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THE ZAIRE MASS MEDIA PROJECT

A Model AIDS Prevention
Communications and Motivation Project



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The Zaire AIDS Mass Media Project was suspended in November 1991 when the U.S. Agency for International Development withdrew funding due to political and social instability in the country. However, PSI is maintaining a presence in Zaire as a local non-governmental agency. Should the situation improve and funding be restored, PSI will recommence its activities.

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Communications and Motivation Project

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Summary

Problem

Zaire's HIV seroprevalence is one of the highest in the world, with a rate of 6-8 percent in the capital city of Kinshasa and other major urban centers, and 3-4 percent in rural areas around the country.

Strategy

In 1988, Population Service International (PSI) initiated the Zaire AIDS Mass Media Project as part of a groundbreaking AIDS prevention program in conjunction with PSI's Condom Social Marketing Project. The project collaborates with the Zaire National AIDS Program and is funded by the United States Agency for International Development/Kinshasa.

The AIDS Mass Media Project messages target youth between the ages of 12 and 19 and prospective parents who are 20 to 30 years of age. Drawing on Zaire's rich traditions in music and drama, the Project seeks to motivate safer sexual practices by influencing social norms through:

- Innovative media materials, based on audience research, which present the AIDS messages in television and radio spot announcements, dramas, music videos, talk shows, interviews and contests; and in printed material such as student notebooks and comic-strip calendars;
- Zaire's extensive media network, which reaches the urban and rural population in the country's 11 regions via satellite relayed television and regional radio stations.

Results

A positive evolution in attitudes and intended behavior related to safer sexual practices is indicated among the target population. Research, including media post-tests and longitudinal knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) studies, conducted over the length of the Project, present evidence of:

- increased awareness regarding asymptomatic carriers;
- increased acceptance and reported practice of abstinence and mutual fidelity for AIDS prevention; and
- increased knowledge, acceptance, and reported use of condoms for AIDS prevention.

It is significant that during the same period, annual sales by PSI's Condom Social Marketing Project increased by more than 1,000 percent. Family Health International's AIDSTECH program estimates that as a result of increased condom sales, close to 7,200 cases of AIDS will be prevented in Zaire during 1991.

Background

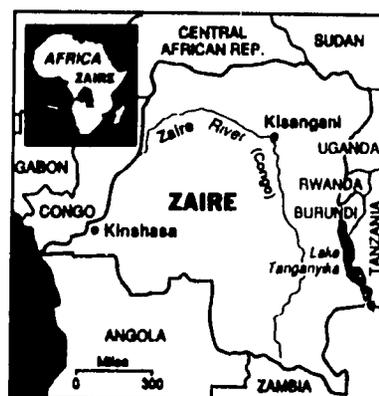
Each month more than 10,000 people develop Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) around the world.¹ Third World nations, and especially central-east Africa, continue to be hardest hit by the disease, where the World Health Organization (WHO) predicts that over the next several decades AIDS will become the leading cause of death among adults in their most productive years.²

Zaire is at the locus of the disease's ravages, with between 6-8 percent of the urban population and 3-4 percent of the rural population believed to be carrying the virus that causes AIDS.³ In the absence of an effective vaccine or cure for AIDS, prevention efforts including information, education, and communication (IEC) strategies aimed at motivating the adoption of safer sexual behaviors are, for a country like Zaire, the only defense against the continuing spread of the disease.

Context

Zaire is the size of the United States east of the Mississippi River. Its 35 million citizens represent over three hundred ethnic groups, each with its own distinct language and cultural heritage. Zaire's topography ranges from unpenetrated tropical rain forests, savannahs, and river-gorges to semi-arid plains, rich agricultural tracts, and volcanoes holding some of Africa's largest lakes.

Transport within Zaire's broad borders is extremely difficult, due to its varied and rugged landscape and the government's neglect of improvements necessary to the road, river and air transport infrastructure. Many roads created by the Belgian colonialists have not been repaired since independence 25 years ago. People in rural areas rely on rides with long-distance truckers, perching atop produce, livestock, furniture, crates of beer or whatever else the trucks are transporting as they journey over huge potholes and mud slicks. More often than not, residents of Zaire's major cities commute by foot, as no public bus system exists in any city outside the capital. The



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Zaire River and its tributaries offers the most reliable transport route between the country's northeast and western regions, and is serviced by riverboats, barges, and wooden canoes.

Significant communication barriers also exist in Zaire, with cultural and linguistic diversity posing enormous challenges. To bridge the language gap, the government of Zaire established five official national languages, including four indigenous languages and French. Besides their own local language, practically every Zairian citizen speaks one of the four official regional languages and/or French.

The government of Zaire has attempted to address the informational needs of its widely dispersed and multi-ethnic population through a national television and radio system, which broadcasts in all five national languages

Zaire has an extensive television satellite system, unique for a country its size in Africa. Television broadcasts are relayed from Kinshasa to all eleven regions. Close to one-third of Zaire's population is estimated to have access to television in urban and semi-urban areas.⁴ Families without a television often watch at the home or yard of a neighbor or member of the extended family. The few regional broadcasting stations with any capacity to produce and broadcast local television programs must operate with hand-held mini-video cameras and broadcast live video feeds.

The transistor radio is often the only link to the larger community for Zairians living in isolated areas. Each capital of Zaire's eleven regions has a radio production and broadcasting station, which produces and airs programs in the regional and local languages. Despite the conditions of material poverty under which most Zairians live, a radio is often considered an essential possession, and much is sacrificed to procure one and keep it running. Whole communities will sit around one transistor radio, listening to an educational program about agricultural techniques or hygiene, or simply enjoying music or one of Zaire's many local radio theater groups.

AIDS In Zaire

As in most countries, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) seroprevalence is higher in Zaire's cities than in rural areas: 6-8 percent in Kinshasa and other major urban centers, and 3-4 percent in rural areas throughout the country. More than 80 percent of AIDS transmission in Zaire is due to heterosexual transmission. The ratio of AIDS infection between men and women in Zaire is approximately 1:1; the median age of women with AIDS is 20-23 years of age, while for men it is closer to 30 years of age.⁵

The economic and social status of women renders them highly vulnerable to HIV infection, and is perhaps the most significant factor contributing to the high rate of AIDS transmission in Zaire. When young girls are told there is no money for school fees, their options are few. Many drop out and hope for a "beau marriage," a marriage, usually to an older man, which will ensure their financial security. Families often play an important role in securing such a marriage, encouraging many suitors to court a daughter for as long as several years. Implicit in such courtships is that the suitors, who by custom must present the parents with cash or gifts, may demand sexual relations with the girl.

A second option for young women is to stay in school by accepting a "sugar daddy," usually an older man, who offers regular financial support in exchange for sexual favors. With the growing awareness of AIDS, many older men have begun practicing their own version of "safe sex:" they seek school girls as sexual partners, assuming that they are not yet infected with the disease. All too often, these "sugar daddies" become infected with HIV, either through their young girlfriends or other sexual contacts, and carry the deadly virus home to their wives.

Another social phenomenon placing both men and women at risk is the "*deuxieme bureau*" (second office), a second wife or mistress. Polygamy is a long-standing tradition within many of Zaire's ethnic groups. That polygamy is not permitted by civil or Christian church authorities only drives the practice underground, depriving the second (and in some cases the third) wife of her legal status. Given the harsh economic conditions in Zaire, a male wage-earner often cannot support even his first wife and children. Exercising his traditionally accepted right to establish a second household, he leaves both dependent women in a position of extreme economic vulnerability. These women then seek financial support from their only option: other men willing to pay for sex.

The AIDS Mass Media Project was initiated by Population Services International in 1988 in collaboration with the Zairian government's National AIDS Program and with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development/Kinshasa. The Project was created as a complementary effort to the PSI Condom Social Marketing Project in Zaire, which ensures the quality, distribution, and affordability of condoms through social marketing techniques.

The Project's groundbreaking approach to AIDS prevention involves developing, producing, and disseminating through the mass media messages about AIDS, which address prevalent attitudes and social norms. The ultimate goal is to motivate the adoption of safer sexual practices among people involved in high risk behavior.

A potent combination of economic conditions, cultural mores, and social interactions thus contribute to the spread of HIV in Zaire. An effective AIDS prevention program in Zaire must acknowledge the traditions and attitudes that lead to risk behavior, and seek to help create new norms which support safer sexual behavior.

Project Description

The PSI AIDS Mass Media Project (in French, *Projet d'Education par les Media sur le Sida* (PSI/PEM-SIDA)) functions as an executing body of the National AIDS Program. Its objectives and action plans conform to the prevention objectives detailed in the Medium Term Plan developed by the Zairian Government's National AIDS Program with support from the World Health Organization's Global Program on AIDS.

Two communication specialists employed by PSI direct the Project. They are matched in all programmatic responsibilities by two local counterparts, specialists in research and in production, designated by the National AIDS Program. PSI directors provided initial, formal training to their local counterparts, followed by on-the-job training in technical aspects of communication, behavioral research, and media material development. They continue to provide training in overall program design, planning, budgeting, and project administration. The Project is highly regarded as a training resource by the Zairian government and local non-governmental organizations; the two Project-trained counterparts are frequently in demand as health communication workshop organizers and trainers.

Due to the lack of established local production, advertising, and communication resources in Zaire, the Project recruited and trained four additional local technical staff specializing in formative research and production. The Project staff also works closely with long- and short-term consultants from the University of Kinshasa, the National Broadcasting Agency, the National Institute for Statistics, the National Theater, Bobongo Studio Music Productions, and many other government and non-governmental organizations.

Project Activities

National Strategy—Urban-centered and Youth-oriented

In terms of media, Zaire's urban residents are the most accessible segment of the population, with the country's eleven regional capitals linked by television satellite and an estimated 13 million urban residents having access to television. The use of an urban medium such as television maximizes the diffusion of information from cities to rural areas. Television's social character offers a further advantage in the Zairian context.

The combination of the seroprevalence pattern and the viability of television as a channel of communication led the Project to direct its first strike against AIDS at the cities. PSI capitalized on Zaire's far-reaching television network to reach one of the most threatened segments of the population, urban youth.

Youth between the ages of 12 and 19 were selected as the Project's first target group for several reasons, including their high-risk behavior and evidence that most Zairians are infected with HIV in their early teens;⁶ the proportionately large size of this age group; and its accessibility through media. The population from 20 to 30 years of age, identified as "Young and Prospective Parents," was added as a second target group in 1990. Research in Zaire and other African countries suggests that the threat AIDS poses to the health of children (such as through mother-to-child transmission and AIDS orphans) is a strong motivating factor for behavior change among parents.

Spots: Giving an Attitude

Conscious that the best way to influence the behavior of a specific group is by involving its members in the communication process, Project staff worked with students from the National School of Performing Arts to script, pre-test, and produce an initial television spot announcement, followed by a series of four aimed at influencing prevalent AIDS-related attitudes. Both the initial spot and the subsequent series were produced in collaboration with the National Broadcasting Network, and were translated into Zaire's five national languages. All spots were broadcast during prime-time viewing and listening hours, under an agreement between the government's Department of Health and the National Broadcasting Network.



Girls at a soccer game—the first television spot, focusing on the asymptomatic carrier, produced with students from the National School of Performing Arts.

The first spot announcement, featuring girls on the sidelines of a soccer game discussing an attractive male player, addressed the concept of the asymptomatic carrier of HIV. The fact that healthy-looking people could carry the virus causing AIDS was identified in research as a point of low knowledge among members of the target audience. A post-test survey conducted in Kinshasa four months after broadcast of this spot indicated that 65 percent of the sampled target population had seen the television announcement, and, of those, approximately 70 percent retained the key message.⁷

The subsequent series of television spots, also adapted for radio, was based on focus group research with the intended audience and featured four dramatic dialogues among young people. The key messages were:

- AIDS is not transmitted by casual contact.
- People with AIDS need support and compassion.

Debunking the myth of casual transmission was considered a priority early in the campaign, as research indicated that an overwhelming sense of pervasive risk diminishes motivation to take specific preventive action. Sympathetic treatment of persons with AIDS was suggested as the second message by the National AIDS Program, which recognized that family members and friends of a person with AIDS sometimes shun and refuse responsibility for them. The four television and radio spots played in each of the five languages an average of once a day over a period of nine months.

In a post-test of these spots, conducted in Kinshasa one month after broadcasting began, two-thirds of a representative sample of the intended audience had already seen the spots on television. Of these viewers more than three-fourths retained at least one of the two key messages.⁸

A correlation between exposure to this initial television and radio campaign and changes in knowledge and attitudes in the target population was revealed by a Longitudinal Program Impact Study conducted in collaboration with the University of Kinshasa School of Public Health. The Study shows that the first spot effectively addressed doubts about the possibility of an asymptomatic HIV-carrier. From the initial mini-KAP survey in Kinshasa to the second survey nine months later, the sampled population responding “yes” to the question, “Can you avoid getting infected with the AIDS virus simply by avoiding contact with people who look sick?” decreased by 14 percentage points. The impact of the spots addressing the AIDS transmission myths also becomes evident from this study. In the control region of Equateur, which receives no radio or television spots, as many as one in three people believed AIDS is transmitted by

casual contact; however, in the comparable region reached by the spots (Sud-Kivu), only one in five believed this myth.⁹

A third series of announcements was aired five months after the AIDS transmission myth spots. This series responded directly to an often-repeated statement by the intended audience: "Sure I know AIDS exists. But I won't get motivated to do anything about it until I see a person with AIDS with my own eyes." In a society where having AIDS is considered not only a personal tragedy but a family shame, one brave woman with AIDS volunteered to speak out about her experience. Four spots were produced from excerpts of extensive videotaped interviews, in each of the three languages she spoke.

In the spots the woman appears in a shadow—to protect her identity—occasionally wiping her forehead with a handkerchief, twisting her rings, speaking toward the camera in a clear, steady voice. The four spots center on the following facts: (1) AIDS exists, and one must take precautions against transmission; (2) there is no cure for AIDS; (3) blood donations should be made to the safe blood banks which test blood before transfusing; and (4) the future of children whose mothers have AIDS is bleak.

Post-tests of this series indicated its value as a means of heightening the audience's sense of personal vulnerability to HIV, especially among young parents who identified with the AIDS-infected mother.

Music: Getting to The Heart

[In Zaire] the air is filled with rhythms. From the street corners and back alleys, from countless shacks of wood, cinderblock and corrugated tin, from churches, roadside kiosks and auto-repair garages, the strains of music pour.

— Neil Henry, *The Washington Post*, May 20, 1991

Recognizing music as Zaire's quintessential and most powerful channel of communication, the Project involved some of the continent's most eloquent and persuasive communicators, the musicians.

The Zairian music community has not been unscathed by AIDS. Before the Project began in 1988, Zaire's most famous musician, Franco-Luwambo, released a song about AIDS nine months before he died of the disease. Franco's song and startling death encouraged other popular musicians to lift their voices against AIDS.

"To die, that is nothing—everyone must die. But I worry so much for my children. What will become of them when I am gone?"

The moving testimony of a mother with AIDS—from announcements developed with Zaire's National School of Performing Arts—heard twice a day during prime-time radio and television over a six-month period.

“Step by step/
hand in hand/
let’s all fight
AIDS...”



Empompo died of AIDS several weeks after his performance at the 1989 World AIDS Concert in Kinshasa.

The Project consulted with Zaire’s top bands to create and produce AIDS songs. The songs were pre-tested with members of the intended audience to select those that presented the AIDS prevention messages in the most appealing and effective manner. To increase audience receptivity to and recall of identified messages, the lyrics and music of these songs were revised by Project staff and the artists. The three initial songs were produced and released in four-month intervals over a one-year period, and the songs were guaranteed daily air time through agreements with the national and regional radio stations.

Public response to these songs was extremely positive. Sung by another of Zaire’s well-known musicians, Empompo Loway, the refrain of the first song released could be heard on the lips of rural schoolchildren as well as stylish Kinshasa residents. In a post-test conducted in Kinshasa six months after the release of the song, 65 percent of a representative sample of the target audience had heard the song; of these nine out of ten could sing a verse or two upon request. Most important, 93 percent of those who had heard the song retained its key AIDS prevention messages, such as the importance of fidelity and of reducing the number of sexual partners; 85 percent of the same group said the song affected their behavior.

Of those whose behavior was influenced by Empompo’s song, one in three people said it discouraged multiple partners, one in four said it encouraged abstinence, and one in six said it motivated them to be faithful to a single partner.¹⁰ Encouraged by the positive response to Empompo’s song, the Project produced a four-minute music video of his live performance at the Project-sponsored 1989 World AIDS Day concert in Kinshasa. Empompo was dead of AIDS three weeks later when the video was released.

The overwhelming response to music as a means of addressing AIDS-related attitudes prompted the Project to produce five more songs, each addressing a slightly different segment of the target population with musicians and styles appealing to different groups.

The message and lyrical tone of these subsequent songs evolved over time, based on focus group studies and pre- and post-test research conducted among the intended audience on a regular basis. The population’s rising AIDS awareness and knowledge allowed later songs to utilize a more emotional approach aimed at affecting attitudes, rather than direct messages which simply delivered information. For example, in a recent two-part ballad the word “AIDS” is never uttered. A man and a woman sing to each other of their past marital trespasses, and—in the face of “the dangers all around us today”—they recall their love and renew their commitment to mutual fidelity. For each new song released, the daily air time is guaranteed through cooperation with the national and regional radio stations.

For the 1990 World AIDS Day (December 1), the Project sponsored a Concert-Gala featuring the live performances of the AIDS songs by many of the original artists. The AIDS Concert was broadcast live nationally on radio and television, the moving and persuasive voices of Zaire's top musicians beaming out to the country's 11 regions. The five-hour live broadcast was edited into five music videos, with cuts of musicians and other popular figures giving advice about AIDS prevention. These music video-clips are currently being broadcast on a rotating schedule. Cassette tapes of the AIDS songs are distributed nationally to organizations active in AIDS prevention for use in community campaigns.



One of the many performances at the World AIDS Day concert; their t-shirts bear the message—"AIDS: anyone can get it; everyone can avoid it."

Drama: Theater on Radio and Television

In Zaire, as in many African cultures, drama plays an important role in expressing and defining the issues and attitudes of the day. Working with Zaire's best-loved radio/TV drama group, the *Troupe Nzoi*, the Project developed and produced a four-part drama mini-series for radio and television broadcast. The series addressed the risk of HIV infection for women, with the objective of influencing attitudes toward marital fidelity, monogamy, people with AIDS, and condom use. The group of "Young and Prospective Parents" was the intended target audience.

Research with the intended audience identified the drama themes to be marital fidelity, mother-to-child AIDS transmission, the economic position of women in Zaire and its relation to their AIDS risk, and the dilemma of AIDS orphans. The underlying behavioral messages of the series were: (1) avoid multiple sexual partners; (2) mutual fidelity—especially in the context of marriage—is a good strategy for avoiding AIDS transmission; and (3) use a condom when having sex in a high risk context.



The popular Troupe Nzoi confronting attitudes about AIDS in a drama production for radio and television broadcast.

The drama follows the plight of a young married woman named Pembele, who discovers after her wedding night that her husband has contracted AIDS from one of his many pre-marital affairs. She remains faithful to her dying husband, weathering a family feud that erupts over his disease. Upon his death she is abandoned by her family and in-laws. Unsure of her own sero-status and forced to adopt a lover in exchange for financial support, Pembele insists on using condoms with her partner, which he violently refuses. Before they have unprotected sex, he learns through a friend that her husband died of AIDS. Frightened by what he realizes was a close call, he also abandons Pembele along with any interest in sexual

relations outside of his marriage. Pembele is taken in by friends of her deceased husband, a married couple who are mutually faithful and live without fear of AIDS. When she discovers she is pregnant her fears about her sero-status are confirmed: she is HIV positive. Pembele decides to have her child, though it is a difficult pregnancy during which she develops AIDS. The birth of her child and Pembele's death reunite the two families, who celebrate the blessing of a new child and mourn the loss of Pembele.

The mini-series provided the first-ever profound mass media treatment of many socially significant and sensitive AIDS-related issues in Zairian culture, such as widespread marital infidelity and the link between the economic and social plight of women and widespread prostitution. In a bedroom scene between husband and wife, and a second scene between the main character and her would-be-lover, the drama presented the first-ever televised discussion of condoms and their advantages for AIDS prevention. The series was broadcast in its entirety twice in 12 months, with each of the four episodes played weekly during the prime-time hour slot, "Our Theater." The entire sequence is being edited into a two-hour video for distribution to community, church, and service organizations to aid in group education and community outreach.

Public response to the realism and sensitivity of the drama was extremely positive. Post-test research following broadcast of the drama series strongly indicated that presenting behavioral messages through an appealing, culturally relevant radio/television drama is an effective strategy for motivating individuals to adopt safer practices. A post-test study was conducted among a statistically representative sample in Kinshasa, in the form of four "day after" surveys following each episode. The results were:

- More than two-thirds of the intended audience watched each episode on television;
- Two-thirds of these viewers could recount the plot of the episodes;
- More than two-thirds of the viewers retained the essential messages of the drama:

| | |
|---|-------|
| Everyone is at risk for AIDS and all must take protective measures themselves | 30.7% |
| Mutual fidelity protects against AIDS | 25% |
| AIDS is a fatal disease/there is no cure | 13.8% |

■ Almost three-fourths of the viewers indicated that they intended to change their behavior; When asked how, they responded:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| I will protect myself | 50.7% |
| I will be faithful to my partner | 28.5% |
| I will not be promiscuous | 5.9% |
| I will get myself tested for AIDS | 2.7% |
| (Other) | 6.3% |
| (Don't know) | 5.9% |

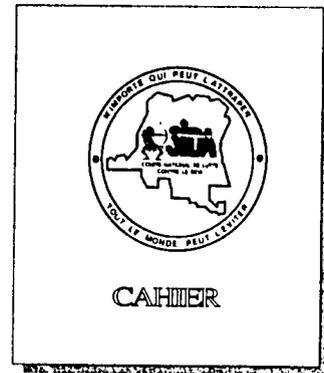
■ More than half of the viewers discussed the content of the drama with their friends and/or family;

■ Ninety percent of the viewers wanted to see another episode.¹¹

The *Nzoi* series established drama as a key element in the Project's continuing effort to influence attitudes and motivate behavior change. Drama permits the audience to evaluate prevailing attitudes in a new light. By presenting real-life situations dramatically, a television play gives the audience an opportunity for objective examination of the rules and conditions governing their most private lives. By presenting characters and situations with which the audience can identify, drama allows individuals to internalize decisions and actions presented in the drama, and move closer to changing certain behaviors in their own lives. In addition, drama provides the opportunity to confront pertinent and often sensitive social issues in a non-threatening manner, thus making their presentation palatable to government censors and media executives.

Print: Daily Reminders

Notebooks are used each day by school children in Zaire. To reinforce broadcast media messages on AIDS, the Project produced standard student notebooks prefaced with five pages of "AIDS Myths and Realities." The myths presented and rebuffed in the notebooks relates to AIDS transmission and prevention as articulated by young people in focus group research. The notebooks were distributed through school and commercial stationery outlets, which sold them at affordable prices.



CE QUE L'ON ENTEND DIRE :

*Comme les antibiotiques, un médicament miracle n'a pas été trouvé.

CE QUI EST VRAI

Ne croyez pas à cette rumeur. Le médicament pour guérir le SIDA n'est pas encore trouvé, et il n'est même pas prévu pour un avenir immédiat.

**LA SEULE SOLUTION
CONTRE LE SIDA
C'EST LA PREVENTION**

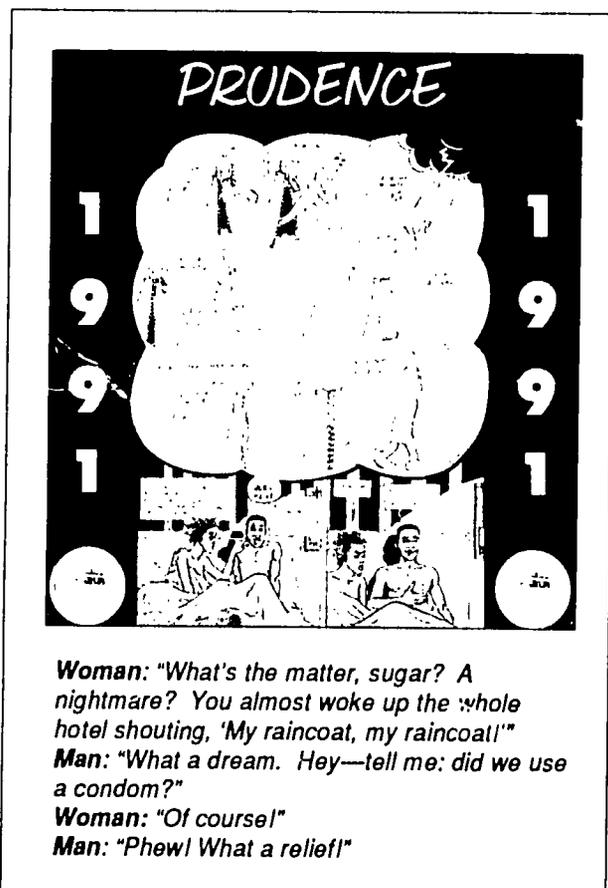
MYTH

Doctors have found a cure: you no longer need to fear AIDS.

TRUTH

Do not believe this rumor. The cure for AIDS has not been found nor is it likely to be found in the near future.

Prevention is the only solution for AIDS.



Calendars are seen each day by many in Zaire. Working with one of Zaire's best-loved comic strip artists, Barly Baruti, the Project designed three 1991 calendars, each featuring a colorful and eye-catching comic strip. The first design targets working men and women, and subtly underlines the importance of fidelity; the second, for young teens, points in a sensitive manner to the risks of promiscuity; the third is for distribution to bars and hotels, and humorously presents the advantages of condoms. These calendars were distributed nationwide through collaborating organizations and the regional AIDS bureaus of the National AIDS Program.

Impact of the National Campaign

By the end of 1990, Zaire's 13 million urban residents were receiving an average of ten minutes a day of televised AIDS messages, whether in the form of music videos, interview programs, dramas, or spots. Kinshasa's four million residents and those in neighboring regions could hear their favorite musicians sing about the need for personal action against AIDS. Video and audio cassettes of AIDS productions were distributed to cities all across the country, and played in school discussion groups, health centers, and social clubs; eye-catching print materials appeared in

schools, shops, and restaurants. By its second year, the Project was reaching an important high-risk segment of the population—urban youth from 12 to 19 and prospective parents from 20 to 30—with consistent and effective messages.

Post-tests of specific media interventions show very high viewer/listener rates and excellent recall of key messages. The Longitudinal Program Impact Study, consisting of a series of periodic, regional KAP studies with a representational sample of 1,500 members of the target population, indicates that the AIDS mass media effort has had significant influence on public attitudes and social norms contributing to behavior change. The following results from the second phase of the Longitudinal Program Impact Study conducted in August, 1990, six months after the first phase, indicate the impact of the AIDS Mass Media program on the attitudes and intended behavior of its target audience in Kinshasa:

■ **Increased awareness regarding asymptomatic carriers:**

The number of people who think “You can avoid getting infected with the AIDS virus simply by avoiding sexual contact with people who look sick” decreased by 14 percentage points (from 56 to 42 percent).

■ **Increased abstinence and mutual fidelity for AIDS prevention:**

When asked, “How have you changed your behavior in the face of AIDS?”, 16 percent more people spontaneously responded “by becoming mutually faithful” in the second study than in the first (increase from 28.9 to 45.7 percent);

When asked, “How have your friends changed their behavior in the face of AIDS?”, 19 percent more of the respondents indicated that their friends had adopted abstinence than did in the first study.

■ **Increased knowledge and acceptance of condoms for AIDS prevention:**

The number of people naming condoms as their first mode of AIDS prevention increased from 5 to 13 percent, representing a 150 percent increase;

The number of people who had ever heard of condoms increased by 11 percentage points.

■ **Increased condom use for AIDS prevention:**

When asked how they had changed their behavior in the face of AIDS, five times the number of people responded, “By using condoms” (increase from 3.6 to 18.8 percent).



Regional Strategy—Reaching Rural Populations

In 1990 the Project initiated a regional strategy to assure that the rural populations are included in the effort to educate about AIDS and motivate the adoption of safer behavior. This regional strategy encompassed techniques to communicate with Zaire's most remote citizens through local radio: farmers living in small villages whose only source of information is regional station broadcasts on a transistor radio; women traders hawking and selling from river barges whose only exposure to mass media is the songs and programs broadcast in their local dialect from their regional capital; and millions of Zairian children who never even see television.

In coordination with the National AIDS Program, the Project identified four radio stations with viable production and broadcasting capacity, in regions of the country considered to be high priority for AIDS prevention: Bas-Zaire, Sud-Kivu, Haut-Zaire, and Kasai Occidentale. Working with regional AIDS bureaus and local radio producers, the Project conducted needs assessments and baseline research with identified target groups. Two producers from each of the four radio stations were invited to a workshop on AIDS mass media materials development and IEC program planning.

The workshop placed special emphasis on audience research techniques, pre-testing and evaluation. At the conclusion of the workshop, producers prepared year-long action plans for AIDS radio campaigns in their own regions, to be implemented with Project funds. Through occasional site visits, Project personnel provide technical assistance to the regional collaborators, and monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of productions.

Radio: The Rural Exchange

Most regional radio stations in Zaire have a close relationship with their listeners, responding to letters and drop-in visitors on the air. Producers often travel to villages and rural areas to discuss the ideas, questions, and opinions of their listeners. This live interaction provides immediate feedback on the content and format of their AIDS productions, and ensures the clarity and appeal of messages.

After one year of formal collaboration, the regional radio stations had produced and broadcast, in over thirteen local languages:

- 28 feature programs about AIDS
- 22 spots relaying AIDS messages
- 8 radio dramas about AIDS and safer sexual behavior
- 2 songs about AIDS
- 5 AIDS-knowledge radio contests

In addition to generating effective AIDS radio campaigns, the Project's work with regional broadcasters helped create partnerships among local AIDS bureaus, community groups, healthworkers, artists, and broadcasters, thus enriching each region's overall effort to reduce the spread of AIDS. At the commencement of the third Project year, four new regional radio stations were identified for training, funding, and technical assistance by the Project, resulting in eight out of Zaire's eleven regions having locally based AIDS mass media campaigns.



Impact of the Regional Campaign

Regional response to the AIDS programming was very positive. In the region of Haut Zaire, for example, villagers far from the radio station created an AIDS song in their own traditional musical style after hearing an AIDS informational broadcast. The radio station recorded it, and the song became one of the most requested songs at the station. Post-test surveys and focus groups in all the target regions indicated a high degree of audience exposure, appreciation, and recall of AIDS messages broadcast in a multitude of forms, including traditional opera/dramas, student debates, and interviews with local healthworkers, religious leaders, and persons afflicted with AIDS.

The first phase of the Longitudinal Program Impact Study, compared KAP levels of one target region (Sud-Kivu) with a non-targeted or "control" region (Equateur). That study indicates a positive correlation between the higher level of exposure to AIDS messages and a higher level of AIDS knowledge and attitudes leading toward safer behavior in the target region. The survey samples from the two regions in the Impact Study are comparable in terms of access to radio, socio-economic factors, and urban/rural population distribution.

Study findings show an 18 percent difference in the level of knowledge regarding AIDS transmission between the target region and the control region, compared to a two percent difference in level of knowledge between two targeted regions. The study also indicates that in the control region, only 15.7 percent were able to name the means of AIDS prevention, but in the region benefiting from the regional radio campaign, 38.5 percent know that abstinence, mutual monogamy and condom use are the most effective methods of AIDS prevention. Finally, those in the target region were more likely to accept condoms for AIDS prevention than those in the control region.¹²

Rural radio stations passed on the safer sex messages through locally developed songs, drama, and interview programs in the local dialect.

Conclusion

The implication of the Zaire experience for the rest of the world is a hopeful one: Through the systematic use of available mass media channels and the marketing and distribution of high-quality condoms sold at affordable prices, it is possible to motivate people to take positive actions to stem the spread of AIDS. Ultimately, reducing the spread of HIV transmission requires each society to examine and alter its customs and social and economic structures. This is an extremely gradual and complex process. However, with prevailing attitudes, public policy, and even intimate behavior affected by our environment, the contribution of consistent, relevant, and creative mass media messages can be significant.

The intensity of the Project's campaign and its use of traditional Zairian forms of communication to convey AIDS messages were key elements in the Project's success. Over a relatively short period of time target audiences revised their attitudes and adopted new social norms which in turn changed their sexual behavior. Studies conducted after the first two and a half years of the project show an increase in the reported practice of abstinence, fidelity, and condom use for AIDS prevention.

A tangible indication of the Project's impact on the adoption of risk-reduction behavior is the 1,000 percent increase in annual condom sales by PSI's Condom Social Marketing Project over the first two and a half years of the Media Project.¹³

Condom sales increased from 900,000 in 1988 to 18.3 million in 1991. Studies indicate that those purchasing condoms fall directly within the population targeted by the AIDS Mass Media Project. Three quarters of the typical condom buyers reported purchasing condoms for AIDS prevention as well as for family planning reasons.¹⁴

According to analysis by Family Health International's AIDSTECH Project, the 18.3 million condoms sold in 1991 prevented close to 7,200 cases of AIDS in Zaire that year alone. The lives saved by the use of condoms can be attributed in part to the assured presence of consistent, relevant, and effective mass media AIDS messages in nearly every corner of Zaire.

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