaningful indication of the size of the audience that is sufficiently involved with the program that they are willing to overcome such constraints. Further, rewards, such as reading the information on the air, or providing a T-shirt to the winner of a random draw of letter-writers, can increase such responses.

2.4 Preliminary Impact Monitoring

For many years in the 1990's, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) funded the production of the E-E radio drama *Twende na Wakati*. *Twende na Wakati* was the subject of one of the most extensive and sophisticated impact evaluations ever conducted of an E-E program (Rogers et al., 1999; Vaughan & Rogers, 2000; Vaughan et al., 2000). Bill Musoke, the UNFPA Country Director in Tanzania who was responsible for the decision to continue funding the program, liked to tell this story about why he continued funding *Twende* for so many years. One weekend, Bill went to a well-known wood carver to look at his carvings. The carver was an old man who had a very simple sales stand. Bill noticed that there was a radio next to where the carver sat, and asked him why he had the radio there. The wood carver responded, “There is a show that comes on later that I like to listen to”, to which Bill asked, “Which show?” The carver responded “*Twende na Wakati*.” So Bill asked the carver why he liked to listen to *Twende na Wakati*, and the wood carver responded “Because if there had been a show like that when I was a young man, I wouldn’t have had 10 children and I would be a rich man now” (Bill Musoke, 1996).

The power of this anecdote, and of preliminary impact monitoring more generally, is that evidence of a positive impact of the E-E program can have a powerful influence on program sustainability, even through substantive changes in funders, government officials, and program staff. If an E-E program is perceived as being impactful, that provides a powerful reason to sustain it.
2.4.1 Point of service data

Most E-E programs educate and motivate their audience(s) to utilize some form of service that is provided by a service provider. Examples might include motivating people to:

- Get an HIV test at a testing center so that they know their status and can obtain counseling if needed.
- Visit a reproductive health clinic to obtain family planning methods.
- Go to a health provider for prenatal medical checkups.

2.4.2 Trend data

In all of these examples, the service provider can collaborate in providing data that can be a powerful measure of campaign impact. Two different types of data can be obtained from service providers. The first is attendance trend data. Very often, service providers maintain attendance data over time to document their own work, and so it may be possible to obtain long-term trend data that precedes the beginning of broadcasting by the E-E program, and then it should be possible to track this data through the completion of the E-E program and beyond. One would hypothesize that such trend data would show an inflection, or an increased rate of visiting the service provider, once the E-E program begins broadcasting episodes that promote it. Figure 4 is an example from Tanzania of attendance at government-run family planning clinics during the broadcast of Twende na Wakati, which promoted the adoption of family planning methods.

Figure 4: Taken from Figure 3 in Rogers et al. (1999). This long term trend data on family planning adoption was collected from 43 clinics in the treatment area and 27 clinics in the comparison area of Tanzania, and clearly shows the increased rate of family planning adoption in the treatment area after Twende na Wakati began broadcasting in 1993. The rate increase was not observed in clinics in the comparison area.
2.4.3 Client interviews

Service providers can also collect a second type of information. In nearly all public health facilities, when clients arrive, they undergo an intake interview to collect basic information about the client by the service provider. It is often possible to augment that information with a brief survey to gather information from the client about the possible influence of the E-E program on their decision to attend the service provider. A brief survey can be appended to the regular intake form that asks questions such as:

**Figure 5. Example of a client interview questionnaire.**

1a. What were the most important source(s) of information that brought you to the clinic today? Please tell me all sources that you can remember.

| Clinic        | staff | friends/relatives | Newspaper | RadioTV | Internet | Poster | Other:_____________
|---------------|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|----------|--------|------------------|

1b. (Ask only if they mention radio in 1a): Which radio program? Do you recall the name?
List of radio programs they might respond with
Other:__________

2a. In the past 6 months, have you ever listened to Name of E-E program?
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

2b. (If yes), About how often did you listen to Name of E-E program in the past 6 months?
- Never
- Less than 1 time/week
- 1/week
- 2/week
- More than 2/week

3. Did listening to Name of E-E program make you more or less likely to come to the clinic today?
- Much more
- More
- No difference
- Less
- Much less

The two types of service provider data given here (attendance trend data and source of referral data) are particularly powerful because they capture individuals at the moment of behavior change, or when they are in the act of adopting the promoted behavior. This provides extremely good evidence that an E-E program has successfully motivated people to adopt the new behavior. For example, in Tanzania, some 25 percent of new adopters of family planning methods cited *Twende na Wakati* by name as their source of referral and an additional 12 percent mentioned radio without naming the program (Rogers et al., 1999).

2.4.4 Mini-surveys

Tracking surveys, discussed above, can also include questions designed to measure impact on the E-E program’s SMART objectives. Because of the relatively small sample sizes and/or limited geographic coverage, such data may not be comparable with results obtained in the larger impact surveys, but they should use the same question format and will be able to give preliminary indications of E-E program efficacy. Demonstrating a causal linkage between an E-E program and a measured change in SMART objectives is problematic (Carleton-Hug and Hug, in press), in part because there are always the possibility that the change was caused by a contemporaneous confounding factor. For this reason, these surveys should also include questions to assess the impact of any confounding sources on your audience. For example, if there are other media programs or interventions of other sorts that are contemporaneous with the E-E program of study, then it is important to ask questions about them to measure how much exposure respondents have had to these other programs that may also have influenced them. These confounding sources can then be controlled statistically using multi-variate statistics, enhancing the researcher’s ability to assess causality.

2.4.5 Content analysis of scripts

The present author was once involved with an E-E radio program where the funders and research team thought the program would promote reproductive health issues, including family planning promotion, as the primary objective, but the creative team dealt much more with the issue of dowry. This problem was not discovered until after a year of broadcasts because nobody was reviewing the scripts. In another program, the creative team wanted to find a cure for AIDS so that they would not need to kill off one of their lead characters, a popular actor who needed the work! These are just some examples of why it is important to have an
independent and regular review of the scripts or episodes. Content analysis is normally done simply by creating a data sheet, and then reading the episode (or listening/watching it) and scoring the episode for which educational issues are addressed in it, which characters appear, and how entertaining it is. These content analyses can also include questions about some of the dramatic elements in the program, for example whether the episode includes a cliffhanger, an epilogue, any humor, any conflict and so on. While it is best to review the scripts prior to production, this is not always possible, but they should be reviewed regularly to make sure that the writers do not stray from the E-E methodology.

2.4.6 Letter or other audience feedback content analysis

As Arvind Singhal points Chapter 7 of this manual, audience feedback from letters, phone hotlines, and other similar methods can provide powerful personal testimony of the program’s impact on the listener/viewer, and can be content-analyzed to determine which characters and educational themes are most influential with them. In addition, the issue content of episodes broadcast over time can be compared with the issue content of letters received and with services sought at health centers to gauge the reaction to the treatment of these issues by the audience.

2.4.7 Monitoring meter

In many instances, E-E program staff is expected to maintain a high level of enthusiasm, productivity, and commitment to their work over a long period of time, often through stressful periods. It is possible to set up a routine evaluation to monitor these (or other) characteristics so that program administrators can see if their staff is changing in any important ways. Figure 5 is an example of such a meter conducted during an 11-week long intense training course in social marketing. Each week the 5 course participants were asked to rate on a 5-point scale their (1) level of enthusiasm for the course, (2) their level of understanding of the material, and (3) how much benefit they felt they were receiving by participating in the course. The average responses are then plotted as a function of time. In this example, while the understanding and benefit metrics remained relatively constant and high throughout the course, enthusiasm lagged substantially in week 5, allowing course managers to take corrective action and reinvigorate the students.

Figure 5. Monitoring meter constructed using 3 questions to assess students’ enthusiasm, understanding of course material, and perceived benefit of the course during an 11-week long training in social marketing.
There is no such thing as the “perfect” research method. All methods have inherent threats to their validity and can be impacted by exogenous events or by improper application of the methodology. Further, some methods are better at answering quantitative questions, such as “How many listened?” or “How many learned about family planning?” whereas other qualitative methods are better at answering questions such as “Why did people listen?” or “How did listeners feel about what happened to certain characters?” For all of these reasons, it is important to utilize multiple methods to monitor E-E programs, a process called “triangulation.” Triangulation allows researchers to better understand how listeners interacted with the E-E program and also to have greater confidence in the evidence that the E-E program had an impact on the listeners.

3. CONCLUSION

Too often, monitoring research is limited to process monitoring, or an assessment of whether specific planned activities took place, and does not include the more demanding, yet more insightful analyses to assess the reach/ratings of a program, how they are being perceived by the audience, and to assess a preliminary impact of the program. Adaptive management is a self-reflective and evaluative process that drives program refinement (Salafsky, Margoluis, and Redford, 2008). This chapter argues that the more thorough monitoring implicit in AM is essential to document the impacts of any E-E program, and also to provide ongoing feedback to the creative team so that mid-course changes can be made if the monitoring results indicate any problems with the program.

NOTES

1 A common response of creative people who are working with researchers for the first time is to feel that they are being evaluated or judged, rather than that the researchers are providing them with a tool with which to improve their work (Carleton-Hug and Hug, in press).
2 Ratings data that are collected by broadcast stations suffer from a lack of independence because stations utilize ratings data to set advertising rates, and therefore have a self-interest in obtaining high ratings. Further, advertisers may primarily be interested in urban audiences that are more likely to buy their products, so these data may under-represent rural areas, often the very areas EE programs are trying to reach. Such data should be treated with caution.
3 Typically, multistage probability sampling is used to select households for participation similar to the methods used to select samples for nationally-representative surveys.
4 Meters have been developed to collect television ratings. The meters are attached to the TV and record the station and times that the TV is on, but meters are relatively expensive and are not applicable to radio.
5 Because Arvind Singhal deals with large-scale impact surveys in Chapter 7 of this manual, impact surveys will not be discussed here. However, be sure to use the same questions to assess reach and frequency of exposure in both these monitoring surveys and in the impact surveys.
6 These mini-surveys do not substitute for the larger pre/post program surveys that are designed to measure EE program impact, although the basic principles of survey design are the same and the questions used in these mini-surveys may also be repeated in the larger surveys.
7 Surveys that are repeated periodically are also known as “tracking surveys.”
8 Sampling error is an artifact of studying a sample rather than the entire population. It does not mean that the researcher has made a mistake, it simply refers to the random deviations from the true mean caused by chance of who is chosen to be interviewed. The best way to reduce sampling error is by increasing the sample size.
9 These false-positive responses are more typically in the range of 3 to 5 percentage points.
10 Positive characters portray the promoted knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors (KAP) and are rewarded; negative characters portray anti-social KAP and are punished; while transitional characters are initially ambivalent, torn between the positive and negative KAP, but ultimately adopt the positive KAP and are rewarded.
11 Initially, 17 percent of listeners perceived Tony as being morally positive, and the rate was slightly higher among female than among male listeners.
12 A common E-E dramatic ploy that can help in this regard is to have the negative character come to understand his/her mistakes and articulate regret for them and the consequences they have wrought.
13 As part of their monitoring plan, researchers should establish SMART (Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, and Time-bound) objectives for their E-E program that relate to the stages-of-behavior change. The SMART objectives are normally measured in the pre/post impact surveys, but they can also be assessed during monitoring.
14 A pilot episode differs from a normal episode in that it will reflect the entire program by introducing all of the major characters and major story lines in a single episode.
15 Para-social interactions are similar to social interactions, except that because one of the dyad is a fictional character, the interaction is one-sided. Examples of para-social interaction might be talking back to the character to give advice, thinking of the character as a real person, writing to the character, or similar acts.
16 An independent research team from the University of New Mexico conducted a quasi-experimental field study over a 4-year period in which the radio drama was first broadcast in a treatment area and was not broadcast in a comparison area for the first 2 years. Subsequently, the program was re-broadcast in the former comparison area for 2 years.
17 Because all trend data from service providers will show variation over time, the longer the period pre-broadcast that researchers can document the trend the better to show the difference between natural fluctuation and change caused by the EE program. A period of at least 2 years is recommended if the data are aggregated at the level of months.
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CHAPTER 7

Studying Entertainment-Education Effects: Going Beyond the Usual

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Photo by Katie Elmore
1. INTRODUCTION

“Not all things countable count.” (Albert Einstein)

Over the past couple of decades, the proliferation in the practice of entertainment-education has been paralleled by improvements in the research tools utilized to evaluate the effects of entertainment-education projects (Singhal & Rogers, 2002). During the 1980s and 1990s, the rigor of these research methodologies progressed from after-only surveys of audience members, to field experiments using multiple measurements of entertainment-education effects. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, scholars, in addition to the aforementioned quantitative methods, also began using more qualitative methods like analysis of audience letters, semiotic analysis of content codes, and more participatory methodologies – such as participatory photography, sketching, and theater – in order to better understand the process through which entertainment-education has its effects.

The purpose of the present paper is to provide an overview of (1) the commonly-employed quantitative research methodologies in monitoring and evaluating entertainment-education programs, and (2) certain novel qualitative and participatory research methodologies that can provide rich insights about how audience members engage with entertainment-education.

2. COMMONLY USED QUANTITATIVE METHODS

There are certain distinctive aspects of entertainment-education which influence the research methodologies utilized by communication scholars to study the effects of entertainment-education. As Douglas Storey (1998) of Johns Hopkins University noted, “Entertainment-education is a point of engagement, a site of discourse, not just another message.” This perspective implies that exposure to entertainment-education may not only have direct effects on the immediate audience, but that entertainment-education, more importantly, causes indirect effects on behavior change by stimulating the audience to talk with family members, peers, and community members – over a period of time – about the educational issues embedded in the entertainment message. These interpersonal discussions may lead to dialogue, decisions, and collective actions, perhaps influencing the audience’s external environment to help create the necessary conditions for social change at the system level. Thus, trying to monitor and assess the effects of entertainment-education programs – at the individual, collective, and system level – calls for different methodological choices. Each method has its strengths and weaknesses; so when possible, mixed-method designs should be employed.

Most of the commonly-employed research methodologies for assessing entertainment-education effects – especially to discern individual level changes – include the following: (1) after-only survey of effects, (2) before and after measurement of effects, (3) interrupted time-series designs, and (4) field experiments.

2.1 After-Only Surveys of Effects

The present author was involved in investigating the effects of Hum Log, a television soap opera about gender equality, family planning, and related issues in India that was broadcast in 1984-1985. Unfortunately, research funding to study the effects of this important entertainment-education program (it was the first international transfer of Miguel Sabido’s entertainment-education strategy) did not become available until after its broadcasts were completed. Hence we could only conduct an after-only survey of audience members. From the post-exposure survey, we established that the degree of exposure to Hum Log correlated with higher levels of knowledge and attitudes toward gender equality (the main educational issue in Hum Log). However, we could not eliminate the possibility that this exposure/effects relationship was because audience members already had higher knowledge and more favorable attitudes towards gender equity and were thus more inclined to watch the television soap opera. The time-order of these independent and dependent variables could not be determined with only post-exposure data.

A post-exposure study cannot tell us much about the effects of entertainment-education, other than the fact that levels of the effects variables are positively related to exposure. The time-order of these exposure and effects variable cannot be established by an after-only study, nor can alternative explanations of the entertainment-education effects be ruled out. *In comparison to alternatives, by itself, the post-exposure research design is a relatively weak means of investigating entertainment-education effects.*

2.2 Before-After Measurements of Effects

One important advantage of before-after measurements, such as by means of surveys, is that they allow the investigator to calculate change scores on the effects variables. In a before-after survey, a sample of individuals exposed to an entertainment-education program are personally interviewed at a benchmark in the program, and again in a follow-up survey after program completion, concerning their knowledge, attitude, and practice of, say, family planning methods. A change score for each of these effects variables for each individual can then be calculated, in order to determine whether such change scores are related to the degree of exposure to the entertainment-education intervention.
An example of a before-after evaluation research design is the Valente et al. (1994) study of the effects of *Fakube Jarra* ("Wise Man"), an entertainment-education radio drama in The Gambia, an Islamic nation in West Africa. Prior to the daily broadcasting of 39 episodes of this radio show in 1991, 19 percent of survey respondents were adopters of family planning methods. Nine months later, 35 percent of listeners had adopted family planning methods, an increase of 16 percentage points.

Unfortunately, before-after measurements cannot eliminate the possibility that the measured effects result from contemporaneous changes, that is, from communication activities other than the entertainment-education intervention of study. For example, some of the increased rate of adoption of family planning methods thought to be due to *Fakube Jarra* may have occurred due to individuals’ exposure to other communication activities about family planning in The Gambia. The most appropriate means of eliminating these contemporaneous changes is the field experiment, although the interrupted time-series can help shed light on the unique changes that are due to an entertainment-education intervention.

### 2.3 Interrupted Time-Series

An alternative to the field experimental design (discussed later) is the interrupted time-series, in which data about, say, the effects of an entertainment-education project on the number of new adopters of family planning are gathered for a number of time periods (typically months): (1) prior to the intervention, (2) during the intervention, and (3) for some time after the intervention. One would expect the effects indicator (such as the number of family planning adopters) to increase during the intervention and immediately afterwards, and eventually to return to the original rate of increase, as indeed occurred in the case of the broadcasts of the entertainment-education television program *In a Lighter Mood* in Enugu, Nigeria (Piotrow et al., 1990).

The weakness of the usual interrupted time-series design is also one of its main advantages: There is no control group. This absence of a control solves the ethical problem of withholding the possible benefits of the entertainment-education intervention to individuals in the control area. However, the effects of contemporaneous changes cannot be removed with the certainty that they are in a field experiment, as the interrupted time-series does not have a comparison group that receives all other communication influences except the entertainment-education. For instance, at the same time that the broadcasts of *In a Lighter Mood* began in eastern Nigeria, the health clinic in Enugu (that provided the monthly data on the number of family planning adopters) increased its clinic hours from 3 to 6 days per week! Is the sharp increase in the number of adopters due to the entertainment-education broadcasts, or to greater clinic accessibility? We do not know.

### 2.4 Field Experiments

Few field experiments have been conducted to evaluate the effects of entertainment-education programs. One of the first field experimental studies of entertainment-education at the national level was the investigation of the entertainment-education radio soap opera, *Twende na Wakati*, in Tanzania. Field experimental designs were also implemented to study the effects of entertainment-education initiatives in China (for the TV program *Baixing*) and India (for the radio program *Tinka Tinka Sukh*) by the present author and his colleagues. However, because of low numbers of listeners found in the treatment areas, not much could be said about the effect of the intervention on individual knowledge, attitudes, and practice (Singhal & Rogers, 1999).

The Tanzania study was a quasi-experiment in that the treatment and the control conditions were not randomly assigned to the eight radio broadcasting regions of Tanzania. The assignment of the Dodoma broadcasting area to control was opportunistic, in that this region was cutting away from the national signal of Radio Tanzania for two hours of local programs every evening at 5:00 p.m. By broadcasting *Twende na Wakati* at 6:30 p.m. twice weekly, the Dodoma region became a “control,” or, more accurately, a “comparison” (these terms are often used interchangeably, although some scholars prefer “comparison” in field experiments because “control” might imply that no communication activities are underway there and that no contamination exists).

Why is the random assignment of treatment and comparison conditions important in removing the effects of all extraneous variables in a true experiment? Random assignment removes all such unwanted effects, whether these variables are measured by the investigators or not. If the researchers do not have the power to randomly assign the treatment and comparison conditions, then they must determine whether or not the two areas are matched on the dependent (knowledge, attitudes, and practices or KAP) variables, and perhaps on independent variables expected to be related to the KAP variables. The Dodoma area was approximately similar to the treatment area in Tanzania, although its population had somewhat higher initial levels of knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

The unique advantage of a field experiment is that it can remove the effects of all contemporaneous changes from the treatment effects. This advantage can be gained, of course, only if logistical and other problems can be anticipated and their effects removed. For example, 2 percent of the
respondents in the Dodoma comparison area, who supposedly did not receive broadcasts of the radio soap opera from 1993 to 1995, somehow managed to listen to the broadcasts, presumably on shortwave radio receivers (Rogers et al., 1999). While this level of experimental contamination did not pose a serious threat to the validity of the field experiment, it suggests that an investigator never has complete control over the respondents’ behavior. A realistic goal for a field experimenter is to minimize the contamination and other logistical threats to experimental design.

One important reason why there are not more field experiments on the effects of entertainment-education on family planning adoption, HIV prevention, etc., is ethical considerations. For example, the broadcasts of Twende na Wakati were blocked for 2 years (1993-1995) from the 2.4 million people living in the Dodoma comparison area who were not able to listen to the radio soap opera. Half of these people were adults, and half of the adults would have listened to the radio soap opera, so about 600,000 people were denied access to the broadcasts of Twende na Wakati. They were more likely to have had unwanted children (because of not adopting family planning methods) and to have contracted HIV/AIDS (because of not adopting HIV prevention methods). After the first 2 years, the original 208 episodes of Twende na Wakati were broadcast over 24 months in the Dodoma region, while simultaneously, the next 208 episodes were also broadcast in a different time slot. The program had similar (but lagged) effects in the Dodoma region, providing strong evidence of entertainment-education effects because they were reproduced in the former control area (Rogers et al., 1999).

A field experimental design requires that the researcher has a high degree of control over the communication treatment. Seldom is this the case, which is one reason why there are so few field experiments on entertainment-education, or, more generally, on any type of communication program. In the Tanzania Project, Radio Tanzania officials understandably wanted to broadcast Twende na Wakati, their most popular program, from all of their stations, including Dodoma. They agreed not to do so because they were convinced (in 1993) by the University of New Mexico communication scholars of the scientific value of a field experiment with a control area. Officials in Radio Tanzania and the Tanzania Ministry of Health signed agreements about carrying out the field experiment, which was a type of informed consent. Obtaining such consent from all of the individuals in the treatment and comparison areas was impossible. Although this research design carried disadvantages for the radio system, and for the people residing in the control area, a field experiment promised to provide relatively definitive evidence of the effects of entertainment-education. At the time that the Tanzania Project was designed in 1993, officials in UNFPA, Population Communications International, and the government of Tanzania, as well as the University of New Mexico researchers, felt that such evidence was much needed. So the ultimate beneficiaries of the Tanzania experimental design are policy-makers, and the populations that they lead, in other nations, that learn from the Tanzanian findings.

Problems with the ethics of control and with gaining permission to conduct a field experiment are avoided in the interrupted time-series, as explained previously, because there is no control group in the usual sense. The treatment intervention (an entertainment-education program in the present case) is not withheld from anyone.

3. NOVEL QUALITATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGIES

Some exciting, novel, and low-cost qualitative and participatory research methodologies for assessing entertainment-education effects include the following: (1) analysis of audience letters, (2) semiotic analysis of content codes, (3) participatory photography, and (4) participatory sketching.

3.1 Analysis of Letters

Entertainment-education radio and television programs in India attracted a huge number of audience letters. An estimated 400,000 letters were written in response to Hum Log, the television soap opera broadcast in 1984-1985, for example, and 150,000 in response to the 1996-1997 radio soap opera Tinka Tinka Sukh. This outpouring of letters was encouraged in the epilogues of these two entertainment-education soap operas, by inviting audience members to write and by providing the address to which letters should be addressed. These audience letters did more than express admiration for the broadcasts (Singhal & Rogers, 1988; 1989). Most of the letters (1) commented on the characters and the story line of the program, often suggesting future directions for the story line, and (2) provided examples of how entertainment-education has affected the letter-writers’ lives (Singhal & Rogers, 1988; 1989; Sood & Rogers, 1996). For example, one letter-writer to Hum Log explained that he had organized several hundred people in his small city to sign organ donation pledge cards in response to a television episode in which a positive role-model received an eye transplant.

Letters from audience individuals can provide a rich type of data for analysis. For example, Singhal and Rogers (1989) obtained 20,000 of the viewers’ letters mailed to Hum Log. The scholars selected a random sample of 500 of these letters for content analysis. Further, a questionnaire mailed to these viewers by Singhal and Rogers (1989) secured a 92 percent rate of response. The questionnaire results
suggested that respondents had a high degree of para-social interaction (or affective involvement) (1) with the *Hum Log* characters (to which about half of the 400,000 letters were addressed), and (2) with the famous Indian film actor (Ashok Kumar) who delivered the epilogues. The analysis of the *Hum Log* letters was important, in that it represented an early attempt by communication scholars to study para-social interaction by highly-involved audience individuals with an entertainment-education program.

Letters represent highly-detailed personalized narratives and are unbiased self-reports, as the letter-writers are usually not aware of the general research design. The letters can also be rich in local idioms and metaphors and provide input for the program’s melodramatic plot. However, one should never forget that the individuals who send letters to an entertainment-education program are highly atypical audience individuals. Analyses of letter-writers show that many are young (often teenagers), who are well-educated (many are students), and very highly involved with the entertainment-education program. Nevertheless, their letters provide insight into the process through which individuals are influenced by entertainment-education, in part because of the atypical characteristics of the writers.

The nature of entertainment-education seems to attract large numbers of letters from audience members, perhaps because such programs are highly involving for many individuals. But not all entertainment-education soap operas attract an outpouring of audience letters. For example, only several hundred letters were received by Radio Tanzania over the 5 years of broadcasts of *Twende na Wakati*, presumably because the cost of postage (35 cents U.S.) was more than many people in Tanzania could afford.

### 3.2 Semiotic Analysis of Content Codes

Semiotic analysis is one type of qualitative content analysis. Anjali Ram (1993), a communication scholar from India then studying at Ohio University, analyzed the text of selected episodes of the Indian television soap opera *Hum Raahi* ("Co-Travelers") broadcast in 1992-1993. The purpose of *Hum Raahi* was to promote a more equal status for women through gaining formal education and economic independence (Engineer, 1992). A more subtle purpose was to promote smaller family size norms through opposing child marriage, female foeticide, and preference for male children. *Hum Raahi* commanded audience ratings of up to 78 percent in Hindi-speaking North India, which represented an audience of over 100 million people (Rogers et al., 1994).
Ram's (1993) semiotic analysis included (1) an analysis of the garment, proxemic (spatial), and kinesic (body language) codes that positioned female characters' status in Hum Raahi, based on an analysis of the first 26 episodes of Hum Raahi, and (2) in-depth interviews with female viewers of Hum Raahi, conducted in 1992 in Pune, India. The garment codes in Hum Raahi provide useful insights about how female characters in the soap opera were positioned. For instance, garment codes positioned Manorama and Prema as opposites in terms of gender equality (Ram, 1993). Manorama, the all-suffering mother, usually covered her head with her sari. In the presence of men, she pulled her sari even more closely around her head to cover her face. This garment code “reinforced her status as a passive, self-effacing, subjugated woman” (Ram, 1993, p. 58). On the other hand, Prema, an independent career woman and a positive role model for female equality, did not use her sari to cover her head or shoulders. Instead, she pinned her sari across her left shoulder, signifying that she rejected the “ritual of gender subordination” (Ram, 1993, p.58).

Proxemics is another dimension of nonverbal communication, focusing on how space affects communication behavior (Hall, 1966). Proxemic codes convey power, distance, hierarchy, intimacy, and other factors (Ram, 1993). For instance, in the first episode of Hum Raahi, Manorama was shown cooking in a smoke-filled kitchen, sighing and coughing in the absence of adequate ventilation. The proxemic codes in Manorama’s kitchen, which represented a “gendered space,” reinforced her plight as the “all-suffering oppressed mother” (Ram, 1993, p. 63). Men were only very rarely shown in the kitchen, which represented a “gendered space,” reinforced the dominance of patriarchal social structures (Ram, 1993).

Kinesics, or body language, is another type of nonverbal communication indicated by gestures and behaviors (Birdwhistell, 1952). Ram (1993, p. 69-70) argued that in Hum Raahi the village gossip, Devaki, was characterized by kinesic codes that signified “manipulation and seduction:” She rolled her eyes, tossed her head loosely, gyrated her shoulders, let her sari’s pallav (the part of the sari that covers the head) fall, chewed beetle leaves (which lends a deep red color to the teeth and mouth), and fluttered her eyelids. Further, Devaki was often depicted talking on a mobile telephone, which was a status symbol at the time of the Hum Raahi broadcasts in the early 1990s.

Manorama, on the other hand, exhibited kinesic behavior that connoted “passivity and subjugation” (Ram, 1993, p.70): Her head was bowed and her face was covered with her sari’s pallav. She walked in jerky, nervous steps, talked softly, and avoided direct eye contact with others. Her body language conveyed subservience. Anjali Ram also conducted several in-depth interviews with female viewers of Hum Raahi in India, in order to gauge their perceptions of gender portrayal in the soap opera. She found:

- Respondents felt that Hum Raahi portrayed women as being against other women, especially by depicting the anti-female stance of Devaki (Ram, 1993).
- Respondents felt that Hum Raahi portrayed the “manipulative woman versus the women’s liberationist” (Ram, 1993). While Devaki was viewed as someone who had “men dance around her,” Prema was viewed as being “always against men” (Ram, 1993).
- Respondents felt that Hum Raahi portrayed certain female characters as being too passive, especially Manorama and her daughter Kusum. Many respondents expressed impatience with these passive characters, urging them to be more assertive.
- Interviewees felt that Hum Raahi highlighted the need for women to have social support (Ram, 1993). This support should come not only from other women, but also from men.

Based on her semiotic analysis and in-depth interviews, Ram (1993) argued that the Hum Raahi text did not really challenge the “patrilineal, patrilocal, and patriarchal” structure of the Indian family, but instead worked “subtly to preserve it” (Ram, 1993, p. 109). Ram commended the Hum Raahi text for promoting women’s education and rights, and for opposing child marriage, female foeticide, and male child preference, but questioned the ideological underpinnings of the text that were steeped in patriarchy.

In essence, semiotic analyses of entertainment-education television programs can provide insights on the consistency between the main text (i.e., the key educational messages) and the accompanying subtext (signs and codes that undergird the main text).

### 3.3 Participatory Photography

In 1973, while conducting a literacy project in a barrio of Lima, Peru, a team led by the noted Brazilian educator, Paulo 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.

Inspired by this Freirean technique, disposable cameras were handed out by the present author in 2002 to 11 listeners (7 women and 4 men) of Taru, an entertainment-education radio program in India. Taru was a 52-episode entertainment-education radio soap opera, broadcast in India from February 2002 to February 2003. Its purpose was to promote gender equality, small family size, reproductive health, caste and communal harmony, and community development.

The purpose of our participatory photography exercise was to gauge the influence of Taru on audience members in three villages of Bihar State, India – Abirpur, Kamtaul, and Madhopur. Several Taru listening groups were active in these villages during 2002-2003, when Taru was broadcast in India’s Bihar State. As opposed to asking subjects questions, and thereby constraining the nature and scope of their word responses, they were asked to capture Taru’s influence on them (or their community) through the language of images (Singhal et al., 2004). Our invitation to Taru listeners – to “shoot back” (in images) the influence of the radio serial in their lives – yielded some 145 photographs. After developing these pictures, we took the pictures back to our participants and asked the participants to narrate what each picture was depicting, what it meant to them, why they took each particular photograph, and so on.

The participants’ photos, we noticed, served several functions: They allowed participants to (a) co-share their lived reality, (b) raise certain social issues for community discussion and action, (c) develop a story that was previously marginalized, rejected, silenced, or overlooked, and (d) talk about Taru’s influence on them or their community (Singhal, Harter, Chitnis, & Sharma, in press).

Photographs that allowed the participants to co-share the reality of their lived experiences captured (a) the prevalent traditions and customs of Bihar’s patriarchal society, (b) the norm of large family sizes and the resulting low levels of maternal and child health, (c) how children, especially young girls, engage in hard manual labor at home and in the fields, (d) how young girls are denied an education because of responsibilities to attend to household chores, and (e) how women’s health is at risk because of poverty and other environmental factors.

For instance, Soni’s photo of an old woman who is trying to cover her head with her sari (Photo 1) captured the strong patriarchal undercurrents in rural Bihar. She noted: “This is a very old woman who always covers her head when any man passes her. I asked her why she covered her head and she said because the man who passed us is her brother-in-law. Even if he is younger than her, because he is from her in-law’s family, she covered her head. It’s to show respect.”

Several photographs, and their accompanying narratives, called for community discussion, mobilization, and action. For instance, Vandana took a photo to advocate for rural communities to have small families, noting how large families contribute to poverty and malnutrition. Narrating the photo of a young mother with six children (Photo 2), Vandana said: “Too much population! One woman has so many children. People from different castes and tribes come to the village. They have such large families. Even food is being cooked outside. Will they be able to provide for so many family members? They don’t have a home, they have a shelter, and they were sitting outside with their kids, so I took the picture. Some people have everything, some nothing; we should do something about it!”

Several photographs provided an opportunity for our participants to develop a story that was previously marginalized, rejected, silenced, or overlooked. In some cases the participants, through their photos, spoke on behalf of “others,” including children, the elderly, and the dalits (people of the lowest caste in India’s social hierarchy).
In other cases, the participants gave voice to their own previously-silenced stories.

Some photographs spoke on behalf of the dalits, especially highlighting the need for them to have opportunities for education. For instance, Kumkum’s photo of a teenage dalit girl (Photo 3) was accompanied by the following narrative: “This is a lower caste girl. She does housework, as she is uneducated. Education is very important. Say if you need to sign; you cannot sign unless you are educated or you cannot read a letter unless you know how to read.”

Several photographs gave voices to the participants own stories that were previously marginalized, silenced, overlooked, or rejected. Often these stories resonate with the stories depicted in the entertainment-education text. For instance, Vandana (who asked her cousin to take the picture) is standing next to a young man of her age (Photo 4).

When asked what the picture signified, she said: “This is my friend. He is [attending] my school. People say that girls shouldn’t talk to boys. Some people still think that way and say, ‘why did you take this picture?’ But I think I did the right thing and it is okay.”

As with the case of participatory photography, researchers may employ participatory sketching as a method to obtain rich, nuanced narratives from audience members of entertainment-education programs.

The present author, for instance, employed the methodology of participatory sketching to gauge the effects of an ongoing entertainment-education initiative in the Peruvian Amazon, spearheaded by Minga Perú, a nongovernmental organization that promotes gender equality and reproductive health. For over four years now, Minga Perú has broadcast a popular radio program called Bienvenida Salud (“Welcome Health”) three times a week in the Amazonas. They dovetailed the entertainment-education broadcasts with several community-based empowerment activities for local women (Singhal & Rattine-Flaherty, in press).

Using plain paper and colored markers, some 30 avid women listeners of Bienvenida Salud were asked to sketch out their perceptions of Minga Perú’s contributions to reproductive health, gender equality, and social change. For instance, one of the questions posed was: “How has your life changed as a consequence of listening to Bienvenida Salud and participating in community-based activities of Minga Perú?” Participants
were asked to draw two pictures – one to sketch how their life was some 5 years ago (i.e., antes, in the past), and how their life is today (i.e., ahora, now).

Let’s consider the antes and ahora sketches of Emira (see Drawing 1), a 21-year-old, including her narrative which accompanied the sketches:

Drawing 1: This is my early life. I didn’t know how worthy I was; I was ashamed, I was sad. Now my personal life has changed, I feel myself as being capable of exerting a public function; I don’t feel ashamed any more, I don’t have fear. I am proud of my body - my femininity. Before I didn’t want to cut my hair but when I went to live in the city, I cut it. With the trousers it was the same. Now I feel capable to wear trousers, previously I wore loose clothes. The same with the shoes, now I wear high heels.

Emira’s sketch and its accompanying narrative provided a highly rich, highly poignant, and highly textured/nuanced insight on the long-term effects of entertainment-education initiatives on certain audience members. Such insights are difficult, if not impossible, to obtain through structured personal interview surveys.

Further, in privileging visual forms of expression, such as participatory photography or participatory sketching, entertainment-education researchers position themselves to question the dominant hegemony of textocentrism that legitimizes the lettered, literate, and text-based ways of knowing (Conquergood, 2002). Participatory photography and sketching, on the other hand, validate other, nontextual ways of knowing by privileging the performative dimensions of sketches and photographs.

However, for visuals to become truly participatory, it is important that the participants not only make sketches and take photos and share their stories with the researcher (as was the case in the present research), but also share their stories with other community members, concerned citizens, and policymakers. We recommend that for participatory sketching and photography interventions, participants share their sketches and photos and their narratives with other community members to further gauge the commonality and differences of their meanings and interpretations. These community discussions can then also serve as a catalyst for community decisions and actions.

What is interesting about participatory sketching and photography is that they lie at the interface of theory, method, and praxis (see also Morphy & Banks, 1997). In taking stock of the sociology of visuals – whether in the form of sketches or photos – it is not difficult to discern the obvious conclusion: Almost all paintings, sketches, and photos are usually produced by “the powerful, the established, the male, the colonizer” to “portray the less powerful, less established, female, and colonized” (Harper, 1994, p. 408). Through participatory photography and sketching, entertainment-education researchers hand over the means of visual production to the oppressed, the silent, and the muted. While recognizing that visuals allow the “oppressed” to make statements that are not possible by words, entertainment-education researchers should remember that all sketches, paintings, and photographs are socially and technically constructed (Harper, 1994). Thus it is as important to foreground the absence of particular characters or scenes, as it is to explicate what is present.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The present paper provided an overview of the commonly-employed quantitative research methodologies in monitoring and evaluating entertainment-education programs (such as after-only surveys, before-after measurements, interrupted time-series, and field experiments), and described certain novel, low-cost, and engaging qualitative and participatory research methodologies (such as analysis of letters, semiotic analysis of visual codes, and participatory photography and sketching) that can provide rich insights about how audience members engage with entertainment-education texts. Each method has its own unique strengths and weaknesses; so, when possible, mixed-method designs should be employed.

Monitoring and evaluation research methods for entertainment-education have evolved from (1) Miguel Sabido’s early 1970s measures of television ratings and such aggregate effects as the national rate of family planning adoption, to (2) measuring such individual effects as the adoption of a behavior change in audience surveys and field experiments, to (3) investigating the complex process through which change may occur in a social system. The main research questions revolve around what effects entertainment-education programs have, and how such effects take place. Future research should utilize more qualitative and participatory research methods to probe the process through which entertainment-education produces such effects.
REFERENCES


NOTES

1 The present paper draws upon some of the previous writings of the present author: Papa, Singhal, and Papa (2006), Singhal and Rogers (1999), Singhal and Devi (2003), Singhal, Harter, Chitnis, and Sharma (in press) and Singhal, Sharma, Papa, and Witte (2004). A special thanks to all collaborators and co-authors on this entertainment-education research journey. This paper was presented at the workshop on Best Practices on Promoting Gender Equality through Media Programs, Population Media Center, Burlington, Vermont, November 17-19, 2005.

2 Actually, the Johns Hopkins University evaluation of the effects of Fekube Jarru had certain aspects of a field experiment when radio broadcasting in the northern region of the country was conveniently halted by the failure of an electrical power plant. The experimental results, however, were not reported by Valente and others (1994).

3 Ethical problems such as these are discussed by Brown and Singhal (1990; 1993).

4 Previous research on parasocial interaction focused on audience members’ perceived relationships with news broadcasters and others.
The Effectiveness of Entertainment-Education: Case Studies from Around the World

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1. INTRODUCTION

There is strong evidence that mass media, particularly entertainment broadcast media, have played a significant role in a number of countries in bringing about changes in reproductive behavior and in promoting adoption of other health measures. Radio and television soap operas in Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Mexico, St. Lucia, and Tanzania have been documented by independent research in their massive effects on audience attitudes and behavior with regard to HIV/AIDS avoidance and use of family planning (Westoff & Bankole, 1997; Singhal et al., 2003; Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Rogers et al., 1999; Vaughan et al., 2000).

One of the advantages of using serial dramas, as opposed to documentaries or single-episode dramas, is that they allow time for the audience to form bonds with the characters and allow characters to evolve in their thinking and behavior with regard to various issues at a gradual and believable pace in response to problems that have been well illustrated in the story line. Just as important, entertainment programs forge emotional ties to audience members that influence values and behaviors more forcefully than the cognitive information provided in documentaries. In addition, the emotional context of a melodrama improves retention of lessons learned by the audience, in much the same way that we remember the details of where we were on September 11, 2001 much more clearly than on an ordinary day.

As described in the social learning theory of Stanford University psychologist Albert Bandura, vicarious learning from others is a powerful teacher of attitudes and behavior (Bandura, 1986). Next to peer and parental role models, role models from the mass media are of particular importance in shaping cultural attitudes and behavior.

Serial melodramas using the methodology developed by Miguel Sabido of Mexico for promoting reproductive health (Nariman, 1993) have been remarkable in that they have attracted no serious opposition in any country. This stems, in part, from the thorough research that has been done prior to the development of the programs to measure audience attitudes and norms with regard to these issues. Characters for the serial dramas can then be developed that reflect the audience, so that the show is in harmony with the culture. Through the gradual evolution of characters in response to problems that many in the audience also are facing, soap operas can show adoption of new, non-traditional behaviors in a way that generates no negative response from the audience. Because of the bonds that are formed between audience members and characters, and because of the commonality of problems between characters and the audience, audience members tend to accept these changes, even though they may challenge some cultural traditions. Because they deal with issues that are as sensitive as sexual relationships and reproduction, it is especially important that such programs are designed not to build opposition or cause a backlash.

2. MEXICO

In 1975, Miguel Sabido, then Vice-President of the big commercial Mexican network, Televisa, broadcast the first social-content telenovela (television novel), which included a subplot that dealt with the issue of literacy. Telenovelas are similar to American soap operas in that they use melodrama, but differ in that they are designed to come to an end after a few hundred episodes, like a novel.

The Mexican Department of Public Education had been carrying out a campaign to register people who lacked formal education in adult education classes. In the year before Sabido’s literacy telenovela, they were successful in recruiting 99,000 people to register for adult education classes. Inspired by the need to promote literacy in Mexico, and also by the Peruvian telenovela, Simplemente María (which caused viewers to emulate the lead character’s success through becoming a seamstress), Sabido set about to apply various theories of communication and psychology to the design of a program to influence the audience to pursue adult education. This program, Ven Conmigo (“Come With Me”), was commercially sponsored and was very successful in achieving high ratings. Not only did it contain sufficient dramatic quality to attract a large viewership, it also reflected the lives of the illiterate television viewers of Mexico, which attracted them to the program in record numbers.

In the 260-episode program, positive and negative characters (with regard to the value of education) tried to convince the illiterate characters of their points of view. The positive characters would tell the illiterate characters of the existence of an infrastructure for adult education and encourage them to sign up for classes, while the negative characters would tell them they were too old or too stupid to learn anything and advise them to stay away from such programs. The illiterate characters were torn between these points of view and were not sure how to escape the poverty and unemployment that came with being illiterate.

Eventually, illiterate characters, one-by-one, would register for classes and would struggle through the program. As they learned to read and write and received their diplomas, their lives improved. These changes were going on in the midst of many developments in the other sub-plots that kept the
audience glued to the program. In the process, the illiterate viewers saw the changes that literacy brought to those characters with whom they most closely identified. Many of them began to register for classes.

Sabido decided to run an epilogue giving addresses of locations for registration for classes. He did this following the episode in which his most popular character graduated from school. This character was a grandfather who broke down in tears at his graduation ceremony because he could finally read the letters he had been receiving from his granddaughter. Before broadcasting this episode, Sabido warned the Department of Public Education that he might generate a crowd. They told him that they liked his program and that it was supporting their own efforts to promote adult education, but said they were sure that they could handle any crowd that Sabido’s program might generate, because they had registered 99,000 people in a year’s time.

Sabido broadcast the episode with the epilogue, and, the following day, 250,000 people tried to register for classes – in a single day! He continued to run epilogues for the remaining weeks of the serial, and a total of 840,000 people registered for classes during this time. The model Sabido had created was one that combined a commercially successful program with a very positive social impact.

Sabido then decided to use a telenovela to promote family planning as a solution to marital conflict. This program, named Acompáñame (“Accompany Me”) went on the air in 1977. As with the earlier serial that dealt with literacy, the program was designed to create characters who would evolve over time to become positive role models for the audience. Acompáñame showed in dramatic terms over the course of the nine-month series, the personal benefits of planning one’s family, by focusing on the issue of family harmony.

The results of Acompáñame, as reported by the Mexican government’s National Population Council (CONAPO), were (Sabido, 1981):

- Phone calls to the CONAPO requesting family planning information increased from zero to an average of 500 a month. Many people calling mentioned that they were encouraged to do so by the television soap opera.
- More than 2,000 women registered as voluntary workers in the national program of family planning. This was an idea suggested in the television soap opera.
- Contraceptive sales increased 23 percent in one year, compared to a seven percent increase the preceding year.
- More than 560,000 women enrolled in family planning clinics, an increase of 33 percent (compared to a one percent decrease the previous year).

In Mexico, to date, there have been five additional social-content soap operas, all developed by Miguel Sabido. They were Vamos Juntos (“We Go Together”), Caminemos (“Let’s Walk”), Nosotros las Mujeres (“We the Women”), Por Amor (“For Love”), and Los Hijos de Nadie (“Nobody’s Children”).

During the decade 1977 to 1986, when many of these Mexican soap operas were on the air, the country underwent a 34 percent decline in its population growth rate. As a result, in May 1986, the United Nations Population Prize was presented to Mexico as the foremost population success story in the world.

Thomas Donnelly, then with USAID in Mexico, wrote, “Throughout Mexico, wherever one travels, when people are asked where they heard about family planning, or what made them decide to practice family planning, the response is universally attributed to one of the soap operas that Televisa has done. ... The Televisa family planning soap operas have made the single most powerful contribution to the Mexican population success story."

Similar effects were noticed in other Latin American countries when Sabido’s programs played in those countries.

3. INDIA

Following a meeting David Poindexter (now Honorary Chair of Population Media Center) and Miguel Sabido held with Indira Gandhi, and a training program they organized for Doordarshan (Indian Television), the country began broadcasting India’s first social content soap opera, Hum Log (“We People”) in July 1984. The program included promotion of family planning and elevation of the status of women through the words and actions of key characters.

Over the 17 months of broadcast, the episodes of Hum Log achieved ratings of 60 to 90 percent. Research conducted by Professor Everett M. Rogers and Arvind Singhal, then of the Annenberg School for Communication of the University of Southern California, found through a sample survey that 70 percent of the viewers indicated they had learned from Hum
Log that women should have equal opportunities, 68 percent had learned women should have the freedom to make their personal decisions in life, and 71 percent had learned that family size should be limited (Singhal & Rogers, 1989). Among other things, the program stimulated over 400,000 people to write letters to the Indian Television Authority and to various characters in the program, stating their views on the issues being dealt with or asking for help and advice.

A second television serial drama, *Hum Raahi* (“Co-Travelers”), produced by Roger Pereira of Bombay, went on the air in January 1992. With an average estimated audience of 230 million viewers, *Hum Raahi* was the top-rated program on Indian television. A study funded by the Rockefeller Foundation found viewers’ attitudes changed dramatically with regard to two issues addressed in the program: ideal age of marriage for women and acceptability of women in the workplace outside the home.

**4. KENYA**

In 1983, David Poindexter, then Director of the Population Institute’s Communication Center, began working in Kenya with the government-run Voice of Kenya, which later became the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). After taking Kenyan television and radio personnel for training in Mexico, he helped in the development of two programs: a television series, *Tushauriane* (“Let’s Talk About It”) produced by Greg Adambo; and a radio series, *Ushikwapo Shikamana* (“When Given Advice, Take It”) produced by Tom Kazungu. Both programs went on the air in 1987. The programs were aimed at opening the minds of men to allowing their wives to seek family planning. The programs also effectively linked family size with land inheritance and the resulting ability or inability of children to support their parents in their old age. Both programs were the most popular programs in their respective media ever produced by the Voice of Kenya.

By the time the two series had ended, contraceptive use in Kenya had increased 58 percent and desired family size had fallen from 6.3 to 4.4 children per woman. While many factors undoubtedly contributed to these changes, a study conducted by the University of Nairobi School of Journalism at rural health centers gave evidence of women coming in for family planning saying that the radio program had caused their husbands to allow them to come for family planning.

**5. TANZANIA**

The most extensive evaluation of the effects of a social content serial drama occurred from 1993 to 1997 in Tanzania. There, Radio Tanzania broadcast a serial melodrama that attracted 58 percent of the population (age 15 to 45) in areas of the broadcast. By design, in one region of the country – the area surrounding the city of Dodoma – a music program was heard instead of the soap opera during the first two years of the project (1993-95). Then, from 1995-97, the soap opera was broadcast in the Dodoma comparison area.

**Figure 1: Map of Tanzania Showing Broadcast and Non-Broadcast Areas for Twende na Wakati**

Independent research by the University of New Mexico and the Population Family Life Education Programme of the Government of Tanzania measured the effects caused by the program with regard to such issues as AIDS prevention behavior, ideal age of marriage for women, and use of family planning (Rogers et al., 1999; Vaughan et al., 2000). While the population of the Dodoma comparison area was more urban than the rest of the country, a multiple regression analysis eliminated the influence such differences might have accounted for. Nationwide random sample surveys of 2750 people each were conducted before, during and after the broadcast of the program. Data was also collected from the AIDS Control Programme of the government, the Ministry of Health, and the Demographic and Health Survey, all of which reinforced the findings of significant impacts on attitudes and behavior (Singhal et al., 2003; Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Vaughan & Rogers, 2000).
Among the findings were a significant increase in the percentage of the population who perceive that they may be at risk of HIV infection; an increase in people’s belief that they can take effective action to prevent HIV/AIDS; an increase in interpersonal communication about HIV/AIDS; an increase in the belief that individuals, rather than their deity or fate, can determine how many children they will have; an increase in the belief that children in small families have better lives than children in large families; and an increase in the percentage of respondents who approve of family planning (Singhal et al., 2003; Singhal & Rogers, 1999).

The study also provided evidence that the Tanzanian radio serial stimulated important behavioral changes. Over half the population of the areas where the serial was broadcast identified themselves as listeners, with more men than women in the audience. One of the key characters in the soap opera was a truck driver with many girl friends along the truck route. In the program he contracts AIDS. Of the listeners surveyed, 82 percent said the program had caused them to change their own behavior to avoid HIV infection, through limiting the number of sexual partners and through condom use. Independent data from the AIDS Control Programme of the government of Tanzania showed a 153 percent increase in condom distribution in the broadcast areas during the first year of the soap opera, while condom distribution in the Dodoma non-broadcast area increased only 16 percent in the same time period (see Figure 2) (Singhal & Rogers, 1999).

The program also had a significant effect in raising the ideal age of marriage for women and the ideal age of first birth for women (Singhal et al., 2003).

Because of its experimental design, the evaluation results were able to disaggregate the effects of the radio serial drama from other family planning promotion and HIV/AIDS prevention programs being implemented throughout Tanzania. In regions where Twende na Wakati was broadcast, the percentage of married women who were currently using a family planning method increased 10 percentage points in the first 2 years of the program, while that percentage stayed flat in the Dodoma non-broadcast area during the time the program was not broadcast there. Then, when the program was broadcast in Dodoma, the contraceptive prevalence rate there increased 16 percentage points. In a sample of 21 clinics in regions where the program was broadcast, the average number of new family planning adopters per clinic increased by 32 percent from June 1993 (the month before the show began airing) to December 1994. Over the same period, the average number of new adopters at clinics in the Dodoma area remained essentially flat (see Figure 3) (Singhal et al., 2003).

Figure 3: Twende na Wakati (Tanzania): Increases in Contraceptive Prevalence Rate and Increase in Number of New Adopters of Family Planning in Broadcast and Non-Broadcast Areas

Figure 2: Twende na Wakati (Tanzania) Increase in Condom Use in Broadcast and Non-Broadcast Areas


Independent data from Ministry of Health clinics showed that 41 percent of new adopters of family planning methods were influenced by the serial drama to seek family planning. This percentage included 25 percent who cited the serial drama by name when asked why they had come to the clinic, and another 16 percent who cited “something on the radio” and then identified the serial drama when shown a list of programs currently on the air. Another family planning serial drama using a different methodology that was broadcast nationwide by Radio Tanzania at the same time was cited by just 11 percent of new family planning adopters at the same Ministry of Health clinics (see Figure 4) (Singhal et al., 2003). These data point to the importance of the methodology used in the design of the serial drama.
Counting all of the costs of the radio serial, the cost per new adopter of family planning was about 32 cents (U.S.). The cost per person who changed behavior to avoid HIV/AIDS was 8 cents (U.S.).

6. ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia, Population Media Center (PMC) produced a radio serial drama, Yeken Kignit (“Looking Over One’s Daily Life”), which was broadcast over Radio Ethiopia in 257 episodes between June 2, 2002 and November 27, 2004. Yeken Kignit addressed issues of reproductive health and women’s status, including HIV/AIDS, family planning, marriage by abduction, education of daughters, spousal communication and related issues.

To monitor results of the program during broadcast, PMC conducted three rounds of facility assessments (client exit interviews) in 48 health clinics during 2003 and 2004. The first facility assessment was completed in February 2003 and consisted of interviews with 4,084 clients. The second assessment, which included interviews with 4,858 clients, was completed in April 2004. The third round was completed in November 2004, and included interviews with 3,649 clients.

Each succeeding assessment report showed an increase in the percentage of both male and female clients citing radio as the primary motivating factor in seeking health services: for example, only 6.3 percent of all clients in the first assessment (February 2003) cited radio as the primary motivation for seeking services; this proportion had grown to 18.8 percent by the third assessment in November 2004 (see Figure 5).

Among those who cited radio as the primary motivation to seek services, there was an increase in the percentage of clients who cited Yeken Kignit by name. By the time of the third assessment, 84 percent cited Yeken Kignit, an increase of 16 percentage points from the first assessment. There was a concurrent decrease of 16 percentage points among those clients who named any other radio program on the air.

Figure 4: Twende na Wakati (Tanzania)
Percent of New Adopters of Family Planning and Reasons Motivating Use

Figure 5: Yeken Kignit (Ethiopia)
Percent of Clients Citing Radio as Their Primary Motivation to Seek Services: Differences Between the First, Second and Third Assessments

Figure 6: Yeken Kignit (Ethiopia)
Percent of Radio-Motivated Clients Citing a Specific Radio Program: Differences Between the First, Second and Third Assessments
One reason for the decrease between the second and third assessments in the percentage of clients naming Yeken Kignit as their primary motivation to seek services was the increase in the percentage citing a second PMC serial drama, Dhimbiba (“Getting the Most Out of Life”), which was in the Oromiffa language. Between the second and third assessments, the percentage naming Dhimbiba rose from 3.7 percent to 11.3 percent. Other than PMC’s programs, by the time of the third assessment, only 4.4 percent of clients named any of the other programs on Radio Ethiopia as a motivation for seeking services.

An independent research firm evaluated the impact of Yeken Kignit in December 2004. This study showed significant results regarding family planning and HIV/AIDS knowledge. The results also showed evidence of behavior change: most notably in terms of use of family planning methods, and in willingness to be tested for HIV. In most cases, there were significant differences in these knowledge and behavior change measures between listeners and non-listeners of the program, showing that Yeken Kignit had a differential effect on knowledge and behavior between listeners and non-listeners.

Figure 7 demonstrates the differences among listeners and non-listeners regarding current use of family planning. Among married women who were listeners to Yeken Kignit, current use of any family planning method increased from 12.3 percent to 43.5 percent (a 31.2 percentage point increase). Among non-listeners, use increased from 12.3 percent to 31.1 percent, an increase of only 18.8 percentage points. Among married men who were listeners to Yeken Kignit, current use of any method increased from 18.1 percent to 42.4 percent, an increase of 24.3 percentage points. Among non-listeners, use increased by only 14.6 percentage points.

Current use of modern family planning methods also increased significantly among listeners, compared to non-listeners (see Figure 8). For example, use of a modern method of family planning by married women who were listeners to Yeken Kignit increased from 11.7 percent to 40.2 percent, a 28.3 percentage point change. Among non-listeners, use increased by only 18.2 percentage points (from 11.7 percent to 29.9 percent). Among married men who were listeners to Yeken Kignit, current use of modern methods increased from 15.6 percent to 41.3 percent, an increase of 25.7 percentage points. Among non-listeners, use increased by only 15.1 percentage points.

Figure 9 shows the differences measured in ever use of family planning among listeners and non-listeners. Among listeners, ever use among married women increased from 23.9 percent at baseline to 79 percent (an increase of 55.1 percentage points). Among non-listeners, ever use increased by only 23.5 percentage points, from 23.9 percent to 47.4 percent. Among married men who are listeners to Yeken Kignit, ever use increased from 28.3 percent to 69.6 percent, an increase of 41.3 percentage points. Among non-listeners, ever use increased by only 16.1 percentage points.
The percentage of respondents who know how to determine HIV sero-status increased considerably after listening to Yeken Kignit (see Figures 10 and 11). The proportion of those who said that there is “no way to determine” one’s HIV status declined from 37.3 percent among women and 34.1 percent among men to 9.8 percent and 8.6 percent, respectively, after listening to Yeken Kignit.

The percentage of people who had taken a blood test for HIV after listening to Yeken Kignit more than tripled for women, and more than quadrupled for men (see Figure 11).

PMC’s program in Ethiopia produced significant knowledge and behavioral change results. In addition to the above, the evaluation research also determined the following:

- 45 percent of women and 47 percent of men identified themselves as regular listeners to the program.
- The fertility rate fell from 5.4 to 4.3 children per woman.
- Demand for contraceptives increased 157 percent.
- Listeners to Yeken Kignit were 5 times more likely than non-listeners to know 3 or more family planning methods.
- Spousal communication about family planning issues among currently married women climbed from 33 percent to 68 percent.
- There was a corresponding decrease of 70 percent in the proportion of respondents to the surveys who said that the decision to use family planning should be made solely by the husband.
- There was a 50 percent increase in communication between mothers and their children about sexuality issues.
- There was a 52 percentage point increase among men and 21 percentage point increase among women in recognition of the importance of girls’ education.
- There was a 35 percentage point increase among men and 13 percentage point increase among women in the belief that women are fit to hold public office.

An excerpt from one listener’s letter shows the impact PMC’s programs are having on people’s lives across Ethiopia:

“I am the mother of many children. Nobody cares about the desperate situation I am in. Instead, what I hear from the women around me is that a woman gets respect when she is a mother. It was while your radio program was discussing programs like family planning and spaced childbirth that I learned about things that affect me very much, including the value of small families.”
A letter from another listener discusses how the program has made her daughter safer from abduction:

“The story of Wubalem reflects clearly the harmful traditional practices in our country such as abduction and sexual violence. These practices have prevented us from sending our girls to school. We were afraid that they would be abducted. Our first child was married at the age of 14 after she was abducted. We were worrying for years as we thought that our second child would face a similar fate. The radio drama focusing on abduction and sexual violence that you have presented and the discussions conducted on these topics have aroused considerable popular indignation. The people have now strongly condemned such inhuman traditional practices. Unlike in the past, special punitive measures have been taken by community people against offenders involved in such crimes. As a result, we have no worry in sending our girls to school. Our children go to school safely and return unharmed. Please keep the program on the air.”

7. CONCLUSION

Because entertainment programming (radio or television, depending on the coverage of each medium in any country) attracts the largest audiences, it is particularly important to utilize entertainment media for disseminating information about reproductive health issues. Along with that, many communications experts state that the most effective way of bringing about changes in attitudes and behavior with regard to any social issue is to utilize as many channels of communication simultaneously as possible, including print and broadcast, news and information, various formats of entertainment programs, and the communication activities of governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Examples of successful media campaigns that have utilized this strategy include the designated driver campaign of Harvard University and the smoking prevention campaign carried out by a coalition of organizations in the United States. It is logical to infer that people learn and change behaviors more quickly when they are hearing consistent information from a variety of sources.

For this reason, PMC works to develop comprehensive media campaigns in the countries where it is carrying out projects. The strategy uses the best of what has been done in the past, and builds on it in each country with intensive broadcast and print coverage of issues related to sexual risk behavior. In this way, PMC intends to contribute to rapid change in the health-related behavior of people worldwide.

In each country in which it works, PMC tries to build a collaborative process with radio and/or television broadcasters, appropriate government ministries, and nongovernmental organizations to design and implement a comprehensive media strategy for addressing family and reproductive health issues. This involves identifying the various cultural issues and prevailing attitudes affecting decision making about sexual risk behaviors within the country, analyzing barriers and opportunities for effective use of the mass media for promoting reproductive health, and developing an action plan that incorporates as much of the broadcast media as possible in a concerted campaign designed to promote sexual and reproductive health. The focus of this work is on reaching producers and writers of prime-time entertainment programs with information that will help them enhance the ratings of their programs through incorporating information about family life that audience members want. In most cases, use of specially designed social-content serial dramas is the centerpiece of the strategy, because of the known effectiveness of this approach in changing attitudes and behaviors.

PMC provides people with entertainment and information to help them make informed decisions without telling them what to do. PMC’s approach emphasizes non-coercive, informed decision-making, tailored in each case to local needs and circumstances. Programs are designed to promote human health and dignity by providing education and examples of various alternatives and their consequences.

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CHAPTER 9

The Successful Application of a Comprehensive Behavior Change Communication Program in Ethiopia and Implications for Communication Projects Elsewhere

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Photo by Katie Elmore
1. INTRODUCTION

Radio is changing lives in Ethiopia. Since the beginning of its operation in Ethiopia in 2000, PMC has made significant contributions to the improvement of reproductive and sexual health and family planning, including HIV/AIDS, in the country.

This chapter describes the steps that PMC followed in developing and implementing its comprehensive behavior change communication program in Ethiopia. The paper will show how the strategy was successfully applied, and will provide implications of this experience for communication projects elsewhere.

2. BACKGROUND

Ethiopia has a population of 77 million – the second largest on the continent of Africa (after Nigeria). Ethiopia’s growth rate of 2.4 percent translates to a doubling time of 29 years. The country was the 20th most populous country in the world in 1998, but by 2050, if current trends continue, it will be the 9th most populous country in the world with a population of 169 million (Central Statistical Agency, 2006).

Ethiopia is one of the least developed countries in the world with GDP in purchasing power parity per capita of USD 810. Close to half of the population lives below the international poverty line, and close to half (47 percent) of Ethiopia’s children are stunted. There are complex and interrelated factors which account for this state of affairs. Among the most important is the imbalance between population growth and the development and utilization of life-sustaining resources (Central Statistical Agency, 2006).

According to various sources, the status of women and girls in Ethiopia is among the lowest in the world. Marriage by rape and abduction of adolescent girls is common in Ethiopia (10.8 percent of marriages are by abduction in the Oromia Region), and childbearing often starts before adulthood (Central Statistical Agency, 2006).

Although Ethiopia has made tremendous progress in recent years to advance economic and social development, to alleviate poverty, and to improve the lives of its people, the combined forces of adverse climatic conditions, a low level of technological development and a rapidly growing population are working against these positive efforts (Office of the Prime Minister, 1993).

Because of inadequate family planning services and prevailing socio-cultural beliefs and practices that inhibit contraceptive use, fertility has remained high, at about 5.4 children per woman, which is among the highest rates in Africa. Although there have been efforts to increase access to family planning services since 1993, the contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) was still only 8 percent in 2000. However, recent estimates indicate that the CPR in Ethiopia increased to about 18 percent by 2004, which is a significant improvement; but which is still very low compared to other countries in Eastern and Southern Africa (Central Statistical Agency, 2005).

Ethiopia is the third most-affected African country with regard to HIV/AIDS, following South Africa and Nigeria. Results from the 2005 EDHS indicate that 1.4 percent of Ethiopian adults age 15-19 are infected with HIV. Among children less than 15 years of age, 2 percent are HIV positive. HIV prevalence among women is nearly 2 percent, while for men 15-49, it is just under 1 percent. In addition, 1.1 percent of pregnancies are HIV positive.

According to the National HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office sixth report in 2006, there were an estimated 1,319,795 Ethiopians living with HIV/AIDS. Of these 30,338 were children, and 128,922 were newly infected. There were also 134,450 annual AIDS deaths in the adult population, 300,330 HIV positive births and a total of 744,088 orphans in Ethiopia caused by AIDS (Ministry of Health, 2006).

3. NEED FOR A NEW BEHAVIOR CHANGE COMMUNICATION PARADIGM

In spite of the effort made by the Ethiopian government and various nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), cultural barriers towards using family planning and changing sexual behavior to prevent HIV/AIDS are still prevalent.

One of the reasons for the lack of success in bringing about behavior change with regard to family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention is the lack of preparation in the design and dissemination of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials. For example, a literature review conducted in 2001 on IEC activities in Ethiopia indicated that these IEC materials and programs were not prepared on the basis of research findings (Population Media Center – Ethiopia, 2005).

Armed with this information, Population Media Center-Ethiopia (PMC-Ethiopia) started activities in the country with the overall objective of promoting reproductive health, including STIs/HIV/AIDS prevention activities, through research-based media communication projects that are believed to be instrumental in bringing about behavior and attitude change.

One of the major reasons for the success of PMC media communication projects in general, and the radio serial dramas in particular, is the extensive use of formative research, sophisticated audience research methods, pretesting, use of multiple media to target the message, and monitoring and evaluation.

4. PMC’S SERIAL DRAMAS IN ETHIOPIA

PMC broadcast two radio serial dramas from June 2002 through November 2004. Yeken Kignit (“Looking Over One’s
In total, 257 episodes of scriptwriters to write and produce the two serial dramas. The serial dramas were developed using the Sabido methodology for behavior change communication using mass media, in which characters in long-running serial dramas are designed to evolve over time into positive role models for the audience. The methodology is based on various communication and social science theories, including the Social Learning/Social Cognitive Theory of Stanford psychologist Albert Bandura, which posits that people acquire attitudes, values, and styles of behavior primarily through vicarious role modeling.

The issues covered in the radio programs were identified through formative research, which highlighted a need for behavior change in various areas, including reproductive health, family planning, HIV/AIDS, elevation of women's status, early marriage, marriage by abduction, education of girls, and spousal communication.

The formative research consisted of a literature review, a media analysis, and a health services situation analysis.

The literature review revealed that numerous beliefs, misconceptions, attitudes, and practices surround reproductive health and related issues in Ethiopia. The review also indicated that Ethiopian women are discriminated against in many aspects of social and economic life, even though the 1994 constitution grants gender equality. The review further showed that IEC activities significantly contributed to high levels of awareness about family planning and other reproductive health issues, but that a considerable gap between knowledge and changes in behavior still existed. The review concluded that in order to improve the reproductive health status of the population, PMC should utilize new strategies that are aimed at bringing about changes in beliefs, attitudes, and behavior.

Following the literature review, qualitative and quantitative research was conducted to identify reproductive health issues of concern and to assess potential audience members' attitudes toward these issues. Based on the findings of the formative research, PMC worked with a team of producers and scriptwriters to write and produce the two serial dramas.

In total, 257 episodes of Yekeyn Kignit and 140 episodes of Dhimbibba were broadcast over the two and a half year period. Of a nationwide population of 76 million people, no less than 40 million people listened to one of PMC's programs.

The radio serial dramas were closely monitored through 50 strategically established listeners' groups, quarterly organized focus group discussions, 48 facility assessment centers (client exit interviews) and analysis of listeners’ letters.

In 2004, 14,400 client interviews were conducted in 48 clinics within the listening area to determine motivation of new clients seeking services. These surveys found that among new clients seeking reproductive health services, 63 percent had listened to one of the two programs, and 26 percent indicated that PMC's programs were the primary reason they were seeking care. Of all clients citing radio as a source of information about reproductive health, 96 percent specifically named one of PMC's two radio dramas.

During the 30 months of broadcasting, program staff received 15,000 letters from listeners, who shared the personal impact the program had on them.

Ethiopia's news media ran almost a hundred stories on the soap opera phenomenon PMC had created.

According to comments by participants in the first PMC-Ethiopia annual program review meeting in 2003, "the high caliber studies undertaken by PMC have really addressed the needs of the people."

Post-broadcast research, completed in 2005, showed significant results in terms of family planning and HIV/AIDS knowledge; and more importantly, in terms of behavior change. Most notable were increases in the use of family planning methods and in seeking tests for HIV. In most cases, there were significant differences in these knowledge and behavior change measures between listeners and non-listeners to Yekeyn Kignit and Dhimbibba, showing that the project had a differential effect on knowledge and behavior change between listeners and non-listeners.

Below are findings from an end-of-project evaluation conducted to assess the impact of the radio serial dramas; that is, to determine the extent to which each of the issues were addressed effectively, to measure the achievements of the programs, and to draw the lessons learned therein. According to the report, some of the changes that occurred include (Population Media Center – Ethiopia, 2005):

- Demand for contraceptives increased 157 percent during the period of broadcast.
- Communication between mothers and their children about sexuality issues increased 50 percent.
- Spousal communication about family planning issues among married women climbed from 33 percent to 68 percent.
- The 2005 Demographic and Health Survey found independently that, since 2000, contraceptive prevalence in Ethiopia had increased 133 percent.
- The belief that female circumcision should be discontinued increased from 59 percent to 77 percent among men and from 53 percent to 79 percent among women.
98 percent of listeners recognized that having more children than they could financially support would lead to an economic and social crisis.

97 percent of listeners could identify three ways that HIV is transmitted.

There was an increase in the belief that a woman can negotiate condom use of 15 percentage points among women and 26 percentage points among men.

There was a reduction among listeners in the stigma against people affected by HIV/AIDS.

Listeners were 5 times more likely than non-listeners to know 3 or more family planning methods.

Among married women in the Amhara region who were listeners, there was a 55 percentage point increase in those who had ever used family planning methods, while among non-listeners the change was only 24 percentage points. A similar increase occurred among male listeners in the Amhara region.

Male listeners sought HIV tests at 4 times the rate of non-listeners, and female listeners sought tests at 3 times the rate of non-listeners.

The fertility rate in Amhara (the most populous region) fell from 5.4 to 4.3 children per woman.

There was a 52 percentage point increase among men and a 21 percentage point increase among women in recognizing the importance of girls’ education.

There was a 35 percentage point increase among men and a 13 percentage point increase among women in the belief that women are fit to hold public office.

A multiple regression analysis was done to eliminate any effects that such factors as income, educational level, age, marital status, urban or rural place of residence, ethnic group, or language may have had on family planning use or HIV testing, and the results continued to show significant effects of the serial drama.

PMC’s first serial drama project in Ethiopia was supported by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office of the Government of Ethiopia (HAPCO), the Hughes Memorial Foundation, the Flora L. Thornton Foundation, CARE-Ethiopia, and 35 individual contributors.

HOW PMC APPLIED THE SABIDO METHODOLOGY IN ETHIOPIA

1. Organized two consensus building and experience sharing workshops: one with partner agencies (such as governmental and nongovernmental organizations, including media agencies) and one with playwrights, radio drama program producers, media and theatre arts practitioners to
   • introduce the PMC program objectives and the importance of research-based entertainment-education in changing behavior;
   • share experiences, avoid duplication and reach a consensus on issues and approaches/intervention strategies; and
   • establish partnerships and generate support for the PMC project.

2. Conducted a literature review of over 200 research documents, evaluation reports, policies, guidelines on population, reproductive health, information, education and communication (IEC) and HIV/AIDS prevention communication activities. The purposes of the literature review were to
   • examine the full range of issues and identify gaps;
   • identify issues on which information is still missing;
   • identify intervention gaps;
   • identify gaps in current knowledge, attitudes and practices;
   • identify stakeholders;
   • identify barriers to the elimination of harmful practices;
   • assess the status of IEC/behavior change communication (BCC) activities in Ethiopia including the capacity of implementing agencies;
   • identify research and information gaps; and
   • analyze the effectiveness of IEC/BCC programs.

3. Conducted a media assessment to
   • explore the strengths and weaknesses of social-content radio and television programs;
   • evaluate their impact on the audience; and
   • learn lessons from the past and design research-based, social-content radio serial dramas.

4. Conducted formative research to
   • assess the current status of knowledge, attitudes and behavior regarding reproductive health and family planning, HIV/AIDS and other social issues among the target audience;
   • provide information for the design of culturally sensitive, appropriate and acceptable radio serial dramas;
   • generate audience focused qualitative information for creative writers;
PMC’s comprehensive media communication approach in Ethiopia includes radio serial dramas, audiocassette programs, video documentaries, poems and short stories, a comprehensive plan for the training of journalists, and even a staged theatrical production.

PMC produced and distributed a third serial drama on audiocassettes. *Maleda* (“Dawn”) was initially designed in collaboration with Save the Children, USA, for high-risk mobile workers along the truck routes between Addis Ababa and Djibouti. The program was originally recorded on audio cassette and distributed to members of these high-risk groups. The evaluation of impact showed that the program was very popular among truck drivers and sex workers, but also among the general population, who made copies of the program tapes and listened faithfully to every episode. The evaluation also showed that the program had very positive effects on the behavior of listeners. The program was so successful that PMC received funding from the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office of the government of Ethiopia to extend the program and broadcast it on Radio Ethiopia and FM Addis. *Maleda* was broadcast from May 2005 to September 2006.

PMC also received support from the Packard Foundation for two additional projects in Ethiopia, designed to involve the creative community in addressing population and reproductive health issues. These projects included:

- a Media Arts project that created traveling stage plays to address reproductive health issues; developed two video documentaries on population and HIV/AIDS issues in Ethiopia; and held contests for the best short stories and poems that address reproductive health issues; and
- a Journalists’ Capacity Building project that trained journalists, playwrights and theatre art experts to better cover reproductive health issues.

Under the Media Arts project, PMC published a collection of national prize-winning short stories and poems focusing on HIV/AIDS and related social issues in 2003 under the title *Yehiwot Tebitawoch* (“Drops of Life”). The creative pieces were selected from among 146 short stories and 176 poems submitted in response to a national competition for the best poems and short stories that address reproductive health and HIV/AIDS issues. Ten thousand copies of this book were published and distributed throughout Ethiopia. A second volume of short stories was published in 2004 as a result of a second nationwide competition. The book, *Kinfam Hilmoch* (“Winged Dreams”), was also widely distributed. A third book, *Wenzoch Eskimolu* (“Waiting for the Rivers to Rise”), was published and
distributed in 2006. PMC also produced a full-length stage play entitled *Yesak Jember* (“Laughter at Dusk”), focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention. The stage play was launched in September 2003, and was attended by former president of Ethiopia Dr. Negasso Gidada. The play was staged in the capital for 5 months, followed by performances in 14 other cities around Ethiopia. The script was then given to local drama groups for adaptation (Population Media Center – Ethiopia, 2006).

The emphasis of the Journalists’ Capacity Building project was to enhance the ability of journalists, playwrights and theatre art experts to accurately portray reproductive health issues. The project had many facets, including a rapid needs assessment, a training manual, workshops, a forum on media for development, a resource center for information and documentation, and a fund to support students and scholars who undertake research in the field of reproductive and population communications.

As part of this project, PMC held four training workshops attended by 149 journalists and took nine journalists on a study trip to South Africa. PMC established an information resource center for journalists in Addis Ababa and held two national symposia on news coverage of reproductive health issues, which were attended by over 100 journalists. The results from the symposia included 70 print news stories in major papers and magazines in Ethiopia documenting the problems of population, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS. In addition, there were 80 radio and television interviews and panel discussion programs on reproductive health issues broadcast throughout the country. PMC presented five journalists with awards for their excellent coverage of these issues.

As of 2005 and 2006, PMC received support from UNICEF, HAPCO and the Flora L. Thornton Foundation to develop and broadcast a youth-focused radio serialized melodrama to motivate young people to adopt positive behaviors regarding HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, and related social issues. The program, *Menta Menged* (“Crossroads”), was broadcast on Radio Ethiopia and FM Addis from March 2005 to March 2007. The evaluation of *Menta Menged* demonstrated that it had significant behavioral effects among listeners. These included the following:

- Listeners were 3.2 times more likely to know about STIs than non-listeners;
- Listeners were 2.5 times more likely to discuss issues relating to HIV/AIDS than non-listeners;
- Listeners were 1.8 times more likely to take measures to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS infection than non-listeners;
- Listeners were 3.2 times more likely to know about voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) than non-listeners; and
- Listeners were 1.4 times more likely to be tested for HIV/AIDS than non-listeners.

This same project involved production of a talk radio program aimed at youth. The program, *Alegnta* (“Security”), has been on the air since October 2005, with phone-ins from audience members and youth-led panel discussions with experts. The *Alegnta* project also involves production of print materials for youth on reproductive and sexual health issues. A total of five booklets have been published, with 32,000 copies of each distributed, along with four leaflets of which 40,000 copies of each were distributed.

Today, many Ethiopians crowd around a single radio set when the PMC radio program starts. It has even been observed that small shopkeepers take time out of their dealings with customers when the episodes are on the air. What better proof than this is there of the people’s deep interest in the social problems affecting their communities? The more involvement and participation there is in such matters, the better is the future of the Ethiopian society likely to be.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE PMC EXPERIENCE FOR COMMUNICATION PROJECTS ELSEWHERE

The Sabido methodology could also be used in development communication projects in thematic areas other than reproductive health, family planning, and HIV/AIDS. For example:

- The prevention and control of malaria using insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs). Millions of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America die from malaria every year. ITNs have been proven to be an effective means of preventing the bites from mosquitoes that cause malaria. Behavior change communication programs using the Sabido methodology could be very effective in motivating people to use ITNs.
• The eradication of harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM). It is estimated that over 130 million girls and women have undergone the practice, and at least 2 million girls each year are at risk of this practice. It has a devastating effect on the health of young girls and women, and it affects the physical, mental and social lives of women and girl children. Radio serial dramas using the Sabido methodology can help to eradicate this practice.

• Prevention of violence against women. This is also common in many countries. A large number of women suffer from gender-based violence. Communication programs can be designed to protect women from all forms of violence and in particular from gender-based violence.

• Promotion of oral rehydration salts (ORS). Diarrheal diseases are common causes of morbidity and mortality among children in many developing countries. Behavior change communication programs using role modeling can show mothers and other care givers how to prepare and use this life-saving treatment to save the lives of children with diarrheal diseases.

• Promotion of safe motherhood. Maternal morbidity and mortality can be reduced significantly through safe motherhood practices. Communication programs can be effective in promoting safe motherhood and in reducing maternal and child morbidity.

Letters and Real-Life Stories

“Sir, Your drama has demonstrated to me the interdependence of social problems in our society. These problems are, of course, well known – HIV/AIDS, population and lack of family planning. Your drama has made me feel more determined to work for the well-being of HIV/AIDS patients in my locality. I have decided to dedicate my efforts in this direction in order to show the gravity of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Most important of all, I have realized that HIV/AIDS patients require the utmost understanding from health personnel. I thank you very much for making me aware of this.”

Engidayehu Dekeba
Pharmacy Technician
Bale, Ethiopia

“I admire your drama. I appreciate its educational role. Its messages are very valuable…I have learned many things from it and have changed my attitude.”

Yenegata Alehegne
Wukro, Ethiopia

“As for HIV/AIDS, the people here believe that it is a problem limited to urban centers, and that it has no relevance to rural areas. Your drama is telling them that this is wrong. I have undergone a change of behavior because of the drama…I encourage you to keep up the good work.”

Lema Tesfaye
Arssi, Ethiopia

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CHAPTER 10

Social Merchandising: Contributing to the Empowerment and Autonomy of Communities

Márcio R. Schiavo
Comunicarte
1. INTRODUCTION

In 1967, Miguel Sabido, then Vice-President of Communications Research of Televisa, the most important television station in Mexico, proposed the idea that commercial television could be used to propagate educational messages, with the goal of stimulating social development. His proposal was based on the assumption that it is possible to promote social causes on a large scale, without compromising sales potential or the audience size expected of a commercial television station. After some experimentation, he developed an efficient methodology to transmit teachings and information to the public; including information about the use of the infrastructure, services, and equipment available to the public. The first serial drama produced by Sabido using the specific aforementioned methodology was Ven Conmigo (“Come With Me”), the success of which was cemented when thousands of people enrolled into the Sistema Nacional de Educación de Adultos, (SNEA) or National System of Education for Adults, as a result of watching the serial drama.

In order to optimize the benefits of his methodology, Sabido successfully developed a process of production and evaluation for serial dramas with social content. His second work was called Acompáñame (“Accompany Me”), and had family planning as the central theme. Family planning was, at this time, an issue surrounded by taboos and misinformation. The evaluation of this serial drama demonstrated important changes in the sexual and reproductive behavior of the viewers. There was a particularly noticeable development in the use of the family planning services and, consequently, methods of contraception. In 1979 two other serial dramas approached this theme. Vamos Juntos (“Let’s Go Together”) centered on principles of responsible paternity, demonstrating that married couples have the right to decide if they want to have children, how many children they will have and when they will have them. Caminemos (“Let’s Walk”), in turn, approached questions related to frequent pregnancies, and defended sexual education for teens and adolescents.

In 1981, at the International Institute of Communication Conference (IICC) in Strasbourg, France, Sabido presented an essay called Theory of Entertainment-Education, which created large repercussions among the specialists present. People’s perspectives were opened, and there was demand created for the methodology to be brought to other countries also searching for ways to promote social issues on a grand scale (Sabido, 1981). Research conducted by Rubén Jara, of the Mexican Institute of Communication; Lawrence Kincaid, of John Hopkins University; and Arvind Singhal and Maisha Hazzard, of Ohio University, scientifically demonstrated the efficacy of the methodology developed by Miguel Sabido. At a later point, studies by Everett Rogers, of the Annenberg School of Communication of the University of Southern California, reached similar conclusions (Rogers et al., 1986).

Between 1984 and 1985, David Poindexter took the first step in exporting the methodology and organized a training workshop in India taught by Sabido. This led to the production and broadcast of the first social-content serial drama in that country. Hum Log (“We People”), addressed themes of family planning and the promotion of equal rights between the sexes. It was an immediate success, with more than 90 percent of Indian families watching. In the second half of the 1980s, the methodology was being promoted in several countries, namely Kenya, Nigeria, Jamaica, China, Indonesia and the Philippines. In Brazil, the success of entertainment-education gave rise to a new strategy: social merchandising, which is the focus of this paper. Previously, in the field of education-entertainment, few productions in Brazil were known. The series O Sítio do Pica-Pau Amarelo (“The Small Farm of the Yellow Woodpecker”) and the soap opera Joãozinho e o Pé de Feijão (“Little John and the Bean’s Foot”) stand out as shows intended to promote supplementary adult education.

1.2 The Socio-Educational Use of Serial Dramas

The use of entertainment in education is not a new idea. A playful component to education can be found in practically all pedagogical methods and, particularly, in adult education. This playful aspect extends to activities in rural areas, programs for professional development or literacy, as well as in “high-tech” courses for executives; in all areas, play and entertainment facilitates learning. In mass communication, educational uses are commonly associated with communication campaigns. With the Sabido methodology as a base, combined with Sabido’s experiences in producing telenovelas in the 1970s, the concepts and practices of entertainment-education were systematized. Entertainment-education was defined as “the process through which one inserts educational messages in the context of entertainment, with the explicit objective of increasing knowledge about a determined issue, constructing favorable attitudes, and provoking changes in behavior with regard to the issues or topics addressed (Singhal, 1988).

The diverse applications of entertainment-education have clearly demonstrated the efficacy of using television and serial dramas to support communication of socio-educational messages. In essence, due to its broad acceptance and wide coverage, television constitutes the ideal medium for implementation of this methodology.

Serial dramas on Latin American television are defined by their continuity, frequency of programming on large television networks, and by the process of identification or distancing from the viewer. The nature of serial dramas, therefore, provides excellent opportunities for discussion of sensitive issues, as well as permitting the conscious adoption of behaviors that contribute to bettering quality of life. In Brazil, this is still true, as high caliber serial dramas (telenovelas)
are produced and successfully exported to dozens of countries. Brazil’s telenovelas are recognized throughout the world. These serial dramas often attain viewership of 70 to 80 percent of the total television audience during the times they are on the air.

The influence that serial dramas exert, or can exert, on the attitudes and behaviors of the typical Brazilian viewer has been the object of many studies. Maria Tereza Monteiro is the director of the Retrato Consultoria, a company which, since 1987, has carried out qualitative research on the Brazilian serial dramas, primarily those produced by the television station TV Globo. Monteiro revealed that “watching telenovelas has become a habit that is extremely valued by the female population in particular, providing a break in their normal routine, which is afflicted by practically no leisure time. Through this, women develop a deep and visceral connection with the serial drama, which offers them entertainment, realization of their fantasies, and up-to-date information and culture.”

It is unarguable that serial dramas, and television in general, are excellent media for the diffusion of educational and cultural messages to people devoid of informative and educational resources. Anthropologist Esther Hamburger defended a theory at the University of Chicago, contradicting the old image that Brazilian telenovelas would be instruments that alienate the public. She says that, actually, the telenovelas function like a chronicle of the nation, propagating the image of a more modern country, and amplifying advanced values for the viewers that part from traditionalism. For example, in general, female characters are strong, financially independent women that have their own sex lives. They have few children and, frequently, constitute the head of the nuclear family.

1.3 Telenovelas and Social Merchandising

It is certain that this modern image does not portray the universe of the feminine experience in Brazilian society, still marked by machismo and sexist preconceptions. However, it points to the transformations that have been occurring over the last decade – valuing the social role of women and, in many aspects, raising women to a position of equality with men. This direct connection with a present or possible reality is one of the basic characteristics of entertainment-education in Brazil, systemized under the name social merchandising. Social merchandising is also a strategy of directed social education with large audiences. Social merchandising consists of intentional and systematic insertion of educational messages in a telenovela or mini-series; messages addressing questions of sexual and reproductive health, family planning, sexual relations, abortion, drug abuse prevention, and STIs/ HIV/AIDS, and themes related to biodiversity and sustainable development. These messages can be inserted into the main plot, or in one of the parallel sub-plots. Thus, the themes can interact with numerous stories, compounding moments in the lives of the characters, and doing so in such a way that the characters become agents for expression of opinion and values.

Telenovelas and mini-series are utilized to support the dissemination of socio-cultural innovations to a large contingent population, maximizing the huge reach and influence of these dramatic works on the behaviors, attitudes, and practices of the population and, in particular, of adolescents and youth. The social issues addressed are relayed to the viewer as an integral part of the plot of the telenovela or mini-series, appearing linked, in an educational and positive format, with the characters and present conflicts in the story. As such, the characters become spokesperson for the concepts and attitudes that are promoted. The audience associates with the pleasantness, empathy and charisma evoked by the messages, as well as with the fame and the credibility of the actors and actresses that represent them. Social merchandising, therefore, is an excellent strategy for approaching and discussing social themes, with the objective of informing and educating viewers. Whether indicators of impact are the number of people reached, or audience members’ ability to recall the messages – social merchandising is a far superior strategy to the traditional strategies of information, education, and communication (IEC).

But, social merchandising is not limited to simply raising awareness of social problems. In addition, it emphasizes the options for reaching a solution, indicates strategies for efficient and simple actions to be taken, and illustrates the easy application of the demonstrated actions to the viewers. Another qualitative indicator is the range and nature of the issues addressed. Since the beginning of the application of social merchandising, the priority issues have been about sexuality, reproductive and sexual health, gender relations, paternity and/or responsible maternity. In recent years, however, the approach is also being used to raise questions regarding more sensitive issues – issues that society is becoming more active about – such as the rights of women and children, child abuse and sexual exploitation, domestic violence, the quality of life of the elderly, unemployment, and underpaid work, among others. This thematic evolution can be explained by two motives; the first is an intrinsic characteristic of social merchandising – its contemporary nature. In order to be effective in the proposed purposes of generating and maintaining change, social merchandising should be in direct connection with the current realities and experiences of the viewers. Secondly, the effectiveness of social merchandising depends on the degree of acceptance of the serial drama; thus, the experiences of the viewers need to be taken into account. This is accomplished by developing elaborate scenes and/or situations that are close to real-life situations experienced by the viewers, and by forming scenes about the issues of most concern to the viewers.
2. SOCIAL MERCHANDISING: METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Latin American telenovelas are open dramatic works. When they begin the broadcast season, only about 20 or 30 episodes are recorded, of a total of 180 or 200. The subsequent episodes are written and recorded as the drama is being broadcast, in response to the reactions of the viewers. Because of this, the public can be considered as a sort of co-author of the story. Indeed, avid viewers do not watch the telenovelas passively: they react, suggest potential future paths, change attitudes and demand answers. The broadcasters and the sponsors are always aware of these reactions, as they define the nature of the drama’s reception by the audience. The social merchandising scenes and situations to be inserted therefore cannot be presented as predetermined and complete, determined at the beginning of the work. The social merchandising scenes and situations are often pivotal turning points in the story to be told. It is in this characteristic, precisely, that the force of persuasion resides.

Social merchandising, therefore, must be planned, created and developed while the story is unfolding, perfectly integrated into the central plot and the parallel story lines of the serial drama. In this way, the unforeseen reactions, situations, and opportunities that develop after broadcast of the initial episodes of the serial drama can be utilized, and the writers can continue creating the story – always based in the indicators and reception from the viewers.

Mini-series follow the same formal structure of the telenovelas, but the number of chapters is much smaller (in general, around 20 episodes). In addition to this difference, when a mini-series is initiated, all of the chapters are written and recorded prior to broadcast. Thus, the eventual changes that can occur during the production process do not have as significant a meaning in terms of new content development. Therefore, any action of social merchandising in mini-series must be determined well before the beginning of production. A mini-series is usually about 22.5 hours long, a schedule that is conducive to exhibiting scenes with major impact and/or with more sensitive subjects. Important to note is that when a telenovela or mini-series is about a particularly notable event or story from history, it is usually not possible to insert scenes of merchandising (be they commercial or social). An example of that is the Brazilian telenovela, A Escrava Isaura (“The Slave Isaura”), which portrayed the socio-cultural reality of Brazil in the 19th century, and thus did not include any contemporary situations.

However, when the telenovela or mini-series treats contemporary issues and situations, the inclusion of social merchandising scenes, dialogue, or situations follows the same methodological structure and phases of execution utilized in commercial merchandising. As such, social merchandising is applied following these major steps outlined in sections 2.1 through 2.4.

2.1 Synopsis Analysis

The process begins with the prospective analysis of the serial drama synopsis – that is, what is the main story, and what are the parallel story lines? There should be a thorough analysis of all aspects of the psychological, socioeconomic, and cultural profiles of the central characters, their occupations and primary concerns, the characteristics of the environment (urban or rural) in which the story will develop, the settings, and any relevant facts integrated by the writers.

2.2 Study of the Cast, the Characters, the Writers, and Directors

From studying the cast selected for a telenovela or mini-series, it is possible to foresee some implications for the parallel story lines. Even though telenovelas present some surprising situations – mainly in the periods of climax and conclusion – the profiles of the actors and main actresses, in general, fit with determined characteristics and/or situations. Therefore, a prudent analysis of the cast is important for the identification of characters who will be appropriate bearers of the socio-educational messages to be disseminated. In addition to this, it is important to avoid possible incompatibilities between the diverse characters, the actors or actresses that will represent them, and the messages that will be transmitted by them. Undoubtedly, it is necessary to recognize and take into account that each character, each actor or actress, has their own public image, which should be respected in the social merchandising actions. If this is not observed, one runs an elevated risk of failure; or (what is worse still) the intended positive insertions could have negative consequences.

Also, one needs to give ample consideration to the writer or writers and their history (experience) of writing about the issue(s) to be addressed.

The directors are “second” writers of the drama, and are thus able to exert tremendous influence over the development of a telenovela or mini-series. In some cases, directors are highly motivated and already properly informed regarding the importance of their role as social director, and they assume the position as main promoter of the socio-educational messages. When such a circumstance occurs (which is always very desirable), it creates a strong synergistic movement that will, in the end, contribute greatly to the final outcomes of the social merchandising efforts. In conclusion, it is fundamental to establish partnerships and/or alliances with the writer(s), and the director(s) of the telenovela or mini-series, in order to create conditions conducive to obtaining the best results possible. The writers and the directors are integral to success, especially if they are truly convinced of the relevance of the social issues in question, and of the resulting benefits of the social merchandising insertions. This alliance should be developed through a continuous stream of adequate and appropriate information.
2.3 Survey of Opportunities

The diverse opportunities that the telenovelas or mini-series present by way of inclusion of socio-educational messages have already been identified through the study of the synopsis, the analysis of the cast and of the characters, and, when possible, through interviews and contact with the writers and directors of the serial drama. Considering the intended target audience, suggestions should be made concerning the social topics and issues that will be addressed in the drama. In addition, suggestions should be made as to the specific conversations, scenes and situations in which the messages could be relayed in a natural, seamless way, without forcing a strange situation into the story. Any obtrusive insertions would not be well-received by the viewers, rendering useless any social merchandising actions. As an example, a character who is a gynecologist would be a good spokesperson for educational messages associated with the following subjects:

- Reproductive and sexual health, women’s hygiene, onset of sexual activity, the importance of a woman knowing her body;
- The importance of prenatal care and exams, having a birth attendance present during labor, the value of exclusive breast-feeding;
- Prevention of unplanned pregnancies, family planning, appropriate and continued use of modern contraceptives;
- Prevention of adolescent pregnancy and miscarriage; physical, psychological and social consequences of teen pregnancy, and the possible complications of induced abortion;
- The importance of adequate education about sexual orientation within the family and in schools; the values and feelings often associated with sexuality; the differences between gender and sexuality; and
- Attitudes, behaviors, and protective practices regarding sexual health; and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS.

But, this same character would not be a credible spokesperson for fighting alcohol or drug addiction.

As another example, a character who is an architect would be able to create opportunities to approach issues such as:

- The beautification of urban spaces and improvement of the quality of life in cities;
- Appropriate use of public service and urban equipment;
- Adequate accessibility to public spaces for persons with physical disabilities.

But, this character would not be a relevant vehicle for messages about reproductive health.

If the plot of a soap opera has a boy or girl whose family has abandoned them, it would be possible to work in the issue of responsible parenting, prevention of unplanned pregnancies, the rights of infants and adolescents, and the risks of life in the streets. If a drama has an elderly character, it is possible to address the psychological and physical issues associated with aging, the need for elevated self-esteem among the elderly, the problems associated with retirement and having excessive free time, the respect that should be paid to elderly people, and the need for the elderly to receive care and affection, among other prominent issues.

2.4 Elaboration of Briefings

At this point, the opportunities for insertion of educational messages have been defined. As stated above, it is important to evaluate thematic as well as situational opportunities, and how to insert issues into the dialogue. It is with this foundation that the writer(s) create an opportunity for inserting the social merchandising message, recommending ways to introduce the educational messages into the story, including in the dialogues and in specific scenes. Messages can also appear on the set in the background of a scene, such as on a large poster (or other appropriate visual aid). During the briefing it is important to make sure that all of the information being incorporated is correct and up-to-date, and to ensure that the messages will not cause any negative reaction among the audience. The codes of ethics of TV broadcasters and advertisers must also be respected.

2.5 Social Merchandising Proposal

The social merchandising proposal is the response that the writer(s) of the serial drama present from the suggestions of actions and scenes that they previously directed. In this phase, all of the details of the insertions should be verified, as this is the last opportunity for possible alterations, additions, and/or corrections to adapt the scenes or situations to meet the intended socio-educational goals. Following the approval of the social merchandising proposal, the scenes, situations and dialogues, as well as any other forms of insertion of the educational messages, will be directed and produced. From that moment on, the promoters of social merchandising do not have any participation in the production; the message is delivered exclusively by the technical and creative teams, and the broadcasters.
2.6 Actions of Social Merchandising

This is the final phase of the construction of social merchandising, when the actions are actually produced and inserted into the serial drama, and the socio-educational messages are recorded and ready to be transmitted. In this phase, as was said, the promoters of social merchandising are not be able to influence the drama. The actions taken in this phase, then, are watching and monitoring the serial drama to verify that the social merchandising messages have been incorporated, and to determine if there have been any negative reactions to these messages among the viewers. To achieve the desired results and social impact, the messages need to be accepted by the audience – are audience members going to eventually adopt the new behaviors? Are the desired attitudes and practices being disseminated?

Ideally, the time elapsed from the approval of the social merchandising proposal to the effective transmission of the scenes and messages should be a maximum of 30 days.

The social merchandising actions or scenes can be incorporated into the telenova or mini-series in multiple ways:

1) Conceptually
Example: A young couple talks about their reproductive and sexual life, analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of using the male condom to prevent a possible undesired pregnancy, and arrives at the conclusion that the male condom is a dependable and efficient method, without contraindications and negative side effects, justifying its utilization.

2) Mentioned in Text
Example: One character appears reading an article about drug abuse in a newspaper or magazine. Or, a character attends a conference about environmental preservation and the sustainable use of natural resources, highlighting the grave future consequences of environmental degradation.

3) Dialogue
Example: A character appears advising a friend or acquaintance of the importance of women doing self-breast-exams and medical exams for prevention of cervical cancer. Or, two adolescent characters are talking, and one advises the other to always use the male condom in his sexual relations in order to prevent unplanned pregnancies, as well as STIs and HIV/AIDS.

4) Use
Example: A worker appears putting on a helmet and protective eyeglasses before starting his or her workday. Or, a road sweeper puts on appropriate pants, gloves, and boots. Or, in every scene in which a character is driving a car, they use a safety belt.

5) Visual Stimulus
Example: In a scene in which a couple is caressing each other, the camera scans the scene and shows a box of condoms on top of the bed-side table. Or, in a street scene, the camera shows a street cleaner emptying the garbage cans.

6) An Event Inside the Serial Drama
Example: A group of characters from the same neighborhood make a joint effort to clean the streets and plazas. Or, characters living near a factory create a campaign to ensure that the factory does not hire children, and oppose buying products that were made by child-labor.

In general, the combination of several kinds of insertions provides the best results. If the same content is transmitted in two or three different forms, the message is strengthened by reinforcement.

3. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Since its creation in 1991, Comunicarte has continuously monitored the serial dramas produced by TV Globo. In the beginning, this work was conducted in partnership with Population Communications International (PCI), then driven by David Poindexter, a pioneer in the promotion of entertainment-education at the international level. At present, Comunicarte is partnering with Population Media Center (PMC) to continue the work of monitoring social merchandising insertions in TV Globo’s serial dramas.

From 1991 to 1994, there was relatively little use of social merchandising by TV Globo (an average of 200 to 250 insertions yearly), with small variation from year for year. In 1995, there was a systematization of the procedures for inserting social merchandising into serial dramas, and a relationship developed between Comunicarte and the directors and other professionals at TV Globo. This led to a substantial increase in the number of social merchandising scenes inserted into TV Globo’s programs, as well as improvement in the quality of the insertions. This period marked the intensification and scale-up of much of the work involved in successfully implementing the method.

From 1991 to 2007, Comunicarte has contributed input to 72 of TV Globo’s serial dramas, totalling more than 9,300 hours of programming. It is estimated that, directly or indirectly, Comunicarte has influenced the insertion of around 6,500 socio-educational scenes or situations, adressing issues as fundamental as human rights and the rights of citizens, sexuality, reproductive and sexual health, gender relations, the rights of children and adolescents, the rights of the elderly and people with disabilities, drug abuse, environmental preservation, and other issues relating to sustainable development. It should be noted that these scenes were not
simply limited to raising awareness of problems; but their aim was to offer various solutions, solutions that could be implemented in the everyday lives of people and communities.

The chart below illustrates the number and types of social merchandising insertions in TV Globo’s serial dramas from 1995-2002:

### Social Merchandising in TV Globo’s Serial Dramas (1995-2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual and Reproductive Health</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Abuse</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Relations*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>2,548</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Until 1996, the thematic group “Gender Relations” was included in the category Social Issues. Included in this group are issues related to fundamental human rights and rights to citizens, especially those that belong to social segments which are excluded or at risk of exclusion from society, such as infants, adolescents and youth; women in all the phases of life; people with some form of physical and/or mental disability; and the elderly. There is emphasis on the following thematic areas: primary and secondary education; literacy; professional development; underpaid work and unemployment; nutrition and nutritional education; public health; environmental sanitation; personal hygiene and hygiene within the home; community, family, and personal relations; environment; quality of life; healthy development; and a culture of peace.

On average, the number of insertions of social merchandising during the period from 1995-2002 (894 insertions annually) almost quadrupled compared to the number of annual insertions observed during the period from 1991 to 1995 (200 to 250 insertions annually). The thematic group of greatest prevalence is “social issues.” However, if “sexuality” and “reproductive health” are combined into one category, this category would have the greatest number of insertions (3,076 insertions – or 43 percent of the total of inserted scenes). This shows that there is a high level of acceptance of these subjects among the audience. This conjecture would make sense, as in Brazilian society there is a lot of discussion about issues such as unintended pregnancy, miscarriage, adolescent pregnancy, use of contraceptive methods among adolescents, and the complications of induced abortions.

A significant factor in the number and quality of the insertions is the level of awareness of the writer(s) and director(s) of the telenovela or mini-series regarding their social role. Through their positions as social editors, the writer(s) and director(s) become multiplying agents for the new attitudes, behaviors, and practices to be disseminated. Given the undeniable relevance of the telenovelas and mini-series in the Brazilian socio-cultural setting, these professionals act as disseminators of social innovations to the public. The majority, undoubtedly, recognize their position as social editor and assumes the responsibility of directing the educational content and delivering it to the viewers. It is this conscientiousness that produces such impressive results.

The chart below presents the number of social merchandising insertions by thematic group into TV Globo’s programs from 2003 to 2006:

### Social Merchandising in TV Globo’s Serial Dramas (2003 – 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Groups</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual and Reproductive Health</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>1,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Abuse</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Relations</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>2,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,354</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>1,551</td>
<td>1,148</td>
<td>5,061</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In more recent years, the most prevalent thematic group continues to be “social issues.” “Sexuality” and “sexual and reproductive health” also continue to have high numbers. One surprise during this period is that the total number of insertions about “gender relations” was higher than ever before observed in 2003, when the topic was the second most prominent subject (with 257 insertions). This was a result of the broadcast of serial dramas that offered countless opportunities to address gender relations – an opportunity that was seized by the social merchandising promoters and the professionals at TV Globo.

In 2007, the thematic groups were changed slightly to reflect differing topical concerns. The number of insertions per thematic group for 2007 is presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Groups</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship and Human Rights</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and Identity</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Development and the Environment</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Science and Human Development</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Quality of Life</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality and Affective Relationships</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values, Principles and Human Relationships</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>799</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beginning in 2008, Comunicarte’s scope of work with TV Globo was limited to tracking and monitoring the inclusion of social health themes in their telenovelas.

4. REMAINING FACTS

Social merchandising is a product of mass culture, as seen through the documentation of TV Globo’s use of social insertions in their serial dramas. Social merchandising capitalizes on the huge potential for television serial dramas to be used to mobilize large audiences, captivating them for long periods. Thus, social merchandising is a methodology that maximizes the impact of television and its most important cultural product, the serial drama. As such, an aspect of social merchandising is inserting reality into fantasy, leading the viewers in a state of “realisía,” that motivates them to reconsider their routine reality, without abandoning their dreams. Social merchandising constitutes a departure from the normal structure of television as fiction. It provides a re-evaluation of reality, one that is different than that commonly referenced by viewers. This re-evaluation is followed by the identification of alternative paths of social action. Social merchandising is, therefore, a strategy for replacing misconceptions, and using communications as an instrument for articulating social arguments and popular demands. Below are some of particularly poignant real examples of how social merchandising has been used in this way:

- A campaign for prevention of cervical and breast cancer was developed in the drama *História de Amor* (“History of Love”) (Manoel Carlos, 1995). In the drama, the main character is a woman who develops breast cancer. It starts with the discovery of a small lump in her breast. Then she receives the diagnosis and follows initial treatment. Finally, she undergoes surgery to remove the tumor, and eventually recovers. The program highlights the physical and psychological recovery, and the need for support from family and friends. The drama emphasized the importance of self-breast examinations and regular and frequent visits to a gynecologist as preventive measures against breast cancer.

- In the same program in 1995, the Minister of Sports at the time, Edson Arantes do Nascimento, fought against the judgment and exclusion experienced by people with disabilities in Brazil. In the program, the Minister also announced measures to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, including involving people with disabilities in sports activities.

- One of the sub-plots in *Explode Coração* (“Exploding Heart”) (Gloria Peres, 1996) addressed the issue of missing children. In this storyline, the social merchandising scenes led to the printing of photographs of missing children on thousands of cigarette packs, shoe boxes, gas bottles, match boxes and many other common items. This real-life social mobilization resulted in numerous reunions between parents and their children, many of whom had been missing for years. This result was heralded by TIME Magazine (February 2, 1997) as being incredibly effective: “By the end of the program, more than 75 children were returned to their parents as a result of this effective campaign.”

- The appearance in a scene of *O Rei do Gado* (“King of the Cattle”) (Benedict Ruy Barbosa, 1997) of real-life Senators Eduardo Suplicy and Benedita Da Silva (affiliated with the Workers Party, which at the time was the main opposition party and which today is the ruling party) as themselves at the burial of the soap opera character Senator Caxias, (Senator Caxias’ character was a defender of agrarian reform, and the presence of the real senators, also promoters of the cause, strengthened this message.
• The insertion of content against sexual exploitation of children and youth was developed in the telenovela *A Índomada* (“The Untamed”) (Aguinaldo Silva and Ricardo Linhares, 1997-98). This telenovela denounced the mistreatment of poor people and blacks, as well as critiquing machismo and corruption in Brazil. The critical point in the drama occurred when an adolescent girl was being initiated into prostitution. There was a competition to choose who would have the luxury of being the girl’s first “customer.” The inclusion of this scene prompted immediate briefings regarding the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. The briefings that resulted from this socio-educational message were a decisive development, so the writers took the plot along another route, completely divergent from the intended one. The adolescent character, about to be initiated in prostitution, was instead adopted by a wealthy family from the region and immediately registered in school. This exciting shift in the plot received formal recognition from the National Campaign For the End of Violence, Sexual Tour-ism and Exploitation Against Children and Adolescents. The drama also received praise from various other organizations defending children’s rights, both nationally and internationally.

• On another occasion, the target of action was child labor. In the agricultural areas of Brazil, the exploitation of child labor is endemic. To eradicate this practice is, without a doubt, a main challenge for all concerned about the rights of Brazilian children and adolescents. Thus, in a scene of the reopening of a plantation, the protagonist in the telenovela makes a statement against the exploitation of children, committing “not to grind the sugarcane that was harvested by children.” It attempted, in this way, to give an example for the other plantation owners of the region to follow, creating real-life change. This important work was formally recognized by the Coordinator of the Program for Eradication of Child Work (PETI) and by the the Ministry of the Providence and Social Assistance (MPAS) of Brazil.

• The question of the child labor was also present in *Meu Bem Querer* (“My Greatest Desire”) (Ricardo Linhares, 1998). The writer identified simple and viable solutions to address the problem, specifically through a program that provides families with a basket full of basic staples monthly, keeps children in school, and monitors workplaces to ensure that children are not working as employees. The writer also showed that, through education, children can be instrumental in bettering their futures, get better jobs, and break the vicious cycle of poverty.

These, and other similar situations, are becoming ever more recurrent in Brazilian serial dramas. They transform fiction and fantasy into socially productive actions. In this way, social merchandising issues are translated into real actions in daily life. The success of social merchandising illustrates that the public wants to see the media, and television in particular, articulating some of the demands of the public, spreading socio-cultural innovations, and provoking executive action within the government. In addition to addressing various social problems, social merchandising allows brainstorming about solutions to the problems experienced by disempowered and empowered communities. Through increasing empowerment and mobilization of communities, action will inevitably follow.

5. IMPACT ON KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND PRACTICES

There is evidence that serial dramas are indeed capable of modifying – or even creating – new habits among viewers. For example, the use of selected linguistic expressions, sales of the sound tracks from the serial dramas, and the popularity of the actors’ hair cuts, among others, indicate that serial dramas are efficient and effective instruments to create new habits and generate product sales.

It is observed that there are numerous similarities between the current sexual and reproductive attitudes and behaviors of the majority of the population, and those attitudes and behaviors that have been promoted in TV Globo’s serial dramas over the last two decades. Because of this, the Nucleus of Population Studies at the University of Campinas (UNICAMP), one of the most highly respected universities in the country, considers serial dramas to be the main factor behind declining birth rates in Brazil. In fact, in less than 20 years, the total fertility rate in Brazil fell from 6.4 children per woman to less than 2.7 children per woman, a reduction unparalleled in the world. This phenomenon is more surprising still because Brazil has never had a national family planning program. According to many specialists, the Brazilian serial dramas modeled the benefits of a small family, stimulating couples to use contraceptives; thus reducing the fertility rate nationwide.

From September 2006 to March 2007 TV Globo broadcast the highly popular program *Paginas da Vida* (“Pages of Life”). The plot of *Paginas da Vida* was designed around several intersecting story lines and addressed various issues such as family planning and Down syndrome.

The story begins with a young student named Nanda who becomes pregnant at a young age by an irresponsible man who eventually disappears. Unfortunately, Nanda dies during the birth of her twin daughters and her mother refuses to take the girl who is diagnosed with Down syndrome. Longing to be a mother, Nanda’s obstetrician, Dr. Helena, adopts Clara, the child with Down syndrome. She treats Clara well, and through their encounters with others who stigmatize people with Down syndrome, they raise an ongoing debate on the treatment of those with disabilities.
At the conclusion of this particular program, multiple quantitative and qualitative studies assessed the impact of Paginas da Vida.

Some highlights of these results include:
• 60% of women interviewed watched Paginas da Vida on a regular basis.
• 65.4% of female viewers interviewed said they would be “more careful” to prevent unwanted pregnancy.
• Among viewers interviewed at BEMFAM family planning clinics, 60% of clients age 18-24 said that scenes in Paginas da Vida served as a stimulus for them to seek a health service.
• There was more than a 50% increase in knowledge among women interviewed with regard to various reproductive health issues such as: contraceptive methods, family planning, maternal health, maternity/paternity, unwanted pregnancy, adolescent pregnancy, and HIV/AIDS.

The Brazilian government has formally acknowledged the power of social merchandising, stating, “The telenovela is the strongest audiovisual tool of the country and can be used as a weapon to educate the current population. It is a source of information and entertainment.”

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is widely accepted that a decline in fertility rates is the interaction of various factors, such as:
• Increase in life expectancy;
• Reduction of infant and neonatal mortality;
• Urbanization;
• Widespread education of women;
• Increasing numbers of women becoming professionals and entering the work force (a factor that, in turn, tends to delay marriage and, consequently, delays first pregnancy and lowers the total fertility rate);
• Increase in family income; and
• Access to family planning services and consistent use of effective contraceptive methods.

It cannot be denied, however, that many of the motivations and changes in behavior that we see today, and have been seeing for two decades, were first disseminated to the more than 55 million viewers (most of them women) of the serial dramas produced by TV Globo, each episode supporting the diffusion of sociocultural innovations.

Because of their format and seductive language, as well as the degree to which the content reflects modern life, the telenovelas constitute an excellent vehicle for the dissemination of model behaviors, attitudes and positive practices, particularly to people lacking information and educational resources. In Brazil, many population groups live in agricultural areas or at the peripheries of urban centers. Comunicarte/PMC-Brazil recognizes its contribution to the social modernization of the Brazilian population, particularly among groups and communities that have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion. João Robert Marinho, Vice-President of TV Globo, recently affirmed, “if we are able to integrate the information and emotion brought by the media, with the educational content demanded by our population, we would be capable of constructing, from who we are, who we want to be."

Social merchandising has been demonstrated to be an efficient and effective strategy to accelerate such integration because
• it makes the diffusion of informative, educational, and motivational messages possible, reaching a large audience simultaneously, accomplishing a broad reach unequalled by any other medium;
• it reaches viewers during moments of privacy, leisure, and concentration, encouraging the absorption of new educational messages, without losing the enjoyable aspects of their preferred programming;
• it legitimizes pertinent issues and social matters, as they are an integral part of the plot and the themes of the telenovelas and mini-series;
• it causes the viewing public to reflect on the issue at hand, and facilitates introspection regarding the concepts, attitudes, and behaviors;
• it is capable of creating social movements and community mobilization in defense of human rights, or in search of common objectives that are of public interest, involving the participation of different social actors;
it promotes a socio-educational message of national pride. In many other countries where TV Globo’s serial dramas are shown, there is involvement of writers, directors, theatrical designers, actors, and technicians, in addition to the directors of the broadcasting house.

All these factors represent important achievements that will, without a doubt, affect the future productions of television broadcasters. The inclusion of social issues and educational messages in the plots of serial dramas also provokes attention in news articles, periodicals, and magazines. This multiplies the messages received by the public, extending the reach globally, and stimulating similar initiatives, with similar educational and preventive objectives. Since 1997, the issues addressed through social merchandising have garnered national and international attention. It is thus not by chance that the Brazilian serial dramas have been exported for broadcast in 55 countries around the world.

The work of Comunicarte/PMC-Brazil is clearly having an impact in many countries beyond Brazil. In fact, some affirm that social merchandising may actually be the most efficient current application of entertainment-education. It is a powerful instrument for social education, and for improving the quality of life and well-being of populations throughout the world. Through social merchandising, educational messages can be seen daily by millions of millions of people. Social merchandising is not a model that can only be used in Brazil or in serial dramas produced by TV Globo. In contrast, the social merchandising methodology can be used by any broadcaster in any country that can make use of its structure for the production of telenovelas or mini-series.

The social merchandising techniques employed in TV Globo’s serial dramas can be used to spread socio-cultural innovations among other nations with similar levels of development and similar social problems to the ones Brazil faces. Social merchandising represents, therefore, a unique strategy to implement - with efficiency and effectiveness - one of the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994, using the media for education and social transformation. The Cairo Plan of Action states that “Governments, NGOs, and the private sector should make greater and more effective use of the entertainment media, including radio and television soap operas and drama, folk theatre and other traditional media to encourage public discussion of important but sometimes sensitive topics related to the present programme of action” (UN Population Information Network, 1994).

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**Earl Babbie** graduated from Harvard University, and received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. He began teaching shortly thereafter. Credited with defining research methods for the social sciences, Dr. Babbie has written several texts, including *The Practice of Social Research*, which has been the best-selling textbook for social research methods since 1975. His books have been translated into several languages, and when he addressed the first conference of the Chinese Survey Research Association in Shanghai in 2010, his hosts proclaimed, “In mainland China, all the teachers engaged in research methods field in colleges and universities are your students.”

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William Ryerson is founder and President of Population Media Center (PMC). Mr. Ryerson has four decades of experience working in the field of reproductive health, including two decades adapting the Sabido methodology for behavior change communications to various cultural settings worldwide. He has also been involved in the design of research to measure the effects of such projects in a number of countries, one of which led to a series of publications regarding a serialized radio drama in Tanzania and its effects on HIV/AIDS avoidance and family planning use. He received a B.A. in Biology (Magna Cum Laude) from Amherst College and an M.Phil. in Biology from Yale University (with specialization in Ecology and Evolution). He served as Director of the Population Institute’s Youth and Student Division, Development Director of Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania, Associate Director of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England and Executive Vice President of Population Communications International before founding Population Media Center. As a graduate student, he was Founder and first Chairperson of the Yale Chapter of Zero Population Growth (ZPG). He also served on the Executive Committee of ZPG, as Eastern Vice President and Secretary of the national organization. Mr. Ryerson is listed in several editions of _Who’s Who in the World, Who’s Who in America_ and _Who’s Who in the East_. In 2006, he was awarded the Nafis Sadik Prize for Courage from the Rotarian Action Group on Population and Development.

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