

# **PERFORMING ARTS FOR HIV/AIDS COMMUNICATION**

## **Some strengths and weaknesses**

A case study of DramAidE's live Drama in KwaZulu Natal  
province of  
South Africa



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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to my late mother Jovial Nyabwiyara Mutiba

## **Abstract**

Basing on drama theory, social learning theory and activation theory of information exposure among others, this thesis set out to explore the effectiveness of live drama as a communication tool for raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS and to draw conclusions in terms of strength and weakness.

This thesis used a case study of DramAidE organization in KwaZulu Natal province of South Africa which has since 1992 been using participatory drama and other interactive educational methodologies to control the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in especially KwaZulu Natal province which has the highest HIV prevalence rate in the country

Data collection methods ranging from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, E-mail interviews, real life case studies, direct observations to desk reviews were employed to collect data.

The findings depicted live drama as a creative, interactive and fun way to raise young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS. It was found out that Live Drama is participatory, uses both word and emotion and combines entertainment to educate and communicate highly sensitive information. This makes it an ideal communication tool that easily attracts the young people's attention, helps them to personalize the risk of HIV/AIDS and participate in finding their solutions to this problem.

On the other hand, it was discovered that though live drama is highly effective in raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS, it is disadvantageous because its performance might be limited due to the facilities, bad weather and the environment. Development of drama and preparation of performance takes long time, it is expensive to buy costumes and live drama might cause the audience to try to practice some of the bad ideas they watch.

## List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CCCMS	Center for Communication, Culture and Media Studies
EE	Entertainment Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
JHU/CCP	Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Program
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NEEF	Netherlands Entertainment Education Foundation
TIE	Theatre in Education
TFD	Theatre for Development
TOP	Theatre of the Oppressed
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
AMREF	African Medical and Research Foundation

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.0 Background**

One of the serious International development tribulations crippling the world, and particularly Low Developed Countries, is HIV/AIDS. By December 2002, just 20 years after the HIV was discovered, the virus had killed 22 million persons worldwide<sup>1</sup>. A total of 33.2 million persons were living with HIV worldwide by the end of 2007<sup>2</sup>.

Many developing countries have been devastated by this pandemic for over 24 years now. Several countries in sub Saharan Africa, where two thirds of all people who have HIV in the world live, have suffered for even longer. Such countries include South Africa where this research was carried out. The result has been generations of citizens who do not know what it is like to live in an HIV/AIDS free society.

The problem of HIV/AIDS manifests itself in a subtle way into increased inability to participate in social activities, inability to unearth potentials, ill health, deaths, domestic violence, orphans to mention but a few all of which result into persistent poverty.

It is important to note that ever since, the HIV/AIDS pandemic broke out in the world, several communication initiatives have been used to address it. There has been great use of Radio, Television, and Print to have a wide-spread awareness about HIV/AIDS. However, the HIV prevalence rates have remained high in several countries. They are even rising. This is threatening the realization of the Millennium Development Goal targeting the halting and reversing of the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015.

The picture being depicted is that messages are not getting through; people listen and take no action. May be communicators do not study and research on the target audience to

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<sup>1</sup> UNAIDS (December 2002) AIDS Epidemic Update, Geneva.

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://www.worldvision.ca/Education-and-Justice/Justice-Activism-Central/Pages/HIV-and-AIDS-Fast-Facts.aspx>

know how to communicate to them and through what channels. Maybe others are failing to take people's culture into consideration because it determines the core values of any given community and if ignored then any communication strategy geared to a particular audience is bound to fail. Indisputably, there is need for rethinking of the communication initiatives being used to address this problem because as Panos (2003:1) has observed, "there is real fear that if the current mobilization against HIV/AIDS fails, then humanity will as it has done in the past, turn its back on one of the gravest public health crises in humanity history."

However, there have been some major success stories in communications strategies being used by some organizations to contain the pandemic. Such strategies hold important lessons for the current and future responses to the pandemic. One of these strategies is the use of live drama in raising awareness of people about the pandemic.

Not for entertainment only, African forefathers used drama in different ways to communicate. Colonialists too used drama to fight paganism on African continent and success was registered. That was the major problem at that time. At this time, one of the major worldwide problems is HIV/AIDS and several organizations are using drama to tell people the dangers of the pandemic.

This study therefore sets out to present research findings of the effectiveness of live drama as a communication tool for raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS taking a case study of DramAidE organisation. DramAidE stands for Drama AIDS Education. This organisation is based in KwaZulu Natal province of South Africa.

The fundamental philosophy of conducting this research was the conviction that I share with several scholars that live drama plays a vital role as a channel through which messages are passes onto the audiences which subsequently influences them to change for better. (Kamlongera, 2005; Shahjahan and Ghosh, 2004; Kiiza, 2001; Kincaid, 2001; Ndumbe, 1987)

For the purposes of this thesis, I have used the term *awareness* to mean the transference of knowledge, skills and resources that enable individuals to take action and responsibility, and the removal of obstacles that may have, in the past, hampered this.

## **1.1 The rationale of DramAidE.**

“To use participatory drama and other interactive educational methodologies to control the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic”<sup>3</sup>, is the mission which DramAidE stands for. DramAidE, which means Drama AIDS Education is a unique project based in South Africa’s KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, which has the highest HIV prevalence rate in the country<sup>4</sup>. It aims to “equip young people with increased knowledge about HIV/AIDS and the skills to inform and communicate with others about sexual health.”<sup>5</sup>

DramAidE was initiated in 1992 at the University of Zululand (UZ), as a project within the Department of Drama. It has since then grown into a unit in the Department of Drama at this university. DramAidE is also now a unit in the Centre for Communication, Cultural and Media Studies (CCCMS) at the University Of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). In its methodologies, DramAidE uses drama, “to critically engage young people to communicate effectively about issues relating to sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS.”<sup>6</sup> In so doing, it facilitates critical awareness and provides information on these health issues.

It does this through a range of cultural activities such as performance of songs, dance, poetry, and plays, theatre in education, forum theatre, and arts workshops. Such activities “engage young people and their involvement in the programme, allow them to personalize the risk of Aids in their communities and to develop the skills to be able to cope with the epidemic.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> As told by Mkhonzeni Gumene, the Project Manager for DramAidE in interview with the researcher, see also the organization’s brochure

<sup>4</sup> South Africa HIV/AIDS statistics at <http://www.avert.org/safricastats.htm> see also The Demographic impact of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> DramAidE Annual report 2004/2005 page 2

<sup>6</sup> *ibid* pp2

<sup>7</sup> see <http://www.uzulu.ac.za/Dramaide487.aspx>

DramAidE targets creating a network of peer educators organized in clubs that practice safer sex and other positive behaviors. The clubs are meant to provide avenues for peer educators to undertake health promoting communication campaigns through action media that involves plays, posters, songs and dances that have been created by young people through a participatory process. It works within all educational institutions, primary, secondary and tertiary in KZN

According to the project's director, Professor Lynn Dalrymple, DramAidE, "remains committed to preparing young people to cope during an age where culture, ideas and the fabric of society are shifting as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic."<sup>8</sup>

## **1.2 The Research Problem**

Three years to the end of the third decade of global HIV/AIDS pandemic, existing literature on Health Communication and particularly HIV/AIDS communication indicate little attention on the effectiveness of live drama in raising young people's awareness on HIV/AIDS. Considering the theories of emotional response which maintain that emotional messages in drama, music, and humor in Enter-Educate approaches to communication are more readily accepted by audience members and more likely to lead to behavior change than messages with low emotional content, it is reasonable to assume that live drama is useful in raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS. However what remains unclear is what it offers and how the young people view it from their perspective. For this reason therefore, I noted a gap in the knowledge of realities of the effectiveness of live drama in raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS.

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<sup>8</sup> DramAidE Annual report 2004/2005 page4

### **1.3 Aim of the Research**

The aim of this study was to explore the effectiveness of live drama as a communication tool for raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS and to draw conclusions in terms of strengths and weaknesses.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

In conducting this study, I wanted to achieve several objectives. The first one was to determine the relevance of live drama in the HIV/AIDS communication campaigns' messages to young people.

The second objective was to find out if live drama is better at reaching the audience of young people than other channels and further go ahead to find out why?

Thirdly, to make recommendations on if and why live drama could be integrated in development programmes.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- 1) Where do young people get information about HIV/AIDS?
- 2) Is live drama a better communication tool to reach the audience of young people than other channels in raising their awareness about HIV/AIDS and why?
- 3) What does live drama offer as far as raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS is concerned which other communication tools might not?
- 4) What other development fields can live drama be used to communicate to masses effectively?

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

The findings of this research will be important in different ways.

Firstly, it is projected that the facts acquired shall be useful to organizations dealing in public health communication in the designing of their communication strategy for the future. Different organizations dealing in HIV/AIDS control could also benefit from it in their endeavor to protect the young people from HIV/AIDS.

Secondly, this work enlightens health communicators about the use of live drama in HIV/AIDS communication. At the same time it will enlighten development communicators about the use of live drama as a communication tool to cause development.

Thirdly, the study will benefit students, researchers and scholars as a reference point.

## **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on DramAidE project based in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province. The area of coverage for this study is Ndwendwe ward in Ilembe district in Thekwini region of KwaZulu Natal Province. It focuses on five secondary schools of Sisebenzile, Mabayana, Hloniphani, Lihlihamba and Sondoda. It is particularly concentrated on the young people between the ages of 15 and 22.

I chose to use DramAidE project in my study because it uses live drama methodologies to control the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in one of the areas in Sub Saharan Africa that has high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in youths. I believed that the experience of this project which has been in existence for 15 years now would be useful in my research.

I concentrated on five secondary schools because of the money and time shortage that could not let me cover all the schools DramAidE project works with. More still I was

able to spend enough time with members of DramAidE clubs in these schools because during the time of my research, they were taking part in DramAidE and Dance 4 Life 2006 life skills project. This gave me enough time to spend with the students as they trained and later performed live to the audience of students at Ndwendwe Community Hall near Ndwendwe Municipal headquarter where I later carried out my focus group interviews.

I in particular focused on the young people between the ages of 15 and 22 because the persons in this age bracket, who are the youths, are amongst the worst affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is important to note that this is the age bracket of most of persons who are in secondary schools in South Africa.

The period of coverage is November 2006, December 2006, January 2007 and February 2007. I chose to begin my project in November 2006 because it is the month that I traveled to KwaZulu Natal Province to attend the Memories Of Modernity conference at University of KwaZulu Natal Westville campus. After this conference, I deemed it important to go on and carry out my research before leaving South Africa.

## **1.8 Researcher's Self Reflection in Relation to this Research.**

Though I am a Ugandan, I carried out this research in South Africa. My main interest of carrying out this research in South Africa was to make sure that my study is carried out in one of the world's most HIV/AIDS affected areas.

The language used in collection of data was English. Although a few songs sang during the live performance and during rehearsals were in Zulu, the local language in KZN, I had a trainer from DramAidE with me who was quick to interpret for me because I do not speak Zulu. However, this could have denied me a chance to get first hand information, just from the mouths of the sources.

My relationship with DramAidE organization was purely academic. I contacted the organization via email about two months before I traveled to South Africa and they agreed to let me carry out a research on their organization. This helped me to remain neutral in this study. I have a background of being a drama member in my former secondary school. This could have influenced me to carryout a research on live drama. However it helped me to go into this research from an informed point of view.

## **1.9 Shortcomings**

While DramAidE works with several schools in KwaZulu Natal province, for the reasons of lack of enough money, this study had to concentrate on only 5 schools. Whereas it would have been interesting to involve more schools, and more learners, the researcher had no much money to take him to several schools in the province.

In my observations as the members of the DramAidE trained, and later performed, I was accompanied by some of the teachers of the students and a DramAidE trainer from the organization's office in Durban. Whereas this was a generous gesture from these people, from the angle of an independent researcher, this could have influenced the interviewees to tell me what they through would impress their teachers and trainer and not necessarily what was collect.

Whereas South Africa is regarded as a rainbow nation with several people of different colors, this research studied only the black South Africans because they were the only ones studying in the upcountry schools which the researcher studied.

Not all the emails containing the in-depth interview questions for health communication experts were answered. Some of the prospective interviewees kept quiet even after reminding them. This left me with few communication experts to rely on.

## **1.10 Summary**

The driving force of this chapter was to present the fundamental factors that guided this study. Having stated the research questions and the aim for my investigation, I outlined the research objectives that acted as the guiding principles while I conducted the field research.

The following chapter ventures into reviewing of the literature and theoretical framework with in which this research was carried out.

## **Chapter Two      Literature Review**

### **2.0 Introduction**

It is the aim of this chapter to review relevant literature concerning the use of Entertainment-Education in health communication, the mother of HIV/AIDS Communication. It analyses the paradigms in which health communication fits and the existing literature concerning especially the use of drama as a communication tool in promotion of public health which this research spins on with the objective of revealing contributions, weaknesses and gaps.

### **2.1 Paradigms**

This section presents paradigms, which this study is based on. Different paradigms in development theory according to Pieterse (2001), Sarvaes and Malikhao (2005), include those of modernization, multiplicity, dependency and alternative development. Sarvaes and Malikhao (2005), argue that paradigms in development communication include diffusion and participatory paradigms.

This study is rooted in the following paradigms of development and communication.

### **2.2 Multiplicity and Participatory Paradigms**

This study is based on multiplicity paradigm of development whose counterpart is participatory paradigm of communication. Sarvaes and Malikhao (2005:95) argue that, “the participatory model... incorporates the concepts in the framework of multiplicity...”

According to Pieterse (2005), multiplicity paradigm aims at satisfaction of basic needs, material development of cultures and indigenous culture and effective utilization of

natural resources, which are all embedded in participatory paradigm of development communication.

With this kind of communication, write Sarvaes and Malikhao (2005:78), “Individuals and communities become empowered by gaining knowledge about specific issues, communicating about issues of common concern, making decisions for themselves and negotiating power relations.” A bottom-up communication approach is emphasized here. Communicators work with community. Communication as Waisbord (2005: 79) puts it, is from, “bottom to up”, it starts right from the local people on grassroots. The practitioner uses communication as a tool to facilitate participation in development.

Waisbord (2005:80) argues that, “practitioners have recognized the need for a multiplicity of communication strategies to improve the quality of life in communities. Different techniques in different context might be necessary to deal with specific problems and priorities.” This draws attention to the fact that participatory development communication is a planned activity based on mass media and interpersonal communication and other participatory process which facilitate a dialogue among different stakeholders around a common development problem.

### **2.3 Alternative and Participatory Paradigms**

Alternative development paradigm which according to Pieterse (2002:74) implies, “a definite theoretical break with mainstream development” is pro-people. This paradigm matches with participatory development communication paradigm too.

As Pieterse (2002:75) puts it, it is “participatory and people-centered.” Sarvaes and Malikhao (2005:95) view participatory as where, “the viewpoint of the local groups of the public is considered before the resources for development projects are allocated and distributed and that suggestions for changes in the policy are taken in consideration.”

Local masses are put first and development initiatives come from below as Pieterse (2002:75) writes, “alternative development is development from below...”

Communication is people centered. It is a bottom-up. Mefalopulos (2005:253), gives the impression of this development communication paradigm when he writes; “...communication is acquiring a more integrated and holistic dimension. It provides a number of approaches methods and techniques that professional communicators can use to facilitate a social process...” All is about sustainable development and as Waisbord (2005:78) argues, communication is meant to bring about “community empowerment.”

## **2.4 Relevancy of these Paradigms to this Study**

Sarvaes and Malikhao (2005:91) note:

“There is possibly a valid reason why we have two ears, but only one mouth, communication between people thrives not on the ability to talk fast but the ability to listen well...participation, which necessitates listening and moreover trust will help reduce the social distance between communicators and receivers between teachers and learners, between leaders and followers as well as facilitate a more equitable exchange of ideas, knowledge and experience.”

This gives an impression that while communicating using drama; performers need not to ‘throw’ the message at the audience but rather share with them the message. Therefore performers have to work hand in hand with their target audience by giving them alternatives. This would empower them easily to change. It would also help to stop performers from presenting superficial information and further stop the public from being suspicious of the information they are receiving.

The reason advanced in this respect is that the audience knows its problems better than any other person from outside their jurisdiction and therefore they are potentially most important assets in solving them if involved in the communication strategies. Actually, as Mefalopulos (2005:252-253) notes, “communication is not about communicating messages or persuading people to change. It is about building trust, sharing knowledge and experiences, identifying and investigating problems, needs and opportunity and

finally about defining priorities and solutions.” In other words communication is a two way. It should be participatory

## **2.5 Development Communication**

Development Communication, “refers to a spectrum of communication processes, strategies and principles within the field of international development, aimed at improving the conditions and quality of life of people struggling with underdevelopment and marginalization.”<sup>9</sup> This definition of development communication draws attention to the fact that the objective of development communication is to get higher the quality of life as soon as possible.

As the name suggests, it is all about causing sustainable development in the community.

This is based on Dissanayake (1985:22) definition of development as,

“a process of social change which has its own goal as the improvement of the quality of life of all or majority of the people without doing violence to the natural resources or cultural environment in which they exist...”

Development communication entails information dissemination and education, behavior change, social marketing, social mobilization, media advocacy, communication for social change, and participatory communication. The efforts for development communication have generally centered on changing traditional behavior of the people. Much has also been done for emphasizing adoptions of modern techniques and technologies.

Every developing country has its own priorities. No government can afford to delay development and no political party can have a manifesto without promises of rising standards of lives of the people. But experience has shown that success achieved is not at all compatible with the amount of work that has gone into it. In some cases, changes have not happened at all, while in others they fall short of expectations.

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<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.glocaltimes.k3.mah.se/viewarticle.aspx?articleID=104&issueID=0>

The blame has been put on people alleging that they don't accept changes. The problem may lie with senders of the messages and not recipients. The messages may not be appropriate or the channels of communications may not be proper. There may be obstacles too like inadequate information or cultural or linguistic barriers and poor communication techniques.

Development communication therefore was born to address all these issues so that a sustainable development is attained. Researchers and experts agree that the effective implementation of development programs require detailed systematic and special communication about these programs between policy makers, civil servants and agents of change in partnership with the general population.

In trying to bring about development in communities, development communication employs different media whose roles are to communicate different issues to the society. This communication plays different roles. Mefalopulos (2005:252) notes that communication can be used among several other functions, "to inform and /or consult relevant stakeholders about key issues. It usually provides a full picture of a given situation, addressing the identified information gaps and the required change." This draws attention to the usefulness of development communication in equipping the masses with knowledge to solve problems in their communities.

In development communication, communication influences communities by directing the public to certain issues thus setting agenda for the society to follow. McQuails (2000:426) notes that during the Agenda setting, "relative attention (is) given to items or issues in news coverage (which) influences the rank and order of public awareness of issue and attribution of significance." This draws attention to the fact that media put certain issues in limelight, which causes the audience to give attention to those issues. The audience concentrates on them and gains more skills which, if applied could lead to a change in form of development. This is based on the assumption that media distributes knowledge which McQuail (2000:267) calls, "the consequences of media news and

information.” Knowledge is power. This power therefore would enable the masses to change for the better.

## **2.6 Health Communication Defined.**

Health communication is one of the branches of development communication. It involves dissemination of information aimed at disease control, prevention and health promotion. The Healthy People 2010 Information Access Project<sup>10</sup> has argued that Health communication involves, “the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community decisions that enhance health.” The central focus here is that health communication aims at improving personal and public health.

In the same way, Obregon and Mosquera (200:238) have argued that, “health communication is generally conceived as a strategic process aimed at achieving a rational use of health services and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of programmes directed at disease prevention and health promotion.” Undoubtedly, health communication aims at dissemination of health related information with different intentions depending on the communicator. Such intentions could include among others behavioral change and or social change of the community members. It helps to change the social behavior towards that which is safer for one’s life.

As Obregon and Mosquera (2005:238) have emphasized, “health communication may contribute to all aspects of disease prevention, including physician-patient communication, adherence to treatment, and the decision, implementation and evaluation of public health communication campaigns.” This puts emphasis to the fact that a strategic and well-planned health communication can make diseases a thing of the past.

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<sup>10</sup> For more on this project, see  
<http://www.healthypeople.gov/document/HTML/Volume1/11HealthCom.htm>

The importance of health communication has been made explicit by Fuglesang (2005:389) when he remarks that, “strategic communication to enhance social and behavioral change is very important as it has the potential to slow down if not stop the pandemic.” However, it is important to note that as Fuglesang (*ibid*) further argues, “changing social and behavioral patterns is very difficult. Engaging people and communities in adopting and adapting new ideas about social relations to help them internalize these ideas and then express them in new practices/changed behaviors, is a huge challenge.” The most striking thing is that they are the people who change people and not leaflets, radio programmes or newspapers. Such things merely help the change agent to get their message across.

So what does it take to obtain change? Communication experts such as Piotrow *et al*, (1997) and Freimuth (1992), cited by Obregon and Mosquera (2005:238), have noted that, “programmes in health communication (should) identify and prioritize key behaviors, segment audience, design messages based on scientific evidence research, and reach audience through key channels with mobilizing communities to become involved in this process.” This emphasizes the fact that people have to be made agents of their own change which makes them partners and not beneficiaries. Secondly social norms, policies, culture of the target audience have to be addressed. This encourages thinking about local health problems of a particular community and finding possible local solutions to help achieve the desired results.

Thirdly, to effectively prevent the occurrence and impact of the diseases in any society, there is need for vigorous education of the masses there. This cannot happen if the local people get wrong information. Health communicators have to be armed with facts. The essence here is that you do not persuade people to change but rather give them the right information from which they can choose either to change or not. This certainly supports decision making by facilitating consensus among the target audience.

Several studies have been carried out on what is needed for health communication programmes to succeed. According to Panos (2003), Obregon and Mosquera (2005), Rodrigues (2002), health communication needs special attention from the communicators if it is to succeed. It aims at controlling and preventing the spread of diseases through social and behavioral change interventions. Such interventions need to be grounded in strong pillars in the society if at all social and behavioral change is to occur having in mind that such behaviors were attained after a long period and so it takes a long process to do away with them. However while such behaviors take a long time to be abandoned, the diseases take a short time to catch and kill!

## **2.7 HIV/AIDS Communication**

HIV/AIDS Communication is part and parcel of Health Communication except for it, it gives attention to HIV/AIDS and the issues this pandemic is rooted in.

27 years ago, no one thought of anything like AIDS Communication. Today, a new form of communication, a branch of Health Communication meant to counteract the deadly disease that has so far killed over 22 million people worldwide, with over 33 million others infected by it. HIV/AIDS communication aims at confronting and containing the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Because the problem of HIV/AIDS is linked to several issues such as what Panos (2003:4) identify as, “gender, inequality, discrimination, poverty and marginalization,” HIV/AIDS communication does not only address HIV/AIDS but all the issues it is rooted in.

It is unfortunate that 27 years down the road with HIV/AIDS Communication, the prevalence rates of the disease in most countries are still high. I agree with Panos (2003:4) that, “much that has been learned during the last 20 years is still not being reflected in anti-AIDS strategies.”

Surely, as Tufte (2005:106) notes, “the history of HIV/AIDS communication and prevention is close to disastrous in the lack of results obtained.” My argument here is that new communication strategies that are participatory are still desired to address this pandemic and bring about change. Success stories have been registered in countries like Uganda, Senegal and Brazil in fighting this pandemic after they employed a variety of participatory communication methods.

Taking an example of Uganda, a country, characterized by high poverty levels and poor environment that favors the rapid growth of disease- causing- vectors. However, this has not hindered it from having a successful story in reducing AIDS prevalence from 30% in the 1990s to about 7% now.

The government together with other players in the health sector have for the last 20 years traversed the country talking to school children and adults through different communication tools on the need to abstain from sex for those who are not married; advocating for being faithful among spouses, and the use of condoms for those who can neither abstain nor be faithful. This approach ABC as it is commonly known has helped to reduce AIDS prevalence.

Tremendous decrease in prevalence rates of HIV in Uganda has been as a result of intensive HIV/AIDS communication by NGOs, CBOs, faith based organizations and private sectors all of which supplement the government efforts in this cause.

## **2.8 Entertainment-Education Strategy in Health Communication**

Within health communication and HIV/AIDS Communication in particular, there are several strategies through which the message is sent from the source to the receivers- one of them is Entertainment-Education. Entertainment-Education can be done with the use of different channels and formats. These include soap operas on Television, Live theater

performances and radio dramas. It employs folk theatre, puppetry, story telling, songs, music, mime and folk dances too.

Several scholars, Barman (1998), Singhal and Rogers (1999), Tufte (2005) inclusive identify Entertainment-Education strategy as the one that employs education and entertainment as an approach to create social change in the targeted audience. It entails different, comprehensive, highly planned, and strategically assembled media messages for a particular period of time, designed to increase awareness, inform, or change behavior in targeted audiences,

EE has for long been used in the world as one of the strategies in health communication. As Tufte (2005:160) has argued, “the use of EE has for decades been seen in addressing health related issues as blood pressure, smoking, vaccine promotion and family planning. It has also been used for the last 15 years in HIV/AIDS prevention.” Likewise Kincaid (2001:1) notes that, “entertainment education is now well established as a strategy to promote health.” While speaking at the third International Entertainment Education Conference for Social Change<sup>11</sup> in Netherlands, Professor Phyllis Piotrow, the then director of Johns Hopkins University’s Centre for Communication Programmes stressed that, “Entertainment education is the Viagra of health communication,” (NEEF and JHU/CCP 2001:2). Factual. EE spices up Health communication. Like Piotrow emphasized (*ibid*; pp3);

“EE and Viagra may have more in common than you think... Both act by expanding human capacity to absorb and retain new materials, both can be effective for women, as well as men, and both can bring new blood, new excitement and new enjoyment to the whole field of health communication.”

Surely the use of Entertainment -Education strategy through Radio, TV or live drama has an intense impact on the way public perceive and make sense of the information. Yet we must ask ourselves why this is so? Why is it effective? Singhal and Rogers (1999:211) have made this explicit by noting that, “the theory based nature of Entertainment-Education increases the audience effects.” Quoting Everett Rogers one of the participants

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<sup>11</sup> The third International Entertainment Education Conference for Social Change took place between 17-22, 2000 in Arnhem and Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

at the third International Entertainment Education Conference for Social Change, in Netherlands, NEEF and JHU/CCP (2001:15) also contend that, “it’s the dramatic appeal that leads to audience involvement. A very important mechanism through which EE has its effects is getting people to talk about the issue. So it is audience involvement that actually leads to changes in behavior.” This demonstrates the value of combining widespread involvement with the strategic application of communication and education interventions to bring about behavior, attitudinal and social change

Other scholars have urged that it is the ability for EE to attract, entertain and hold the audience that makes it unique in communication. Kincaid (2001:1) drives this home when he urges that, “what makes entertainment different from other types of communication...is the ability to hold attention and provide enjoyment.” He argues that, “without emotional involvement and relational change, individual behavior may not change.”

Basing on the Bandura’s social learning/cognitive theory (1986), an individual’s behavior is the result of the interaction among cognition, environment and physiology. This therefore suggests that the individual is expected to imitate the behavior of viewed role models in the play. It is widely accepted that people learn new behaviors by observing them being demonstrated by others

The real meaning here is that the role models demonstrate behaviors that members of the audiences emulate. Member of the audience also see for themselves the consequences of unhealthy behaviors which forces them to change for better.

Using Africa as an example, EE strategy has long been used in different campaigns to address several problems in communities. Some of these include environmental degradation and making people aware of the dangers of HIV/AIDS. Some of the successful campaigns include the prevention of soil erosion campaign that was ran by the then Kenya’s first President Daniel Arap Moi in 1990s which saw almost a complete

eradication of soil erosion and improved farming practices. The other is the success story of HIV/AIDS combating campaigns in Uganda that gave it an international recognition.

On a continent like African, characterized by high levels of poverty and illiteracy better health is a dream for many people especially for the majority living in villages where health services are poor. However, health experts say about 90 percent of diseases in Africa could be prevented if effective communication aiming at empowerment of the local people with preventative facts is done. Therefore due to its ability to attract, entertain and hold the members of the audience as they receive messages, EE strategy could be effective in African context.

## **2.9 Entertainment-Education Compared With None Entertaining Strategies in Health Communication**

For better results, in any communication strategy, when sending messages, it is important to send the right message, through the right channel, at the right time and to the right people. Surely all communication channels be it radio, television, print can be used as tools for health communication. However, as discussed by Fuglesang (2005) health communication deals with a complex matter- enhancing social and behavioral change. This also calls for complex communication strategies if communicators are to achieve their objectives.

Currently we are witnessing globalization bringing in the media industry a number of players. Several Transnational Media Companies are penetrating societies everywhere on the planet (Carlsson:2005; Deane 2005). Also considering the fact that several governments in the world have liberalized their media industries, local people are faced with several choices to choose from where they want to get information.

Critically related to this is the fact that several private media houses concentrate on advertising to survive (Deanne: 2005) and so they pay little attention to issues which

affect majority rural poor people who are always marginalized. Such issues include diseases.

In the competition to effectively pass on information to the local people and more especially those on grass roots, the winner thus could be the strategies which are highly persuasive, exciting and entertaining because they are able to keep their audience.

Important to note is that EE puts local people's culture first. Several scholars have described culture as an eased means of penetrating communities and solving their problems. Sarvae and Malikhao (2005) have also argued that culture is looked at as an entry point for health communication interventions.

Closely related to this, several efforts in international development are now focusing on cultural values. We are witnessing a cultural turn which has been described as a shift in emphasis towards meaning<sup>12</sup> or rather a shift to putting emphasis on the culture of the people concerned.

NEEF and JHU/CCP (2001:1) have urged that, "when designing an EE campaign, one has to keep in mind the role cultural values and intercultural differences play when the audience receives the message." Observation of cultural values plays a very important role in bringing closer to the audience what one is communicating as audience members see it through the angle of their culture and identify themselves with it. Basing on this therefore, it would mean that EE penetrates communities easily and solves their problems because it capitalizes on culture.

However on the other side, cultural turn might have negative connotations in development communication, it may mean implementation of a communication strategy which is not all emblazing but rather catering for a particular cultures.

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<sup>12</sup> Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/cultural\\_turn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/cultural_turn)

As Pieterse (2002: 65) notes, “the dark side of local culture is local ethnocentrism or in other words, ethnic fundamentalism.” Equally Skelton and Tim (2005:4) have also argued that ;

“anyone individual’s experience of culture will be affected by the multiple aspects of their identify rule, gender, age, sexuality, class, caste position, religion, geography and so forth and it is likely to alter in devious circumstances his kinship and tribesmates and leave alone others he considers not of his/hers likewise, a country may try to concentrate on development practices that cater for that particular country and frustrate the issues of regional cooperation.”

It is also important to note that such strategies are bound to fail if they are applied in context of foreign countries (Airhihembuwa, 2000). EE could also be an agent of cultural imperialism if what is used in this strategy originates from foreign countries (Ndumbe, 1987).

I can not forget to observe that in some circles, entertainment is taken as an object of pleasure and therefore there is a possibility of the audience members using it as just simply a means to get pleasure and neglect the information it is delivering.

It is important to note that social mobilization campaigns often require that more than one channels of communication be used at the same time. This therefore means that EE can not work alone; it has to be supplemented with other strategies. In fact research has shown that the most successful communication efforts require multi-media, multi-channel approaches. Specifically, the combination of mass media and interpersonal channels is effective for linking information-giving with the possibility of producing behavior change. Research shows that individuals that are exposed to a message from multiple sources – mass media, community-based media and interpersonal communication – are more likely to take action than those exposed to a message from a single source.

## **2.10 Drama as a Communication Tool in Communication for Development.**

Like Radio, Television and Print, drama has for long been used as a means through which to pass on information to the masses. The actors are looked at as disseminators of information.

Kamlongera (2005:435) bear witness to how drama is being used as a communication tool. He argues, that with drama, “while performers might engage in doing spectacular movements and dances, they also carry within the performances special messages or lessons to some members of their audience.” And as Ndumbe (1987:57) has urged, “through dramatization, people’s attention can be focused on problems in a way that challenges their perception of their situation. They are encouraged to take a fresh look at the situation and work out new solutions.”

Much literature has been written on the use of theater in different development fields (Tufle 2005; Singhal and Rogers, 2004; Bauman, 1999; Gao 2005; Kamlengela, 2005). Citing Byram et al (1981:10), Ndumbe (1987:57) notes that theatre is “used as a two-way communication process; it serves as a catalyst for involving people in discussion and action on their problems rather than merely accepting their lot or waiting for external solutions.”

Drama in Africa started as a platform for challenging oppressive structures so that human beings especially the marginalized ones can achieve dignity, self-expression and self realization. It is now being used as a tool for communicating and educating local people especially when it comes to the adult education courses and educating those who have little access to convectional forms of media (Ndumbe, 1987; Kamlongera, 2005)

Ndumbe (1987:57) has urged that, “the theater in particular is being used in community education to concretize and mobilize groups of society (especially) those who have been denied access to the more convectional forms of media.” As the masses attend live

dramas or watch those which are not live, they are able to get new ideas in different issues affecting them. These ideas range from the fields of public health, to agriculture, religion, politics, environment, democracy to mention but a few.



**The ability of Drama to attract, entertain and hold such a big audience makes it a unique communication channel**

This is supported by Kiiza, (2001:97) when she notes that, “in most African countries the literacy rate is very low, so drama written and performed in local languages very easily reaches the audience it is approved to reach, that is, The Holy Trinity of the worker, the peasant, the patriot who traditionally are the guardians of African languages.”

Talking of the African languages which are some of the continent’s heritages being lost, Kamlongera (2005:438) notes that, “performing arts have always been fulfilling a utilization role in the community and that to encourage this serves to forestall nearly lost African heritage.” In the same way, Kiiza (2001) argues that drama helps to protect

cultural traditions, invigorate and support languages which would otherwise be wiped out.

What can drama do? Citing (Ross Kidd, 1982), Ndumbe (1978:57) notes that drama, “is being used...to stimulate community thinking, develop self confidence, participation, expression, awareness and organizational strengths of popular groups, communities and organizations.”

More still, drama has been used as a tool for protesting against foreign rule and oppressors. Theater contributed much in ending apartheid in South Africa and in several African countries. Drama was used as a tool to tell colonialists that they were no longer welcome on the African soil. Citing Kidd (1983:287), Ndumbe (1987:60) drives this point home when he notes that, “popular theater in the third world often claims to be a tool of protest and struggle and a means of social transformation.”

As already seen, drama plays a great role right from promotion of health, to education, democracy, and environmental conservation among others.

Ndumbe (1987:65) summarizes it all when he writes that;

“theater is undoubtedly a viable method for generating community involvement, in discussing communal issues and seeking joint methods for action. It provides a forum for collective – interrogation forwards a communal search for a better life. It creates a dialectical context within which the past can be used to inform the present and shape the future. It provides humanity with possibilities to set its own agenda and set about their realization.”

## **2.11 Conceptual Framework**

This section presents theories and concepts, which this study is based on.

Under this section, concepts and theories were dealt, together because they are interrelated and inseparable.

## 2.12 Drama Theory

This study is based on the drama theory which explains how drama affects audience behavior. Citing (Von Neumann and Morgenstern, 1953; Howard 1997; Howard et al 1997; Bennett & Howard, 1996; Bryant, 1997), Kincaid (2001:6) notes that, “drama theory was delivered from mathematics game theory as a general theory of human interaction.”

Basing on game theory, drama theory states that emotions in drama trigger rationalizations that create changes in the game, and so change follows change until either all conflicts are resolved or action becomes necessary. The game as redefined is then played<sup>13</sup>

Kincaid (2001:3) summarized this theory when he notes that in drama theory, it's assumed that, “in situation X, A does this, then B that, then A this and so forth, which causes Y to happen. If understood, this casual structure provides a lesson for audience individuals” as they follow the drama keenly. What this points to, as Kincaid (2001:5) has argue is that members of the audience identify themselves with the characters in the drama and, “characters affect the audience to the extent that they become involved with the characters, emphasize with them understand their point of view, feel what they feel, and anticipate their next move and sympathize with what happens to them.”

As already noted this helps members of the audience to put themselves in the ‘shoes’ of the characters and imagine what is happening in drama as if it is real. In the end therefore as Kincaid (2002:22) has argued, “the confrontation and emotional response of the characters generate a corresponding emotional response in the audience” which makes members of the audience feel like they are participating in the game and suspense, keeps their emotions high as they wait to know what takes place next.

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<sup>13</sup> Retrieved from [http://wikipedia.org/wiki/drama\\_theory](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/drama_theory)

This theory is important in this study because it conveys the idea that by observing what is taking place in drama members of the audience are able to undergo a similar change themselves. However, I am critical of this in that it could be dangerous if the character is a wrong element. This would mean that members of the audience take on his/her personality and undergo a change for the worst and not for the better. It is important to note however that drama has a greater impact on the audience members who understand the story from the view of the character.

Secondly, this theory acknowledges the audience members' participation even when they are not on stage. It is important to this study because it brings in live drama, the element of participatory. However it is important to note that it gives little attention to the feedback notion.

Worth noting also is the effect of scrip and the development of characters on the audience member's understanding and accepting of the message. The way characters act is determined by the script and certainly, understanding of the message by the audience members depends on how the characters have been developed. They are developed according to the script. Therefore, this would mean that if scripts are written in a way that does not appeal, the characters might not appeal to the audience too and certainly the drama may lose meaning. The essence here is that character observation by the members of the audience might not determine the outcome; there are other factors that do this including the script itself.

### **2.13 Social Learning Theory**

Delineated by Albert Bandura (1995, 1997), this theory suggests that persons learn through observing the actions of others. It contends that people learn from one another which is also reinforced by the environment. As they observe, they learn, imitate and model.

This theory is important in my study because it gives a picture of how watching drama being performed, or shown on television, can give the viewers or members of the audience insights into the behaviors of others. The viewers therefore can opt to take up or keep away from the behaviors shown.

Secondly the importance of this theory to this research is that it brings in the element of copying and imitating. It is assumed that members of the audience learn and copy what they watch on the stage in live drama and later practice it.

However, one of the weaknesses of this theory is that it maintains that learning can occur without change in behaviors whereas behaviorists say that learning has to be characterized by a permanent change in behaviors (Ormrod, 1999)

It is imperative to note that this theory's observation and modeling process, if coalesced with a strong sense of self-efficacy (the belief in one's capacities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments<sup>14</sup>) may lead to behavior change. Bandura (1994) urges that a strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways.

## **2.14 Summary**

This chapter reviewed relevant literature, the paradigms and theories with in which this study lies. The following chapter ventures into the methods, which were employed in this study to achieve the objectives.

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<sup>14</sup> See [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/self-efficay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/self-efficay)

## **Chapter Three    Research Methodology**

### **3.0    Introduction**

This chapter gives the idea about the methods, which the researcher employed to achieve the objectives of the study. This research is intended to explore the effectiveness of live drama as a communication tool for raising young people’s awareness about HIV/AIDS and to draw conclusions in terms of strength and weakness.

Specifically, this research took a descriptive approach. A descriptive research can be put under two categories namely quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative research deals with the observation, impression and interpretation. It entails descriptive or analysis of phenomena whose variables are not easily measured. While a quantitative research uses measurement and statistical principles and models, this involves quantification of the phenomenon under study. It is mostly used in cases where the phenomena under study can be expressed in terms of quantity.

This research in particular is qualitative.

### **3.1    Data Collection Methods**

Different data collection methods were employed in this research. I decided to use a combination of data collection methods in this research because as Hansen *et al* (1998:1) have noted, a “good research usually benefits from the use of a combination of methods. In other words, researchers should not only consider which is the most appropriate method for the study of their chosen topics or problem but also what combination of research methods will produce a better and deeper understanding of it.”

## **3.2 In-Depth Interviews**

As part of several methods used to collect data, this research employed in-depth interviews. Babbie (1986) argues that rather than asking respondents to read questionnaire and enter their own answers, with in-depth interviews, the researcher asks questions orally and records respondents' answers.

The questions were laid down in an interview guide. I in particular used a semi-structured interview guide which, as Hansen *et al* (1998:274) have made a case, worked as my "guide or manual to work from and follow."

The advantages of in-depth interviews are that they allow the interviewees to express themselves freely. As Wimmer and Domminick (2003) observe, the researcher also is given a chance to probe deeper into the issue, based on the respondent's response. In-depth interviews further help the researcher to be able to make important observations as he/she carries out interview.

Three officials of DramAidE organization out of 4 members at their office at University of KwaZulu Natal Howard College in Durban city were interviewed using in-depth interviews. These included the Project Manager and two coordinators of the project.

These interviews targeted the people behind DramAidE organization who took the initiative to start this project.

## **3.3 Focus Group Discussions**

This research also used focus group discussions to collect data. Bessette (2004) has urged indisputably that, "group discussions and debates are widely used (and) so common that we seldom think of them as communication tools."

Focus group discussions, involve small groups selected from a wider population and sampled through open discussion. These, were employed to collect data from the organization's target audience (youths). The aim here was to gather information about the perception.

I took with me discussion guides that contained already prepared open-ended questions. In the discussions, I worked as a modulator and helped to facilitate and guide the participants as they expressed their ideas.

In the discussions, it is important to note that I separated the students according to their sex. Girls discussed separately from boys. This certainly helped to give a chance to those who might have had fear to talk when the opposite sex was around which could have hindered open discussions.

While the students discussed, I observed and monitored whether what I saw them watch on the stage was attained in the intended way. In other words, as Hansen *et al* (1998:258) have urged, I observed how the students made "sense of (the drama they just watched) through conversation and interaction with each other."

Twenty students from five schools were engaged in discussion groups. These included four students consisting of two males and two females from each school. These students were randomly selected from the secondary schools of Sisembenzile, Mabayana, Hloniphani, Lihlihamba and Sondoda all in Ndwendwe ward, in Ilembe district in Thekwini region of Kwanzulu Natal province.

Some of the students selected in this study were members of DramAidE clubs in their respective schools. Others were performers while others weren't. They had known DramAidE's live drama for at least 3 months. I in particular selected these students because surely they had watched the dramas and some of them had participated in the performance of these dramas by DramAidE.

The discussion groups were held after the students had watched and some of them performed to the audience of students at Ndwendwe hall at the end of DramAidE/Dance 4 Life 2006 life skills project<sup>15</sup> at the end of November 2006.

This gave me an advantage of getting first hand information from the students about the reception of live drama. Secondly, I was able to interview even those who participated in the performances themselves. Each school under the DramAidE project forms a club of member students of about 30, most of whom are performers. These students are the ones who are the role models for other students in their respective schools.

There are several advantages of Focus Group Discussions. As Hansen *et el* (1998:262) citing Morgan (1988:12), have noted, “the hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in the group.”

Focus Group Discussions also help the researcher to make necessary observations in the process of discussions. As the researcher observes, he/she is able to get clear and unbiased results since he/she is able to know exactly whether the message has created any change. They further help the researcher to initiate and build relationships with the participants.

### **3.4 E-Mail Interviews**

This research employed e-mail interviews to interview experts who have experience in different health communication methods.

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<sup>15</sup> Dance4Life project involved youth all around the world in combating HIV and AIDS and fighting the stigma and taboos surrounding them. Youths participated in Dance4Life through Dance4Life Schools Project .It involved dance, music, and acting among others

These online in-depth interviews were semi-structured and involved multiple exchanges between the researcher and the interviewees most especially on answers that were considered not clear by the researcher.

Several scholars (Lokman Meho<sup>16</sup>; Neil Selwyn and Kate Robson<sup>17</sup>; Kvale, 1996) inclusive have argued that e-mail interviews are advantageous because they cost less, reduce the cost of transcribing, several people can be interviewed at ago, and the researcher can be able to interview those in hard to reach areas.

Selwyn and Robson further argue that, “e-mail interviewing reduces the problem of interviewer effect, whether resulting from visual and non-verbal cues or status differences between interviewee and interviewer” such as shyness, race, color, age and gender.

Perhaps what is important to note too is that e-mail interviews bring into the research, an element of internationalizing the research. The researcher is able to interview people from different corners of the world rather than concentrating on a few people from one area.

However, on the other side, it is important to note that, e-mail interviews are costly especially in accessing the internet, sending e-mails and waiting for replies takes a lot of time. It took about a month and a half in this research. Ensuring respondents’ anonymity is almost impossible.

I recruited interviewees through individual solicitation, and personal research websites. Most of the interviewees were also got from the M/MC Health Communication material Network<sup>18</sup> which I am a member. I was able to contact the members basing on the organizations they were working with and their positions.

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<sup>16</sup>See [www.slis.indiana.edu/faculty/meho/email-interviewing.pdf](http://www.slis.indiana.edu/faculty/meho/email-interviewing.pdf)

<sup>17</sup>see [www.nrf.ac.za/yenza/research/internet.htm](http://www.nrf.ac.za/yenza/research/internet.htm)

<sup>18</sup> The M/MC Health Communication Materials Network (HCMN) is an international network of professionals specializing in the development and use of health communication materials - pamphlets, posters, video, radio, novelty items, flipcharts, cue cards, training materials, electronic media, etc. see <http://www.m-mc.org/hcmn>

Four health communication experts were interviewed.

It is important to note that out of 7 e-mails which I sent to interviewees, only 4 replied. One replied turning down the request and two remained silent.

### **3.5 Real Life Case Studies/Oral Testimonies**

Oral testimonies were obtained from some of the students who had watched DramAidE live dramas for some time.

More still oral testimonies were given by teachers of the students who are focal persons of DramAidE organization in their particular schools. They gave testimonies on how the lives of students in their particular schools have changed particularly as a result of watching or participating in performing live dramas.

The advantage of this method is that it gives first hand testimonies.

### **3.6 Direct Observation**

Hansen *et al* (1998:3) notes that, “participant observation can be one of the most exciting, challenging and potentially rewarding of all mass communication research methods.”

With the help of the DramAidE officials, I was able to observe the students as they did training in dancing, acting, singing, poem citation to mention but a few. I also observed the students perform live on stage. More still, I also observed the students discuss in discussion groups.

The advantage of this is that it made me part and parcel of my research and helped me to collect first hand information.

### **3.7 Desk Review**

Secondary data was got from internet, textbooks, DramAidE's annual reports and other records kept by the organization, the students' teachers and students themselves.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter concentrated on the research methods, which the researcher employed to achieve the objectives of the study. These included the focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, e-mail interviews, real life/ oral testimonies, direct observations and desk review.

The following chapter presents findings got after using the above research methods.

## Chapter Four      Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of the Data

### 4.0      Introduction

The task of this chapter is to present findings from focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, e-mail interviews, real life/ oral testimonies, direct observations and desk review in a view of exploring the efficacy of live drama in raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS taking a case study of DramAide organization.

In this chapter and other chapters in general, I use conventional terms *audience* to describe those watching live drama, *Performers* for the people performing to the audience and *Channel* for the medium through which information is transmitted from sender to receiver.

Data analysis involved searching for patterns of data in form of recurrent behaviors and interpreting it moving from description of empirical data to interpretation of meanings.

In-depth interviews, oral testimonies and group discussions were recorded and later transcribed. Data generated was sorted and arranged into different themes and later organized into categories (coding) before being presented in a qualitative narrative form.

All the research methods employed in this research were meant to discover the in-depth information about the targeted audiences' perceptions, attitudes and experiences.

For this reason therefore, I present analysis and discuss the data generated using all these methods henceforth in tandem.

## **4.1 Access to Information on HIV/AIDS**

Respondents in the focus group discussions and those who gave testimonies were asked where they had obtained information about HIV/AIDS. All of them mentioned DramAidE's live drama but went ahead to mentioned others that included radios, Televisions, their fathers and mothers, Counselors, Soul City TV, Zone 14 drama on TV, Magazines and Newspapers (focus group discussion for females, 2006). Whereas in a separate focus group discussion for males, the respondents talked of, "televisions, neighbors, trainings, radios, sisters, friends, counselors, hospitals and teachers." (Male focus group, 2006)

From these findings, it emerged that DramAidE's live drama was not the only actor in the sensitization of the young people under this study about HIV/AIDS. The respondents turned to other channels of communication where they learned about HIV/AIDS. True. There are different avenues through which people get information. They do not rely on a single medium of communication.

The DramAidE project Manager agrees with this when he maintains that there are several ways through which young people access messages on HIV/AIDS and DramAidE's live drama is one of them. He also gives examples of radios, televisions and print as some of the media where the young people get formation about HIV/AIDS.

In addition, the mentioning of their friends, parents, sisters, neighbors, mothers and fathers as some of the sources of their information about HIV/AIDS proved that HIV/AIDS issues are more rooted in social networks. Therefore these social networks themselves can be identified as sources were people get facts about the pandemic.

The use of social networks as a source of information also suggests that media are not the only sources of information about HIV/AIDS and other issues in communities.

It is important to note that, no respondent mentioned internet as a source of the information on HIV/AIDS. This could suggest that the HIV/AIDS communication campaigns in KwaZulu Natal province and South Africa as a whole have not ventured maximally into the use of internet as a medium for sensitizing the young people about HIV/AIDS. It also suggests that the use of internet as a source of information has not taken root in rural schools in KwaZulu Natal province.

Putting in consideration that all the interviewed students in this research, (the DramAidE club members and none members), mentioned that they at one time accessed information on HIV/AIDS from DramAidE's live drama, I feel vindicated therefore, to conclude that the DramAidE's live drama is an important source of information for the target group.

## **4.2 Young People's Attitudes towards DramAidE's Live Drama**

All the respondents in focus group discussions and those who gave oral testimonies (members of DramAidE and none members inclusive) showed a favorable attitude and an appreciation of DramAidE's live drama as far as raising their awareness about HIV/AIDS is concerned. They in particular stressed that it helps them to developing a positive way of thinking and behaving as they physically watch what is being exhibited on the stage and interpret it according to what happens in their communities.

"I really like these plays they show us," "It is good", "we enjoy it very much" (focus group discussions, November 2006) are some of the sentences the focus group respondents used to describe how they felt about the use of live drama by the DramAidE project in raising their awareness about HIV/AIDS.

These findings were supported by my observations of the students' behaviors while they watched live drama at Ndwendwe Community Hall. They danced, sang, made all sorts of noise and cheered as drama members from different schools performed on stage.

Likewise in the interviews with the teachers, sentences like “they enjoy it”; “they like participating in it,” were common.



**Young people like these ones enjoy taking part in Drama through which they communicate to others**

The teachers in particular said DramAidE’s live drama attracts the attention of students because it involves a lot of entertainment which is what young people like.

“Youths get excited. They enjoy the project very much and are always there. You don’t have to run after them to recruit them as actors or to come and watch.”  
(A female teacher, 2006)

Similarly, the two coordinators and the Manager of DramAidE organization contended that the young people are always interested in their Live drama; be taking part in it as performers or members of the audience. They narrated to me how they usually see the students who are members of the audience “dance, sing, cry and laugh” as they watch.

The findings therefore showed that DramAidE’s live drama is liked by not only the young people who watch it but also those who take part in it. It attracts their attention. It

is assumed therefore that as they develop interest in it, the chances of getting the messages embedded in it also increase.

If these messages are put into practice, positive way of thinking and behavior would be achieved. This is partly based on the statement of the great Chinese thinker and social philosopher Confucius who once said; “Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I will understand.” The most striking thing is that they are the people who change people and not leaflets, radio programme or newspapers. Such things merely help the change agents to get their messages across.

Students who participated in the focus group discussions (DramAidE club members and none members inclusive) were asked to mention any words they can use to describe DramAidE’s Live Drama. They in particular used the following 6 words to describe it; “enjoyable”, “Good”, “Exciting”, “Interesting”, “Creative” and “Interactive” (focus group discussions 2006).

Having described it with the above words, members of the focus group discussions were further asked what they meant by these words. In their responses, they used the above words interchangeably. They reported that it was fun because it is interesting; others said it is good because it is enjoyable. These findings suggested that the members of the discussions group had an affirmative attitude towards Live Drama.

However the failure for the focus group discussion members to mention words like informative and educative and their vagueness in defining what they meant by the words they used to describe DramAidE’s Live drama could also suggest that they like it just for its fun and aim at satisfying their desires for having fun and neglect other things embedded in it such as information.

On the other side, the people behind DramAidE organization believe that Live Drama is informative and educative on top of what the focus group discussion members believe. This was revealed in my interviews with the people behind the DramAidE organization,

when they categorically disclosed that they choose to use live drama as part of their communication channels because it is “participatory”, “fun”, “interesting”, and “educative” to the young people. They stressed that they are these characteristics of the live drama that keep the young people hooked to it. (DramAide Manager and 2 coordinators, 2006).

Likewise several writers (Kincaid, 2000; Albert Bandura, 1995, 1997; Tufte, 2005) inclusive describe drama as being participatory, interactive, interesting, educational and informative.

Therefore the findings suggest that by communicating to the young people through Live Drama, DramAidE organization hooks them because drama itself is seen as, interesting, fun, informative, educative, good, and exciting. This in the end would mean that the DramAidE’s message in the live drama reaches the intended audience because the audience likes the channel. However more study is needed to find out whether the members of the audience just end at being entertained or go further to take all the information being communicated in the entertainment.

### **4.3 The Impact of DramAidE’s Live Drama on Young People**

What is the impact of dramAidE’s live drama on young people as far as raising their awareness about HIV/AIDS is concerned?

The five teachers of the students interviewed revealed that DramAidE’s live drama had influenced behavior change amongst the students and other members of the schools and neighboring communities who watch these pieces of live drama. They in particular revealed that students had acquired knowledge on how HIV/AIDS is transmitted and prevented and they were now able to take informed decisions as far as sex is concerned.

They also revealed that reported cases of simple sexual harassment especially of girls by boys had reduced in their schools. They said that through such drama, girls had acquired

assertiveness skills and can easily express themselves. They disclosed that more girls can now say “no” to demanding boys.

The teachers also disclosed that some members of DramAidE who are seen as role models in their schools have greatly improved in their school performance because they want to be seen as role models in every field.

From the focus group discussions, the learners revealed that through watching DramAidE’s live drama on HIV/AIDS, they have acquired knowledge about pregnancy, their rights, dangers of HIV/AIDS, how it is spread, how it is prevented and controlled, to take responsible choices, not to be aggressive, respect other people, abstinence and use of condom. (Females focus group discussion, 2006).

Male students who took part in the focus group discussion were also able to mention that, through DramAidE’s live drama, they have been able to learn how to choose good friends, condomise (using a condom), abstinence, respect others, communicate with their parents on sexual matters, how to control themselves when faced with peer pressure, being faithful to themselves and treating people with HIV/AIDS like any other persons. (Males focus group discussion, 2006)

**Box 1: Impact realized in the life of young people as seen through the lens of a DramAidE Club female member and a performer who gave an oral testimony.**

- |  |
|--|
| <p>I know that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HIV is spread through having sex with an infected person,</li><li>• Having unprotected sex can kill me</li><li>• I should abstain but if not then use a condom</li><li>• I should not accept gifts for sex</li><li>• I am the one to control my body</li><li>• It is good to stay a virgin till marriage</li><li>• I should always live an extemporary life</li><li>• How to express my feelings openly</li><li>• Where I can go to have HIV test and counseling</li></ul> |
|--|

A testimonial given by a male student who had watched Live Drama performances for DramAidE for at least 2 years also revealed more or less similar issues.

**Case 2: Impact realized in the life of young people as seen through the lens of a regular audience member of DramAidE live drama who gave an oral testimony.**

I have come to know that;

- You don't have to play sex with someone to show that you love her
- I should always be responsible for my personal actions
- I live only one life so I should not mess around with infected girls
- All girls are infected with HIV/AIDS except those that have been checked while I am around
- No need for sex till I get married but if I fail I should condomise
- AIDS is real and it kills
- If someone has AIDS, he should live a good life and should not infect others
- I should not discriminated people with AIDS and those with out it

From the findings, it emerged that the young people had been empowered by the DramAidE's live drama by gaining knowledge about different issues on HIV/AIDS. This would mean that the young people are able to make informed decisions for themselves.

This was corroborated during the in-depth interviews with two trainers of DramAidE who said that as years went by, they had observed that the behaviors of the learners who usually watch and those who take part in performing the drama pieces had changed. They stressed that the drama pieces had showed the learners, the problem of HIV/AIDS and other related harms, helped them to explore the causes and find their solution.

The trainers further disclosed that pregnancy rates in the female learners has decreased over the years. They talked of how students now live responsible lives, how they know where to get counseling services, where to buy condoms and how to use them, and the advantages of abstaining among others.

The manager of DramAidE organization agrees and partly disagrees saying "we can only contribute, you can't know where you got behaviors you have today whether you got them from your mother, father, sister, or teacher" (Manager DramAidE, 2006)

Again as already seen, the manager seems to suggest that there are several channels through which the young people access messages on HIV/AIDS and so you cannot conclude that it is DramAidE's live drama alone that made the youths change but rather a combination of other channels of information.

#### **4.4.0 What Does DramAidE's live drama Offer to Young People**

What does DramAidE's live drama offer to young people which other channels of communication (radio, television and print) might not offer as far as raising HIV/AIDS awareness is concerned?

##### **4.4.1 Participatory**

A question was posed to officials of DramAidE organization in the in-depth interviews why they chose to use live drama to sensitize the young people about HIV/AIDS and not Radio, Television or News papers. In their response, they stressed that live drama was chosen to be used as one of their communication method because on top of being entertaining like other channels of communication; it is also highly participatory as it combines entertainment to educate and inform members of the audience. They hoped that this would help the young people participate in finding their solutions to the HIV/AIDS problem.

Save being highly participatory, from the point of view of the three officials from DramAidE, they seemed to suggest that the use of live drama as a communication channel offers similar benefits like those got from Radios, Televisions, films and newspapers. In particular, the DramAidE organization Manager stressed that the uses of recorded drama on television, radio and also written drama series in newspapers, or magazines would offer almost similar benefits like those offered by live drama except the fact that with live drama, drama is live and members of the audience are able to be part of it.

**Box 1: An Extract From Mobilizing Young Men To Care: A DramAidE Organization’s Project Manual**

Plays, songs and dances are popular ways of working with young people for social change. Making a play allows participants to explore problems and develop problem-solving skills through improvising and role-playing.

...the fictional dimensions of play-making provide a safe haven to practice and learn life skills through simulation. In this sense the plays are rehearsals for life. For example in the first scene of Does ‘no’ mean ‘yes’? Hazzel is pressured into having sex with Siphon. She practices a delaying tactic by agreeing to see him later. This is a useful skill to use in real life situations in which men can be very persuasive and refuse to take ‘No’ for an answer.

Songs help to mobilize young people. In the song *Isizwesakithi* [help the Nation], the chorus pleads with the audience to join them in saving the nation from AIDS. The audience shows its support for singers.

A more or less similar question was posed to the health communication experts to find out what live drama offers to the young people which other communication channels (radio, television and print) might not offer.

“First of all, the possibility of active participation in identifying the dangers of the disease and finding their solutions. The actors are wonderfully prepared to respond to the questions the audience will raise, so the play is flexible to adapt to the audience’s concerns. No other media can do this, except inter-personal communication but this does not cover a big audience.” (Communication Officer, UNICEF Angola, 2007).

He further stresses that live drama is “really participatory....it transforms the audience into actors” and enhance personal, interaction between individuals.

All the health communication experts, officials from DramAidE, teachers and members of the focus group discussions agreed that live drama is participatory. In particular, DramAidE Manager stressed that, it “gives space for dialogue” (DramAidE Manager, 2006).

In the same way several scholars (Tufte, 2005; Barman, 1998; Singhal and Rogers, 1999; Kincaid, 2001; Mwansa *et al*, 2003; Kamlongera, 2005) inclusive have strongly argued that drama especially the live one is highly participatory because it brings the audience and the communicator together at the same time, same place and therefore involves and engages the community as a whole.

This corroborated with what, the focus group discussions for both males and females said about DramAidE's live drama. With it, they contended that they are able to take part in what is being presented to them. They spoke of how they are able to ask if they don't understand, how they are able to collect any information they think is wrong, how they include in the plays what they want. In particular, a female participant said, live drama, "involves me" (Focus group discussion for females, 2006).

The finds imply that live drama is participatory. It involves members of the audience in the communication process. However, it is important to note that some other communication channels do offer this kind of advantage. Such channels include radios, television programmes where one is able to call in and become part of the programme.

Other communication channels say newspapers and websites have introduced corners where members of the audience are able to write their comments and be part and parcel of the communication process. With globalization and one of its byproducts-the internet, communication is changing immensely. It is no longer the sermon like type but rather interactive. Many media organizations have created new interactive platforms. Television, radio and print media houses have gone ahead to own websites where they have news, blogs, podcasts, emails and chatrooms to mention but a few. The audience is now part and parcel of the information gathering and dissemination (Castells, 2000, 2001a, 2001b; Eby, 2005; Singhal, *et al*, 2001, 2005)

The essence here is that the long-lived participatory component of live drama is facing high competition from the other media channels as globalization and one of its byproduct- the internet take root.

#### **4.4.2 Combining Entertainment to Educate and Communicate Highly Sensitive Information.**

The DramAidE manager said with their live drama, they are, “able to put across messages which are otherwise about serious matters in a fun way and more acceptable.” (DramAidE Manager, 2006). Similarly in the interviews with the health communication experts, they disclosed that live drama is able to combine entertainment to educate and pass on highly sensitive information such as that concerning sex and sexuality onto the audience which could be hard with non entertaining channels like print media.



**Performers like these ones find it easy to communicate to masses through drama**

In particular, the Director of programmes for Marie Stopes International – China said when it comes to HIV/AIDS, live drama, “shows sensitivity and relation to lives of young

people in easy and equal way instead of teaching from health workers,” (Director of Programmes Marie Stopes International China, 2007).

She goes ahead to say that live drama;

“Tells a story which integrates the education into entertainment which applies to the young people (because) ...young people are interested in lively, smart and story-like form. They like the education entertainment. They want to learn from thinking over the story rather than listening to the adults.” (Director of Programmes Marie Stopes International – China, 2007)

In the group discussions, participants said that they were interested in live drama because it entertains them. They talked of how they are able to “dance”, “sing” (Focus Group Discussion for Females, 2006). Some male students talked of how they are able to “copy dancing strokes” from the performers and “shout at the performers” among others (Focus Group Discussion for Males, 2006).

However, as a communication student, I find this trait common not only with live drama but also other communication channels say radio and television. They are also able to combine entertainment to educate and communicate highly sensitive information be it sex and sexuality.

Again the shortcoming here could be that some members of the audience might concentrate on entertaining themselves and relegate the highly sensitive information embedded in the Live Drama.

#### **4.4.3 Using both Word and Emotion**

In separate interviews with two trainers of DramAidE organization, they both stressed that they chose to employ live drama because it uses both word and emotion which sometimes are not found in other means of communication. The health communication experts interviewed also contended that messages in drama be it live or not are highly emotional.

In particular, the Communication Officer, UNICEF Angola said that messages in live drama have high emotional content because what is happening is live. He stressed that members of the audience are able to relate to what is happening in the live drama easily because it is live and they can see the performer as being like them which makes them feel that what has just happened to the performer can happen to them too.

Bearing in mind the theories of emotional response which argue that emotional messages in Enter-Educate approaches to communication are more readily accepted by members of the audience and more likely to lead to behavior change than messages with low emotional content, it is reasonable to assume that DramAidE's live drama offers an extra benefit in raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS.

However drama, music, and humor among others which are highly emotional are not only found in live drama. They are also found in none live dramas say that on radio, television or in films. This again suggests that live drama does not possess this trait alone.

In conclusion therefore according to the findings, DramAidE's live drama offers to the young people entertainment which they like. And as they enjoy themselves, the communicator is able to pass onto them serious and sensitive information. DramAidE's live drama is for and by the young people. Young people perform to fellow young people and share with them their own experiences. They are therefore used as agents of their own change, a change which is facilitated by the highly emotional live drama.

#### **4.5 Advantages of Using Live Drama in HIV/AIDS Communication**

What are the advantages of using live drama in HIV/AIDS Communication with a focus on raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS?

The health communication experts interviewed gave some of the advantages of using live drama to raise young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS to include;

- It could reflect the sensitive topics like HIV, sex, condom, discrimination and homosexuality in a form of story telling and furthermore trigger the audience to comment, to discuss and to think.
- It distributes information through lively performance, demonstrating the process and illustrating the consequences in a visual way, which helps the young people to understand the difficult medical terms and remember the knowledge.
- It includes young people in the performance, in script development, acting and promoting, hence giving ownership to the young people to bring up more talents and passion for the HIV/AIDS education issues.

Likewise in addition to the above advantages, the 3 officials of DramAidE said it makes both the communicators and members of the audience be part of problem solving. They stressed that the communicators and members of the audience are all part and parcel of finding solutions to the problems at hand which is none other than HIV/AIDS and its related ills.

**Box 2: Extract from DramAidE's brochure. (DramAidE 1992-1996)**

The educational drama approach is a valuable methodology for AIDS and life skills education because:

- It offers an educational experience that is participatory and learner centered rather than teacher centered;
- It allows the participants to actively explore problems and develop problem-solving skills by role-playing various options;
- It actively teaches life skills such as communication and negotiation skills;
- It provides a way of exploring values without imposing them;
- It does not rely on high levels of literacy and makes connections with an already established oral tradition;
- It is transportable and does not necessarily require expensive equipment.

In support of these, the 5 teachers who are the focal persons in their respective schools also disclosed that live drama;

- Builds stronger relationship between performers who see themselves as sisters and brothers who have one cause of telling others about HIV/AIDS.
- It is fun for teachers, learners and communicates dangers of HIV/AIDS in a different and uncommon way.

#### **4.6 Disadvantages of Using Live Drama in HIV/AIDS Communication**

What are the disadvantages of using live drama in HIV/AIDS Communication with a focus on raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS?

The study discovered that almost all the respondents believed that live drama had shortcomings. In the interview with the Programmes Director, Marie Stopes International- China, categorically contended that with live drama, "performance might be limited due to the facilities, bad weather and the environment." (Director of Programmes Marie Stopes International China, 2007).

Other reasons got from the health communications experts include the fact that;

- Development of drama and preparation of performance takes long time; it is expensive to buy costumes.
- The audience is not constant and therefore performers may keep meeting different audiences during different sessions. This therefore would mean that it is a one time influence rather than continuous impacts on behavior change if at all no further performances are made for the same audience.
- The audience might try to practice the bad ideas they watch in drama to find out for themselves if things they were told about in the play are real

The DramAidE Manager contends that;

“Live drama as a form of communication you need something beyond just a play, beyond just drama and that is the challenge because you need to link people to services, you need to make sure that they have access to those services and they are available and you need to make sure that the messages you are transmitting, would stay as long as possible, all of which might be hard with live drama.” (DramAidE Manager, 2006)

All the communication experts and officials of DramAidE interviewed also agreed that live drama could be dangerous especially if there is a bad character but acts well, people could emulate him/her and take on his bad traits. As the Drama theory contends, drama has a greater impact on members of the audience when they identify with one of the characters in the drama. However if such a character is a bad one, then harm rather than good would be caused.

From the group discussions, the participants some of whom were members of DramAidE clubs stressed that live drama takes a lot of their time as they train and rehearsal plays, songs and dances to perform to the audience. True, this is corroborated with the information got from their teachers in the interviews who said that some of the times; members of DramAidE club have to stay behind after classes for them to rehearse what they are to perform.

Respondents in the focus group discussions, who had been members of the audience, complained of the same problem too. They stressed that some times when they are supposed to be in class, they have to go on the assembly and stay there for so long as they watch the play.

The discussion group respondents also stressed the fact that they may forget soon if at all no further performances are done.

In conclusion, according to the findings got, though live drama is generally taken as a good communication channel due to its highly entertaining, participatory, emotional,

informative and educative traits, it has several disadvantages which should not be underestimated.

#### **4.7 Other Fields of Development where Live Drama can be Employed to Communicate**

What other fields of development can live drama be employed to communicate to the masses?

In order to find out if live drama can be used to reach out to people to communicate to them other development issues apart from raising HIV/AIDS awareness, respondents were asked what fields of development they would employ it to communicate to the masses and why they would do so.

According to the reactions from all the respondents, it emerged out that live drama could be used to communicate any issue to the masses. In particular, the UNICEF Angola Communications Officer noted that,

“Live drama could be used for any purpose. In Mozambique we used it for hygiene promotion as well as for HIV prevention. It should be used for any purpose.” (Communications Officer UNICEF Angola, 2007).

The reason he gives is that live drama is participatory, and using it would mean involving all the community members in finding solutions for their problems.

In support of him, the Behavior Change and Communications Officer for AMREF’s Busia child survival project in Kenya, notes that because live drama is “participatory”, “emotionally” and “entertaining” to the members of the audience, it can be used to “pass” on child survival messages to “mothers and fathers.”

He goes on to mention that it can be used to “minimize ethnic animosity” because it attracts a large audience. He also says that live drama can be used to sensitize “community members about the best agricultural practices and availability of foods that

are good for nutrition of the community members.” (Behavior Change and Communications Officer for AMREF’s Busia child survival project Kenya, 2007)

Other respondents interviewed including officials of DramAidE organization stressed that they would employ live drama to communicate to masses on issues that included;

- Defilement prevention
- Poverty eradication
- Imparting of life skills
- Sensitization about human rights
- Environmental education
- Safety tips
- Challenging certain attitudes
- Promotion of new products on market
- Health education
- Revive culture of the people

The following quotations further illustrate why the respondents thought they would use live drama to communicate to masses on these issues.

“It makes people, see, believe and be part of the problem solving.” (Male DramAidE Trainer, 2006)

“People are part of the problem solving; they do not wait for someone to do it for them” (Female DramAidE Trainer, 2006).

“Live drama creates proximity to the issues being raised and you are next to the characters that are talking.” (Female teacher, 2006).

“It is the form to fit in the interests, to make people think and reflect and do interact with people in

an equal and friendly way. " (Director of programmes, Marie Stopes International China, 2007).

"Live drama is potentially dynamic, participatory and emotionally intense and changes happen when emotion and participation are involved. " (Programme Communication Officer UNICEF Angola, 2007).

However, the DramAidE Manager was quick to mention that;

"You won't apply drama only but almost you have to use other channels of communication. Drama is not an end in itself because people may remember the character and forget what you are saying. " (DramAidE Manager, 2006)

During the discussion groups, participants also suggested that live drama could be used in the following fields almost similar to those got from interviews.

- Poverty eradication
- Drug abuse prevention
- Human rights sensitization.
- Stopping and advocating against discrimination
- Environmental conservation
- Education, respect for one another
- How to care for the sick people

"Live drama would show those who discriminate people basing on color that they are doing bad because they will be seeing it live on stage." (Female member of focus group discussion, 2006).

"Many youths take drugs but they don't know that it is wrong and spoil their health so they would see for

themselves that this is bad and so they stop it." (Male member of focus group discussion, 2006).

The findings suggest that Live Drama is not only meant for health communication. It is a communication channel that could be used to communicate to the masses on any issues at hand. Due to its highly participatory, emotional and entertaining traits, live drama facilitates the active involvement of people together with the stakeholders.

The employment of Live Drama would mean that as the local people write scripts, they are able to identify, analyze and prioritize the problems and needs of their communities and further go ahead to solve them together. Community mobilization would also be eased.

#### **4.8 Summary**

This chapter presented findings from focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, email interviews, real life/ oral testimonies, direct observations and desk review in a view of exploring the effectiveness of Live Drama in raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS taking a case study of DramAidE organization.

The following chapter is an appraisal of this study, draws conclusions, presents shortcomings and makes suggestions for further research. It also assess the extent to which the research questions and the objectives stated in chapter one have been accomplished.

## **Chapter Five      Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.0      Introduction**

Basing on findings presented in chapter four, conclusions were drawn and thereafter recommendations given for priority actions to be taken. This chapter therefore presents an appraisal of this study, draws conclusions, and makes suggestions for further research. It also assess the extent to which the research questions and the objectives stated in chapter one have been accomplished in the presentation of the research findings

### **5.1      Conclusions**

The first task of this research as stated in the first research question in chapter one was to find out where the young people get information about HIV/AIDS. Using mainly focus group discussions, this study discovered that the young people do not get information about HIV/AIDS from just a single source but a variety. The sources of this information as outlined in this study were found to be; radios, drama both live and the recorded one, televisions and fathers, mothers, counselors, print, neighbors, trainings, friends, sisters, teachers and hospitals<sup>19</sup>. It is of essence to note that at least every member of the focus group discussion mentioned radio to have been at one time his/her source of information about HIV/AIDS. This showed that radio was the study group's major source of information on HIV/AIDS.

It was discovered that the young people like any other age bracket do not get information about HIV/AIDS from the media only but also in the social networks that include among

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<sup>19</sup> This arrangement has nothing to do with the ranking of the sources according to how frequently they are listened to by the participants.

others fathers, mothers, friends, sisters, and teachers. This highlighted the importance of interpersonal communication in the flow of information especially the health promotion related information.

Again, despite the rapid diffusion of new communication technologies, the findings of this research emphasized the fact that young people still rely more on informal channels of communication (families, neighbors and friends) as source of social messages.

It was also found out that the use of internet as a communication tool to raise awareness of the young people about HIV/AIDS amongst the interviewees had not taken root. No member of the focus group discussion mentioned that he/she had accessed information about HIV/AIDS from internet.

This research therefore concludes that communication strategies meant to raise the young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS aimed at helping them adopt protective behaviors such as using condoms, abstaining or going for counseling and other issues too, should never use a single communication channel but rather a variety of them because as this study discovered, not all the target audience gets information from a single channel.

Perhaps what is important to note basing on these findings is that there are several channels through which the young people studied in this research accessed messages on HIV/AIDS and so this research cannot conclude that it is DramAidE's live drama alone that made the youths under this study adopt protective behaviors against HIV but rather a combination of other channels of information<sup>20</sup>.

Using DramAidE's live drama as a case study, the second major task of this study was to determine whether live drama is a better communication tool to reach the audience of young people than other channels<sup>21</sup> in raising their awareness about HIV/AIDS and why? The study suggested that HIV/AIDS awareness initiatives through live drama play an integral part in the campaign to stem out the HIV/AIDS scourge in young people.

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<sup>20</sup> As already noted these channels included radios, drama both live and the recorded one televisions and fathers, mothers, counselors, print, neighbors, trainings, friends, sisters, teachers and hospitals.

<sup>21</sup> Other channels, in this research meant radios, televisions and print

It was discovered that live drama, once utilized well is a better communication tool than radio, television and print in disseminating crucial information targeted towards changing young people's attitude to appreciate the dangers of HIV/AIDS pandemic so as to guard themselves against it. The reason behind this is that, as the study discovered, with live drama, many interviewees asserted that its components such as plays, songs and dances were fun, enjoyable, good, exiting, interesting, creative and participatory, educational and informative. With such characteristics, certainly live drama hooks the audience and as the audience listens, interacts with the communicators and as all these go on the message is absorbed. It is also important to note that most of these characteristics of live drama such as participatory and fun are minimal in print, radio and television.

More still the study established that many HIV/AIDS communication experts especially through NGOs were dedicated to providing all necessary realities about HIV/AIDS be it social, political, and economical challenges through live drama. Sensitive concepts like sex, abstinence, condoms and their use and HIV test were best elaborately explained through live drama than other communication channels. This therefore showed the fact that live drama unlike other forms of communication tools was going a mile further in offering the young people increased knowledge about HIV/AIDS and the skills to inform and communicate amongst themselves about how to guard themselves against the pandemic.

Another mission for this study was to find out what live drama offers as far as raising awareness of young people about HIV/AIDS is concern which other communication tools especially radio, television and print might not offer. Using e-interviews, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, direct observation and desk review, this research found that live drama was more participatory and interactive than print, radio, and television. HIV/AIDS is more pronounced amongst the youth across sub-Saharan African and mobilization is the feasible tool to bring to reality the effects of the pandemic which has no cure, as yet. It is against this background that the study concluded that mobilization was more effective when communication was done in a manner that made the audience to

participate and interact physically; this is more possible through live drama, where the audience owns up the message through sentimental attachment.

The component of participatory means that live drama moves from the focus of just informing and persuading the young people to change their behaviors and attitudes to spotlight on facilitating exchange between different stakeholders to address particular problems. In this particular study, the young people are therefore involved closely in the communication strategy against HIV/AIDS. This helps them to take the ownership of the initiative rather than seeing themselves as mere beneficiaries. It makes them participate and observe the actions of characters and are able to learn, imitate and model (Bandura, 1995, 1997) and in the end they adopt protective behaviors towards the pandemic.

In particular, as this study found, participation also ensures effective circulation of information amongst the participants. It further facilitates dialogue and exchange of ideas amongst the performers and the members of the audience and goes ahead to support the identification and realization of concrete set of action and the findings of the solutions to the problems faced.

However, this is not to say that communication on television, radio and print is not participatory. It is, but not to the high level exhibited in live drama.

Live drama was found to have an edge over print, television and radio through employment of entrainment to educate and persuading the young people to adjust their conducts and attitudes with immediate effect. It was discovered that indeed the young people interviewed liked entrainment. They enjoyed dancing, singing, rapping to mention but a few. This research therefore found that the young people keep hooked to live drama because it is entertaining. No wonder all the young people interviewed in this study showed a favorable attitude and appreciated the use of live drama in making them aware of HIV/AIDS. It attracts their attention more than for example print does and in the end it enables them to think through the message coated with entertainment in any given play, song, or dance.

However such a benefit is also shared with drama on radio and television, the only advantage with live drama as discovered in this study is that it offers participatory entertainment where by both the entertainers and those being entertained take part in the action at the same time and in case, those being entertained are bored, the entertainers are able to change it and try to adjust to what the members of the audience want immediately. This is impossible with radio and television because changing the drama being broadcast would mean recording it again which takes a lot of time and money.

The study further observed that the best message is the one touching the emotional part of the heart. Live drama was seen to be using both word and emotion not found in some of the other means of communication such as print. However, this is also common with radio and television drama but with live drama, the degree of emotion is high because the actor is live. This makes him/ her nearer to the members of the audience than the recorded actor.

This study discovered that although all those interviewed agreed that live drama is an effective communication channel due to its advantages of being entertaining, participatory, emotional, informative and educative at the same time, it has several shortcomings. It was found out that live drama is expensive, if no further performances are made, it might create a just one time influence on the members of the audience which might not change their behaviors, members of the audience too could copy bad behaviors depicted by some of the characters in the play. Live drama wastes time for especially learners which could have been invested in reading their books.

This research therefore concludes that it is important that health communication experts first study all the communication channels they have at their exposure and decide which one is best for them to use in their communication strategies because certainly all communication channels have advantages and disadvantages.

The forth task of this research was to find out other development fields where live drama can be used to communicate to the masses. It was found out that live drama was able to

be utilized to communicate to masses on any issue at stake be it reproductive health, drug abuse rights, poverty, cultural transformation and environmental protection. The main reason behind this was that live drama makes the audience to observe, understand and own up the means to solve their problems.

This research study used research questions instead of hypothesis; therefore, there is no testing of previous hypothesis (HO) to be either accepted or rejected and thus setting for the alternative hypothesis (HI).

However, true to the study theme, basing on the case study of DramAidE's live drama, indeed live drama was found to poses characteristics of being creative, interactive, and fun in as far as raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS is concerned. This was found to be significant and effective given views echoed by respondents especially those involved in DramAidE project, the health communication experts and the results observed by the researcher.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Basing on the study, recommendations were made by the researcher on live drama a creative, interactive and fun way to raise young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS.

First and foremost, this study recommends that it is important for any communication strategy to employ more than one communication channel. This is because the members of the audience do not listen to one communication channel. Communication planners ought not to undermine any communication channel in any communication strategy.

Basing on the need to confront the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic coupled with decades long devastating effects of the scourge in the world particularly South Africa, there is need to venture in more communication strategies that employ different communication channels, some of these as the study found out should include internet, and social networks.

The researcher strongly recommends that the use of live drama to create awareness about HIV/AIDS should go beyond the young people to include their elder siblings and parents. Old people especially in villages should be targeted intensively to involve them effectively in the fight against the pandemic. HIV/AIDS knows no age, race or creed, therefore there is need to target sensitization of the old people especially women who are better placed to handle their offspring, husbands and wives. Husbands and wives groups should be organized into live drama clubs to disseminate HIV/AIDS message to their contemporaries. This could be translated into a massive effort to tackle the scourge.

The study further recommends that other universities in South Africa should emulate what the Universities of KwaZulu Natal Howard campus and Zululand are doing. All tertiary institutions and even other levels of education should link to make the DramAidE initiative a national one so as to have a bigger impact on the entire South African society.

Media especially radio stations and televisions including other stakeholders should promote with vigor and versatility the drama option within their programme schedules so as to complement live drama and attract people from all dimensions to learn from the drama message about the HIV/AIDS reality sugar coated with entertainment and fun.

Live drama should be employed to convey other forms of information other than HIV/AIDS but related to either the effects of HIV/AIDS or other challenge that contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Poverty, sanitation, environment and family planning should be emphasized in plays and songs to bring them to terms on how they are interrelated with HIV/AIDS challenges.

As a supplement to other communication channels, live drama should massively be employed to communication any development issues in community. Such issues could include fighting poverty, promoting sanitation and hygiene, advocating for conservation of environment, advocating for human rights, condemning drug abuse and several other social ills in the community.

Other NGOs should be initiated to complement the efforts of DramAidE in combating the scourge. HIV/AIDS virus needs a concerted effort to counter its spread. Live drama has been singled out by this study as effective but it is championed by one project that lacks all the facilitation to tackle a challenge with such magnitude as HIV/AIDS so many more NGOs and initiatives should give hand in handling the situation.

To crown it all, the government of South Africa should do all it can in her capacity to address HIV/AIDS issue in the country. Relevant initiatives should be embraced by the local leaders in the provinces and the central government should channel substantive amounts of money to carry out multi- dimensional initiatives to mobilize the population against the scourge. Besides organizations and media efforts, live drama ought to be picked up by the government to impact on the emotional outlook of the population against HIV/AIDS pandemic in the country

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Interviews with DramAidE organisation management included the following questions**

1. What is the mission of your organization?
2. Who are your target audience?
3. How do you put your messages across?
4. How long have you been doing this?
5. Why did you think live drama was a good method to achieve your goal?
6. What impact do you think your live dramas have had on the behaviors of your audience especially the young people?
7. What challenges have you encountered in trying to communicate HIV/AIDS messages through live drama?
8. What do you think are the advantages of using live drama to communicate HIV/AIDS messages to the young people?
9. What about the disadvantages?
10. What do you think your live drama offers in raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS, which other communication channels in particular radio, television and print might not?
11. Apart from raising people's awareness about HIV/AIDS, what other fields of development would you employ drama to communicate to masses?
12. Could give reasons why?

### **Interviews with the focus groups included the following questions**

1. Have you ever heard about HIV/AIDS?
2. If yes from where?
3. How long have you watched the live drama pieces of DramAidE?
4. How do you feel about the use live drama by DramAidE in raising your awareness about HIV/AIDS?
5. Mention a single word you can use to describe DramAidE's Live Drama?
6. What have you learnt from these drama pieces?

7. What do you think DramAidE's live drama has offers you which other communication channels in particular radio, television and print might not offer you as far as raising your awareness about HI/AIDS is concerned?
8. Part from HIV/AIDS what other development issues do you think live drama could be employed to address in your community
9. Could you give reasons why?
10. Do you have any other information on this topic, which you think the researcher should know? IF YES: which one?

**Interviews with the teachers included the following questions**

1. What is the name of your school?
2. How long have you been a focal person for DramAidE organization at your school?
3. What would you say is the attitude of the students towards these live drama?
4. What impact do you think DramAidE's live dramas have had on the behaviors of your students both members of DramAidE clubs and non members?
5. What advantages have you encountered in using DramAidE's live drama to communicate HIV/AIDS messages to the students?
6. What about the disadvantages?
7. What do you think live drama offers in raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS, which other communication channels in particular radio, television and print might not?
8. Apart from raising people's awareness about HIV/AIDS, what other fields of development would you employ drama to communicate to masses?
9. Could give reasons why?

**Testimonies**

1. Have you ever heard about HIV/AIDS?
2. If yes from where?
3. If DramAidE's live drama is mentioned, could you please testify what you think you have benefited from it.

## **APPENDIX B**

Email interviews with communication experts were formatted in the following way:

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

My name is Fredrick Mugira, a student of MA Communication for Development at Malmo University in Sweden <http://webzone.k3.mah.se/projects/comdev05>

I would like to invite you to participate in my MA Communication for Development research project which examines performing arts as a tool for health communication. It in particular looks at the effectiveness of live drama in raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS using a case study of DramAidE organization's live drama in KwaZulu Natal South Africa

This email interview aims to capture your experience in this field following the good work your organization has been doing in the field of HIV/AIDS communication over the years.

This study is purely academic and will lead me to attaining a Masters Degree of Communication for Development of Malmo University in Sweden

A summary of the proposal for this researcher has been attached to this mail for you to read through and get more information.

All the information that you provide will be treated with high level of confidentiality and will only be used for this academic research only.

A copy of this research could be availed to you at the end of the research if you want it.

## **Interview Guide**

1. Could you please disclose your names
2. What is the name of the organization you work with?
3. What is your position in the organization?
4. How long have you worked with this organization?
5. What communication strategy is your organization using to raising awareness of young people about HIV/AIDS?
6. What do you think live drama has to offer in this field?
7. What do you consider to be advantages of using live drama to raise young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS?
8. What about its disadvantages?
9. What does live drama offer in raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS which other communication channels might not?
10. Apart from raising young people's awareness about HIV/AIDS, in what other fields of development would you employ live drama to communicate to masses?
11. Could you give reasons why?