



**IFJ research findings on
reporting HIV/AIDS in
six countries in Africa and Asia**

July 2006

**Part of an IFJ project “Strengthening journalists’ unions by
improving reporting of HIV/AIDS in Africa and Asia”**

Supported by the LO-TCO



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Foreword

At its most basic level, the HIV/AIDS challenge for media is simple: people around the world are contracting HIV and dying of AIDS in massive numbers and the spread of the disease could be substantially curtailed if more people had accurate information about how HIV is contracted. Journalists have a frontline role to play in combating the reasons why AIDS is on the rise.

There is a vital role that journalists and the media can play in combating the HIV/AIDS crisis, primarily in providing information – often at the most basic level – to the public. Additionally, the media can play a crucial role in combating stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS and exposing myths about the disease.

HIV/AIDS is the news story of our time - and our research shows that journalists agree.

Over November 2005 – March 2006, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the global organisation representing more than 500,000 journalists in 120 countries, conducted research into the media's reporting of HIV/AIDS, as part of a program aimed at improving reporting of HIV. The research was supported by the Swedish trade union movement, the LO-TCO. The research focused on six countries across Africa and Asia. The six countries were: the Philippines, India and Cambodia (in Asia) and Zambia, South Africa and Nigeria. There were two parts to the research: media monitoring for two two-week periods (one for Asia and one for Africa) in late November/December 2005 to determine the quality and quantity of HIV/AIDS reports in the media; and surveys of journalists and NGOs in the HIV/AIDS field on their perception of coverage of HIV/AIDS.

The research work was part of a broader project called “Strengthening journalists’ unions by improving reporting on HIV/AIDS in Africa and Asia”. It commenced in the second half of 2005 and will be conducted throughout 2006.

Fundamentally, this project recognises that HIV/AIDS is a union issue. It seeks to strengthen the capacity of journalists’ unions to effectively represent their members’ interests, both as workers who are affected by HIV/AIDS and as journalists who can improve professionalism when reporting HIV/AIDS.

This project seeks to share experiences and resources between journalists in Africa and Asia on combating HIV/AIDS from two perspectives: journalists as workers who can build strong unions to implement workplace strategies to combat HIV/AIDS, and journalists as part of the hugely influential media, which has an instrumental role to play in combating the epidemic.

The research findings presented here start with an executive summary of results from all six countries, including recommendations for both media organisations and journalist organisations. It then examines each country's research results in detail.

The results give us an insight into the current quantity and quality of reporting HIV and AIDS in the six target countries, and more importantly, pointers to strategies to improve it.

And the overall strategy is simple: by improved and more frequent media reporting of HIV/AIDS, lives will be saved.

Emma Walters
Project Manager
IFJ

Executive summary of results

Low coverage and medium prominence of HIV/AIDS stories in media

Media monitoring found a low incidence of HIV/AIDS stories across most media in the six countries. Researchers variously described the incidence of HIV stories during the media monitoring as “small” (Cambodia and the Philippines), “miniscule” (South Africa), and “infrequent” (India). In Nigeria, the researcher noted that cartoonists in particular had “gone to sleep on HIV/AIDS”. When they appeared in Asian media, HIV stories were generally given a moderate to high prominence, although researchers in all three Asian countries felt this was related to World AIDS Day (which occurred during the monitoring period in Asia). Researchers in African countries found that prominence varied and that many stories were event-based and buried. All researchers reported that, overall, the number of HIV/AIDS stories in print and broadcast media was low compared to other stories during the two monitoring periods.

In Zambia and Nigeria especially, television coverage was extremely low, a particular problem given the low literacy rates in these countries. In Zambia, the research found that HIV/AIDS stories accounted for only 20.5 minutes of the 700 news minutes (just under 3%) broadcast on television and radio combined over the two week monitoring period. Similarly, in Cambodia, even including World AIDS Day, stories that mentioned or featured HIV/AIDS accounted for less than 3% of all the total news stories of the outlets monitored.

Disjunct between journalists’ perceptions and monitoring results

The research found a distinct disjunct between the monitored level of reportage and journalists’ perceptions of the level of reportage, and also between journalists’ perceptions and NGOs’ perceptions. For example, despite negligible levels of reporting of HIV in the monitored media during the monitoring period in South Africa, journalists’ perceptions from the survey was that reporting of HIV and AIDS was frequent and regular: 60% said coverage of HIV was ‘moderate’, while 30% said it was ‘high’.

Almost 60% of journalists surveyed in both India and Zambia said they filed one to five HIV/AIDS stories weekly; however while Zambian journalists thought their stories appeared quite frequently (55%), 20% in India said they had difficulty getting published. Journalists in Cambodia said they filed one to five stories about HIV/AIDS monthly and that their news organisations published a story a week or more on the topic. Journalists in the Philippines were disappointed that only a few media organisations covered the topic every week, while 65% of Zambian journalists thought that their media outlets published six or more HIV/AIDS stories per week. In all three Asian countries, journalists thought HIV/AIDS had a moderate to high news value.

Quality of reports generally good, with some problematic areas: language and images

Although the media monitoring exercise found reporting to be of good quality, a significant proportion of journalists and NGO respondents in all countries surveyed thought reporting was imbalanced and contributed to negative stereotyping. Almost all countries reported a perceived improvement in reporting over the last five years. Articles were generally seen as balanced and sensitive. Images used in stories, in particular, were seen to be sensational and in the Philippines, NGOs thought that journalists usually downplayed the crisis. Similarly, in South Africa the use of images was seen to be problematic. The issue of identification of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) was difficult and varied from country to country: in the Philippines, there is a law that prohibits journalists identifying PLWHA while in India, the media regularly identified those living with HIV.

Language and tone were generally seen as positive. However there were regular reports of misleading, and derogatory language used in media, including “AIDS sufferers”, “AIDS patient”, AIDS “scare” along with several dubious and misleading reports including that garlic can be a cure for HIV (it is not) and that HIV-positive people are more prone to car accidents (they are not).

Censorship, whether external or internal, is perceived to be a factor in HIV/AIDS reportage, however, the perceived source of any censorship differed according to the country and whether the respondent was a journalist or an NGO staffer.

More HIV stories in print media

Despite low levels of literacy among the populations most at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, the research found greater coverage of HIV/AIDS stories in print media rather than in broadcast media. Of the 356 stories sampled over the two-week monitoring periods, 281 (79%) were from the print media and 75 (21%) from the broadcast media. While more print media was monitored than broadcast, proportionally, broadcast media generally had a lower incidence and proportion of reports on HIV and AIDS.

Possible 'story fatigue' in Africa, and 'taboo' issues in Asia

The Zambian research indicated a feeling of 'story fatigue' among some editors and journalists about HIV/AIDS. In South Africa, startlingly, a significant minority of 10% of journalist respondents said HIV/AIDS had 'low' news value, while 80% said they filed no HIV stories over the last month.

In Asia, a different issue arose: that of the story of HIV being connected to the 'taboo' issues of sex and homosexuality. This was noted as a particular problem in India.

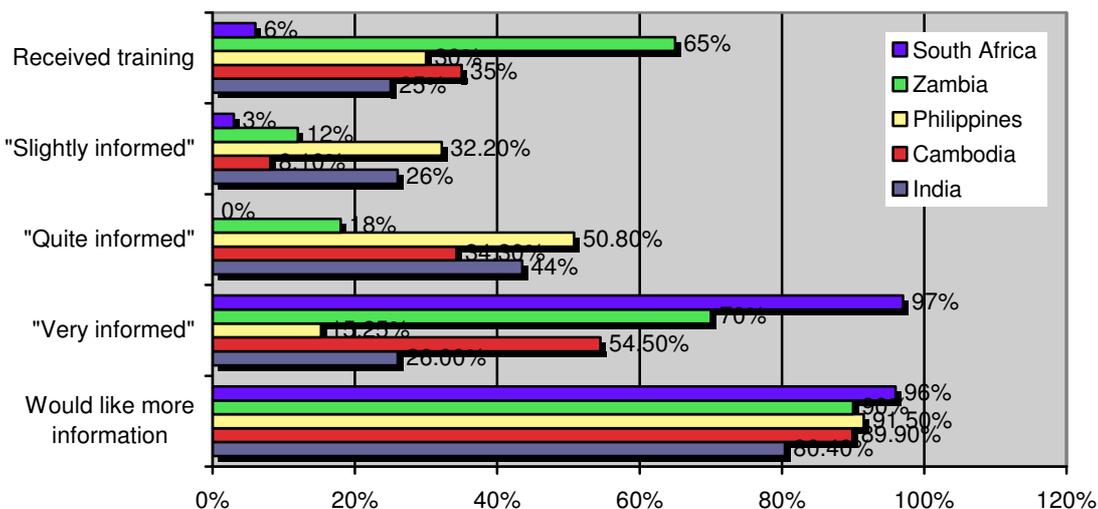
NGOs note general improvement in coverage of HIV/AIDS, but still more to be done

In India, 58% of NGO respondents were satisfied with the coverage, but felt it had a medium to low prominence and was infrequent. NGO staff in Cambodia felt coverage was poor or only satisfactory while staff at Filipino NGOs thought coverage was poor in general. Less than one-third of NGOs in Zambia thought that story placement, story prominence or story frequency was high. The story was very different in South Africa, where 70% of NGO respondents were satisfied with general coverage and the vast majority (more than 90%) thought story placement, prominence and frequency were medium/acceptable. On the whole, NGOs felt that coverage of HIV/AIDS had improved in the last five years, particularly in India and South Africa

Training would improve reporting on HIV/AIDS

A majority of journalists and NGO respondents in all countries surveyed agreed that training in HIV/AIDS reporting would improve coverage. While very few journalists had received training, most journalists in India and Cambodia believed they were either very informed or quite informed about HIV/AIDS. The most striking contrast was in South Africa, where only 6% had received training and yet 97% felt they were very informed. Zambia stood out as having had the most training and, not surprisingly, the highest number of journalists who felt they were very well informed.

Journalists' Level of Knowledge About HIV/AIDS - All



However all showed less confidence in specific topics such as medical breakthroughs, people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), treatments for HIV/AIDS, and HIV/AIDS orphans. This contrasts

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sharply with the Philippines, where 88% of journalists said they wanted access to more information on a wide range of topics.

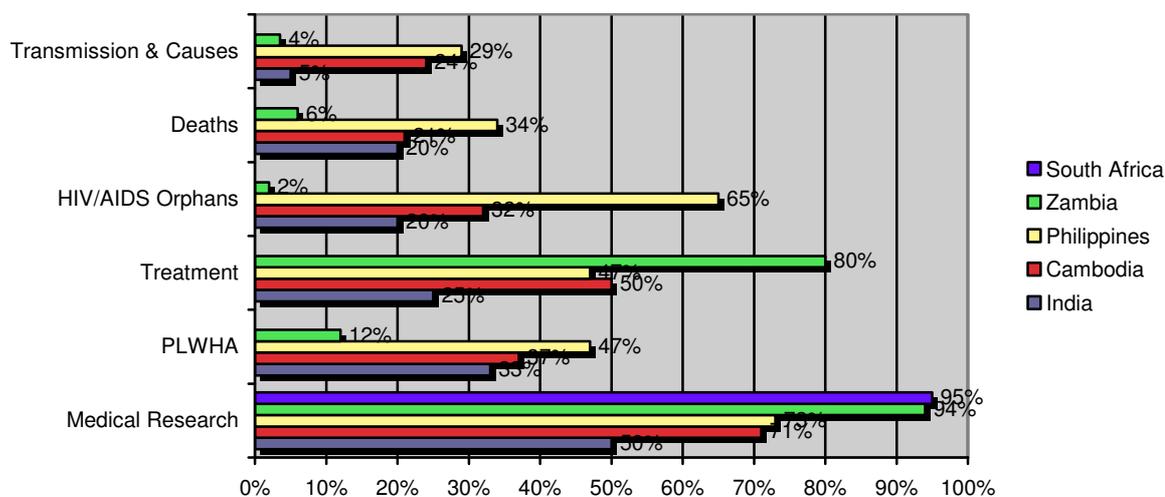
Topics covered varied from country to country

Topics of stories were recorded and the language and presentation was analysed. Generally, the least covered topics were HIV/AIDS orphans and medical breakthroughs in HIV/AIDS research. In India and Cambodia, journalists said topics most covered were the transmission of HIV, followed by the treatments available for HIV/AIDS and deaths from HIV/AIDS. In the Philippines, the most covered topic was deaths from AIDS followed by PLWHA and transmission of the virus. In Zambia, coverage of the topic seemed to have moved away from HIV and AIDS altogether and on to the mileage to be gained from being seen to do something about the crisis. More than half (56%) of stories in Zambia concerned ceremonies, donations and government and NGO announcements. In Nigeria, the opposite was true: almost all stories that appeared during monitoring were health stories, although those that did appear elsewhere were similarly event-based 'soft news' rather than issue-based economic or political stories.

NGOs in India said only the transmission of HIV/AIDS received moderate coverage, while all other topics on HIV/AIDS had low coverage and were split on whether media provided adequate information on resources for PLWHA. In the Philippines, NGO staff felt the media did not provide enough information of this kind.

It is interesting to compare this topic spread with the areas of knowledge where journalists felt they lacked information or knowledge.

Journalists' Perception of Gaps in Knowledge About HIV/AIDS - All



Government, then NGOs most popular sources for HIV stories

Journalists in all three Asian surveys nominated health officials then NGOs as the most popular sources for their stories on HIV/AIDS. In Africa, however, health officials and PLWHA were equally important. However, 50% of journalists in India, for example, thought information from government sources was biased or limited. Generally, journalists in the Philippines felt that information from both government officials and NGOs was limited. NGOs in Cambodia thought journalists have difficulty getting information from them, citing a number of barriers. Also, they complained about journalists asking for money in exchange for publishing stories. Journalists in Africa rated information from NGOs as very good or excellent (Zambia) or overwhelmingly satisfactory (86%, South Africa).

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PLWHA as sources, or not

In Asia, PLWHA were generally not sources for stories about HIV/AIDS. In the Philippines, while reporting was perceived as generally supportive of PLWHAs, people who actually had HIV were one of the least likely sources for journalists on HIV and AIDS. In India, there was a perception that the media was fair and gave a 'voice' to PLWHAs, but again, the monitoring showed they were one of the least likely sources to be used in a media report.

This contrasted markedly with some of the African research, which showed that PLWHAs were more likely to be used as sources.

Network of journalists interested in HIV/AIDS should be formed

Across all countries surveyed, journalists and NGOs expressed an interest in a network for HIV/AIDS reporting. However, the preferred method and timing differed markedly between countries and journalists/NGOs. In particular, Cambodian journalists reported that they have little Internet access or knowledge. Journalists in Nigeria have an existing network to combat AIDS and produce material on HIV/AIDS reporting, but the website has not been updated significantly since 2000.

Recommendations

Recognising the vital importance of HIV/AIDS as a news story, the impact that improved media reporting will have on saving lives, and based on the information gathered and the analysis made, the following actions are the recommendations arising from the research:

Recommendations for media organisations:

- Increase the quality, quantity and diversity of news reports on HIV/AIDS broadcast and published, particularly in the broadcast media.
- Institute wide-ranging, regular and sustained training program for journalists and editors on HIV/AIDS issues, ranging from prevention to transmission and treatment, appropriate use of language and images, and issues surrounding identification and giving a 'voice' to people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Develop and implement editorial guidelines and policies for coverage of public health issues and gender issues, particularly HIV/AIDS, with specific references to the issue of confidentiality for people living with HIV or AIDS.
- Develop sustained and comprehensive media strategies to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
- Produce HIV/AIDS materials and resources on improving reporting of HIV/AIDS in local languages.
- Encourage all levels of editorial staff to form a strong partnership with health professionals, members of civil society, communities and others to enable them to diversify their sources of information and to give HIV/AIDS coverage a more human-centred approach.
- Adopt policies on HIV/AIDS in the workplace and engage with journalists on the importance of safe behaviour to limit the risk of HIV infection.
- Adopt the International Labour Organization's Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS.

Recommendations for journalists' organisations and IFJ:

- Form networks of journalists interested in HIV/AIDS to help fight the epidemic.
- Encourage and support the media in improving the quality, quantity and consistency of HIV/AIDS coverage.
- Demand training for reporters and editors on HIV/AIDS in local languages, and/or provide this training for members.

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- Assist media houses to develop editorial guidelines and policies for coverage of public health issues and gender issues, particularly HIV/AIDS.
- Produce HIV/AIDS materials and resources on improving reporting of HIV/AIDS in local languages.
- Encourage journalists to challenge and question government policies on public health as well as programmes undertaken by NGOs.
- Establish an IFJ Media Award and Fellowships for best coverage of public health issues, in particular HIV/AIDS from a gender, development and human rights perspective.

Methodology

During October/November 2005, six project researchers/in-country coordinators were identified, one each in Zambia, South Africa, Nigeria, India, the Philippines and Cambodia. The coordinators each conducted a two-week media monitoring “snapshot”. In Asia, the snapshot occurred from November 28-December 11, 2005 encompassing World AIDS Day on December 1. In Africa, the snapshot occurred from December 11-24, 2005 (December 12-25, 2005 in Nigeria). In the Asian countries, South Africa and Zambia (but not in Nigeria), two surveys (one for journalists, one for NGOs) were carried out to measure the quality (language, placement, accuracy etc) and quantity of news reports on HIV/AIDS in each of the countries. The media monitoring/survey exercises aimed to identify problem areas in each of the countries and to provide the basis of what is required for a media guide.

Each researcher, in consultation with the IFJ Africa/Asia-Pacific regional offices, selected a number (generally 10) of media outlets to monitor and assess the quantity and quality of HIV/AIDS-related stories appearing in their sample. The media outlets were chosen to represent a good cross-section of media in their country (ie, local/international language, print, broadcast, metropolitan, regional, public and private). They also managed the translation, distribution and collection of two surveys among journalists and HIV/AIDS NGOs within their country.

The surveys in English are attached as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

Cambodia

By Chansok Lay

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) aims to increase the quality and quantity of fair and balanced news reports on HIV/AIDS in six target countries across Asia and Africa (India, Cambodia, the Philippines, South Africa, Zambia and Nigeria). “Strengthening Journalists’ Unions by Improving Reporting on HIV/AIDS in Africa and Asia” is a year and a half project funded by the LO-TCO, the Swedish trade union movement.

This research work was carried out to increase the quality and quantity of fair and balanced news reports on HIV/AIDS in the target countries in Africa and Asia, by building strong organisations of journalists able to represent their members’ interests on HIV/AIDS issues. The assumption here is that it is best to engage journalists on professional issues through strong collective journalists’ organisations.

Six project researchers/in-country co-ordinators were employed in each of the target countries. The coordinator in Cambodia conducted a two-week media monitoring “snapshot” on ten media outlets from November 28 – December 11, 2005, and two surveys (one for journalists, one for NGOs) to measure the quality (language, placement, accuracy etc) and quantity of news reports on HIV/AIDS in each of the countries. The major findings of this research are presented here.

Executive summary

HIV/AIDS is a serious concern in Cambodia. The country has the highest HIV infection rate in the Asia Pacific region. Currently, 123,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS in Cambodia, and to date, 94,000 people have died of AIDS. Millions of dollars are spent each year in Cambodia to assist people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and to spread HIV/AIDS awareness amongst the public. It is believed one of the most effective ways to spread awareness of HIV/AIDS in Cambodia is through reporting by the media. This report looks at the current state of HIV/AIDS reporting in Cambodia and what is being done, and what can be done to improve it.

The research found that the coverage of HIV/AIDS in the Cambodian media is small. In the week preceding World AIDS Day on December 1, 2005 and the week following it, HIV/AIDS reporting accounted for only 3% of all news reporting during that period, even though the coverage of HIV/AIDS should have been at its highest all year, during those two weeks.

In contrast to these findings, most journalists surveyed believed HIV/AIDS stories have a high news value. They said their news organisations published a story a week, or more, on HIV/AIDS, and the one to five stories on HIV/AIDS they filed each month had a strong chance of getting published.

NGO staff interviewed disagreed, believing the coverage of HIV/AIDS was poor or only satisfactory, and that HIV/AIDS had only a moderate news value because of lack of public interest.

Most coverage of HIV/AIDS in Cambodia focused on the transmission of the virus, whilst HIV/AIDS orphans received the least coverage. Topics with moderate coverage in HIV/AIDS reporting were deaths due to AIDS and PLWHA, whilst medical breakthroughs and HIV/AIDS research, as well as, treatments for HIV/AIDS received low coverage.

The quality of reporting on HIV/AIDS in Cambodia was found to be professional and positive towards PLWHA. However journalists appear to be self-critical of their reporting. Although 80% of journalists surveyed in this report believed they did not use stereotypes, only half of the respondents believed that their reporting was balanced, accurate and fair. Equally, although most journalists believed images used in their reporting were positive and appropriate, 41% believed they were sensational.

NGO respondents were more supportive in general, feeling that reporting was mostly accurate, balanced and fair, although most believed images used were stereotypical.

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In regards to censorship, journalists and NGOs surveyed believed the most likely form would be either official censorship from government or censorship for social reasons.

The most popular source journalists used in their reporting of HIV/AIDS were health officials, and then HIV/AIDS NGOs. Reporters were satisfied with the information available from both these sources, however NGOs believed that journalists do not report regularly on HIV/AIDS because they had difficulty getting information on the subject.

The research found that NGOs have had moderate success in getting their stories published by the media. However there were a number of barriers which prevent NGOs from getting their information to journalists. NGO respondents said they did not have time to do interviews with journalists, some information was restricted to journalists because it was of a confidential nature, and other reports were not media-friendly as they were designed for donors or NGOs, or, were written in English, which journalists did not understand. Besides this, there have been complaints of journalists asking for money to publish stories offered by NGOs.

The report found that the majority of journalists believed they were informed on HIV/AIDS, but media training for reporting HIV/AIDS was limited in Cambodia. 63% of journalists surveyed said their media organisation offered training in reporting HIV/AIDS, but only half of these respondents had participated. Other journalists received training abroad, or from state institutions or NGOs. NGO staff surveyed believed there had been improvements in HIV/AIDS reporting in the last five years due to increased financial support for running HIV/AIDS stories.

The report found that journalists want more access to information on HIV/AIDS especially about medical breakthroughs and research, but also on PLWHA, HIV/AIDS orphans, transmission and deaths by HIV/AIDS. Journalists felt the best way of accessing this information was through training, but contradictorily, they also stated that training was unlikely to change the media culture. It is important to note that journalists thought the least likely way to improve reporting of HIV/AIDS was by increasing access to more NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS.

Like the journalists surveyed, NGOs also felt the best way of improving reporting on HIV/AIDS was through training. Besides this, NGO respondents had a number of suggestions to increase communication between NGOs and journalists, such as an HIV/AIDS information centre, as well as involving journalists in campaigns, conducting workshops and seminars, and organising field trips for the media.

Both journalists and NGOs were equally enthusiastic about joining a network to improve the reporting of HIV/AIDS. Amongst journalists, the most agreed on form of maintaining contact was through meetings once a month. It should be noted that half the journalists surveyed do not know how to use the Internet, so email is an unadvisable method of communication. In contrast, email was NGO respondents' most preferred means of maintaining contact or through meetings once a month.

Introduction: HIV/AIDS in Cambodia

Cambodia has made important progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS. However, even though the infection rate of HIV/AIDS dropped to 1.9% in 2003, which was lower than expected, Cambodia still has the highest infection rate in the Asia-Pacific (according to KHANA), with around 123,100 people living with HIV/AIDS (GAP). It has been estimated that about 94,000 people have died from HIV/AIDS in Cambodia (according to the National AIDS Authority NAA, 2003).

Unprotected sexual intercourse is the major cause of HIV/AIDS transmission in Cambodia. The affected age group is between 15–40 years (NAA 2003). This age group makes up the pillars of society: they have the most potential to help develop this poor country, however they are also the most likely to contract HIV. This shows that HIV/AIDS affects not only individuals, but also the development of this country. Every year, millions of dollars are spent to help people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), and to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. Moreover, discrimination against PLWHA is a barrier preventing these people from being a part of the wider society and to help Cambodia to develop.

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To combat HIV/AIDS, media involvement is vital. A prevention plan cannot be executed successfully unless the media broadcasts important information that educates vulnerable groups about the transmission of HIV/AIDS and therefore prevents them and others contracting the disease.

Methodology

Two methodologies were used in this research. Firstly, a two-week media monitoring exercise was conducted using a sample of the most wide-reaching media outlets in Cambodia. Secondly, two surveys were conducted, one for journalists and one for members of non-government organisations (NGOs) involved with HIV/AIDS in Cambodia.

Media Monitoring

Media monitoring was conducted over two weeks from November 28-December 11, 2005. This time period was chosen as it was the week leading up to World AIDS Day on December 1, and the week after the event. Ten media outlets were monitored, four of which were print media, four were radio programs and another two were television programs. Only news programs were monitored.

Phnom Penh was selected as the sample area for the media monitoring exercise since most of the media is based there.

In Cambodia, there are 279 newspapers, 30 of which are international newspapers, 25 newsletters and 49 magazines (Ministry of Information, 2005). However, only 13 newspapers were daily. Moreover, nearly all of the print media is based in Phnom Penh.

For the media monitoring research, four daily newspapers were selected as samples. They were *Kampuchea Tmei*, *Rasmei Kampuchea*, *Koh Sontepheap*, and *Moneak Seka Khmer*.

The first three newspapers were twenty pages and the fourth was a four-page newspaper, which focuses on political issues. The four newspapers selected are the most influential newspapers, with a large daily circulation; they are available in almost every part of Cambodia.

There are 20 radio stations in Phnom Penh, four of these radio stations were selected to be the sample. They were FM 96 (State-run), Women's Media Centre FM 102 (NGO-run media station), FM 105 (private), and Voice Of America AM 1575 (broadcast-from- abroad also on FM 105).

For FM 96, three 30-minute news programs were monitored at 6 am, 12 pm, and 6 pm. For FM 102, two news programs – 7am and 12pm – were monitored, 30 minutes listening time in total. For FM 105, one 30-minute news program at 12 pm was monitored. For Voice Of America, two programs were monitored, the 5 am news program, which is 30 minutes long, and the 8:30 pm news program that is an hour.

There are seven television stations in Phnom Penh. Two of the seven stations were monitored. They were TVK Channel 7 (state-run), and Cambodian Television Network CTN Channel 21 (private). Monitoring focused on their main news programs.

News stories were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.

Surveys

For the survey, around 400 copies of questionnaires were distributed to journalists and media outlets based in Phnom Penh. 106 copies were returned from the journalists, and seven of these could not be used due to incomplete answers. Therefore, 99 questionnaires have been considered to be usable.

The majority of respondents (74.25%) were journalists, 14.85% were editors and 10% were photographers. Other respondents were sub-editors and there was one artist. 35.6% of respondents worked in print, 32% worked in radio and 31% worked in television. Other respondents worked for agencies, wire services and online.

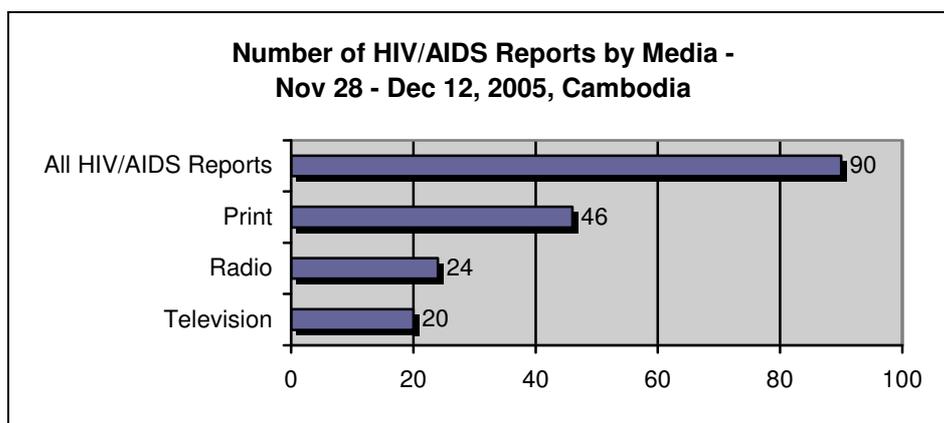
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Around 60 HIV/AIDS NGOs were selected from a sample frame available from the National Aids Authority. Because of the limited time and other resources, random samples could not be applied as most of the NGOs were based in the provinces. Therefore, only NGOs available in the list and based in Phnom Penh were selected to be part of the research. Most of the 51 participants in this survey are from the biggest HIV/AIDS NGOs in Cambodia, as well as donors to some HIV/AIDS organisations.

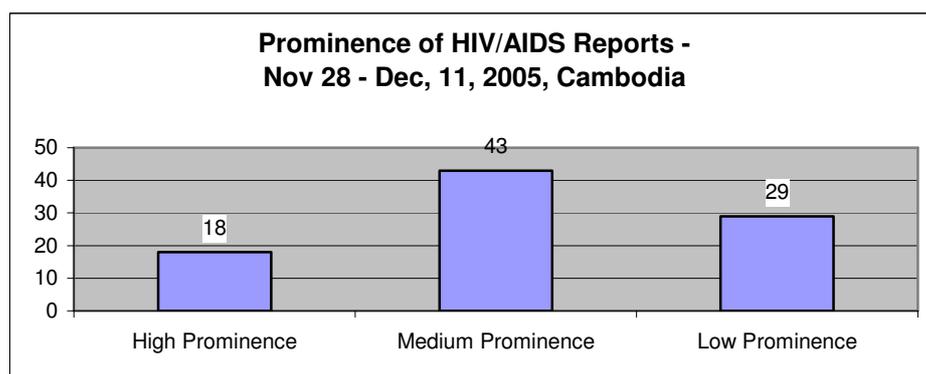
The Research Results:

Coverage

90 HIV/AIDS stories were published or broadcast during the two week monitoring of the media. 20 of these stories were broadcast on television, 24 on radio, and the rest were published in three of the four newspapers. The political newspaper *Moneak Seka Khmer* did not publish any stories on HIV/AIDS. These 90 stories on HIV/AIDS made up 2.72% of all news stories broadcast or published from the media organisations monitored over the two-week period.



Nearly half of all stories had medium prominence in the news run-down, while 18 stories had high prominence in the news. Hardly any HIV/AIDS stories were found on the front page of the newspapers or were the first stories on news programs. About half of the HIV/AIDS stories appeared in general news section and 27 stories were published or broadcast under world news. Ten stories were broadcast as community news on the television station TVK. Most of the stories were once-off reports, only a few were follow-up stories and no regular column or segment for HIV/AIDS stories was found.



The survey of journalists found that generally, journalists thought that HIV/AIDS stories made the news every week. Around 26% of journalists believed that their media institution covers one HIV/AIDS story per week, while 38.4% covered two to three stories, 9% four to five stories, and 3% cover more than six stories per week. However, about 18.2% of journalists thought that their institution did not cover even a story a week or fewer than one per week (some journalist respondents did not answer this question).

The journalists' survey revealed HIV/AIDS stories' prominence in the media is perceived by journalists as moderate. 50% of journalists said HIV/AIDS stories had a medium level placement in the news run-down, 25% rated its frequency as high, and 10% low.

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However the survey found that most journalists perceived HIV/AIDS stories as more newsworthy than their current representation in the media demonstrates. Nearly 73% of journalists thought the news value of HIV/AIDS stories was extremely high, and another 22.2% thought it had high news value, while only 3% and only 1% thought the news value was either moderate and low respectively.

Journalists appear to collect HIV/AIDS news stories quite regularly. 79% collect one to five stories related to HIV/AIDS every month, 5% collect six to ten stories per month, 1% collects more than 10 HIV/AIDS stories per month, and 11% did not have any HIV/AIDS stories at all for the same period. 4% did not comment.

However although journalists collect stories the success they have in getting them published varies. 29% of journalists say their HIV/AIDS stories were published every time, whereas 46% said their stories were published most of the time, 10% said they were rarely published, and 3% said they were never published. 12% did not answer the question.

The survey of NGO staff revealed these respondents were not as positive as the journalists about the coverage of HIV/AIDS stories in the media. 70% of respondents working in NGOs classify the media's coverage of HIV/AIDS as poor or just satisfactory. Only 8% believe the media coverage of HIV/AIDS is very good or excellent, while 22% believe that it is good.

Approximately 50% of NGOs surveyed believed coverage of HIV/AIDS was moderate. Out of the other 50% of respondents, the majority believed media coverage was low, whilst only a handful believed it was high.

The NGO staff were less enthusiastic about the news value of HIV/AIDS stories. 29.4% of respondents believed HIV/AIDS stories had a high news value, whilst nearly 50% thought HIV/AIDS stories had a moderate news value. NGOs believed a lack of public interest in the issue discouraged the media from reporting on HIV/AIDS regularly.

Topics reported

The main topic of HIV/AIDS stories discovered in the monitoring of Cambodian media was the transmission of HIV/AIDS, with more than half of the stories taking this angle. The prevention of HIV/AIDS was the second most common topic covered. About one third of the stories focused both on death by HIV/AIDS and PLWHA. Only 10% of stories focused on HIV/AIDS orphans or treatments.

The results from the survey of journalists agreed with the findings of the media monitoring exercise. More than half (57%) of the respondents to the survey of journalists thought that the Cambodian media had a high coverage of transmission of HIV/AIDS, and a relatively high coverage of PLWHA (43%) and deaths by HIV/AIDS (41%). However there is little coverage of HIV/AIDS orphans, treatments for HIV/AIDS and especially medical breakthroughs of HIV/AIDS.

The research discovered an inconsistency in the response of journalists. Although they believed HIV/AIDS orphans received little coverage, they still thought this topic was the most media friendly. The second and third most common topics are the transmission of HIV/AIDS and PLWHA respectively. 20% of respondents did not answer the question.

Another finding of interest discovered in the survey of journalists was that the coverage of treatments for HIV/AIDS and deaths by HIV/AIDS was considered by journalists to be not very common. Stories on medical breakthroughs/research were viewed by 60% of journalists as the least common topic for media coverage.

The results of the NGOs survey agreed with those of the journalists' surveyed in this area. NGO respondents believed that the most popular topic on HIV/AIDS covered by the media was the transmission of the virus, around 49% ranked it high, 39% moderate and only around 10% ranked it low. PLWHA was the second most popular topic. HIV/AIDS orphans seemed to gain the least media coverage. However NGO respondents believed the topic of deaths by HIV/AIDS

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and the treatment of HIV/AIDS were moderately popular, whilst journalists believed they were not very common.

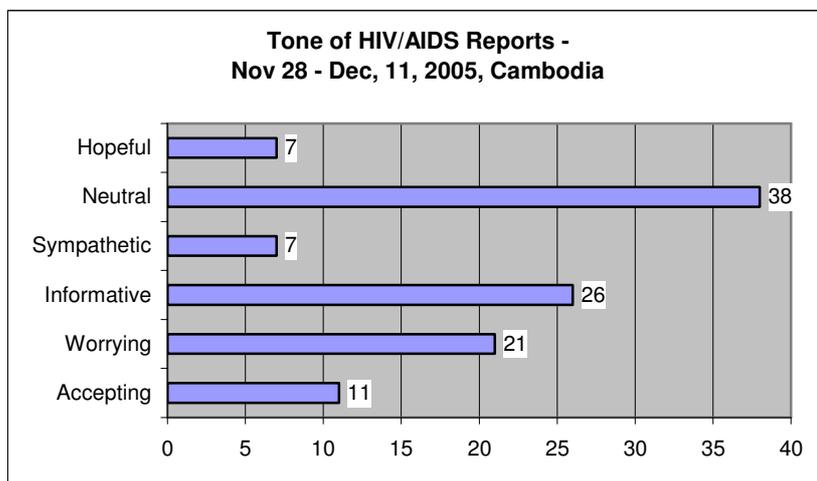
Media's role

A large majority of journalists (82.8%) thought that the media played an important role in reducing and preventing HIV/AIDS by disseminating vital information to the public, while a small proportion (13.1%) thought the role of the media was to observe and report the developments of HIV/AIDS. However, 3% of journalists thought that the media would provide negative effects by shielding the public from the harsh reality of the crisis. 1% did not answer the question.

The NGO staff surveyed agreed with journalists: 84% recognised that if the media assists disseminating vital information to people, especially the most vulnerable ones, HIV/AIDS rates would be reduced. 92% thought the media were either very important or reasonably important to their organisation's work; only 8% did not see the media as important to their organisations.

Quality of reporting

The monitoring of the Cambodian media found that of the 90 stories documented, 42% of stories had a neutral tone, 29% of stories were informative, 23% expressed a tone of concern and worry, 8% of stories showed sympathy and the rest were considered accepting. Societal groups commonly identified in stories were the poor, sex workers, housewives, children and orphans.



Journalists were more self-critical of the tone used in reporting HIV/AIDS. Approximately 15% of journalists thought the tone of media coverage of HIV/AIDS related stories in Cambodia was neutral, whereas approximately 5% thought it was biased. 17% of respondents thought that the tone of transmission of HIV/AIDS stories was sensational, but around 18% thought the tone was accepting in HIV/AIDS stories, except for the stories on HIV/AIDS orphans.

Overall, the journalists surveyed were positive about the quality of reporting on HIV/AIDS. More than half of the respondents believed that the media in Cambodia had taken adequate steps to provide accurate, balanced and fair information on HIV/AIDS. However, more than one third (36.4%) of journalists surveyed did not think it had provided accurate, balanced and fair information. In regards to negative stereotyping of PLWHA, 20% thought the media contributed to negative stereotypes of PLWHA, while the rest, 79.8%, disagreed.

Journalists were also generally happy with the language used in reporting HIV/AIDS. 62% believed that language used in HIV/AIDS stories was balanced, while 20% thought it was not, and 17% did not answer. 38% thought stories were generally analytical whilst 36% disagreed with this and 24 participants did not choose either.

Many journalists (78%) thought that in general the language was emotional. Many journalists surveyed, roughly 70%, thought that the language used in reporting HIV/AIDS was not inflammatory, derogative or stereotypical, but rather 80% thought the language was hopeful, emotional and especially sympathetic.

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In regards to images used in the media, approximately 60% thought that images of HIV/AIDS in the Cambodian media were balanced, positive, and appropriate. There was a slightly different perception about the sensationalism of the images. 41% thought they were sensational and 35% thought they were not. Moreover, about 64% believed that HIV/AIDS images were neither stereotyped, derogatory nor unnecessary. 20% did not answer the question.

Similarly to the journalists surveyed, the NGO respondents were supportive of the quality of reporting by journalists. Nearly 60% of NGO staff surveyed believed that the media has given accurate, balanced, and fair information to people, whilst around 25% believe the media has not. 14% of respondents did not know. Also, the majority of respondents do not think the media contributes to a negative stereotype of PLWHA, however a little over one third of the respondents believe they do. 76% of organisations said useful information provided by organisations for PLWHA is generally featured in the reporting of HIV/AIDS.

NGO respondents were also satisfied with the tone of HIV/AIDS stories. The majority of the respondents believed that the tone of all the stories were neutral, accepting and sympathetic, while only a few respondents believed that the tone was either balanced, sensational, offensive or degrading. In regards to language, most respondents believed that it was emotional (68.6%), sympathetic (78%) and hopeful (70.6%). The majority also believed the language was analytical (59%), balanced (51%) but also sensational (51%) and stereotypical (49%). A minority believed it was inflammatory (23.5%) and derogatory (15.7%).

However in regards to the quality of the images used in reporting HIV/AIDS, the NGO respondents expressed mixed feelings. The results show that 66.7% thought they were balanced, 76.5% thought they were positive, 58.8% thought they were stereotyped, 21.6% thought they were derogatory and 15.7% thought they were unnecessary.

30% of NGOs believe the most common mistake that journalists make is identifying PLWHA in stories. Pictures of PLWHA are usually found in stories related to HIV/AIDS. A lack of balance was considered by 30% to be the second most common problem. Around 60% believed that stereotyping and downplaying the crisis were the least common problems with HIV/AIDS reporting. Besides these, NGO respondents thought journalists copying NGO reports directly was another mistake.

Ethical Reporting

About 90% of journalist respondents said their media institutions have a code of ethics, but only 60.6% of them have a copy. Only 6.1% said that their media organisations do not have a journalism code of ethics. 4% of respondents did not answer the question.

Censorship

Both journalists and NGOs recognised that there was some censorship of the media in their reporting of HIV/AIDS. 29% of journalists said the most common form of censorship was official censorship from government, whilst unofficial government censorship was the least common form. Social and cultural practices were also rated quite high in terms of HIV/AIDS media censorship. Besides these, journalists also engage in self-censorship, but this was not common, nor was managerial or editorial censorship.

The survey of NGO respondents differed in this area from that of journalists. They believed that the most common form of censorship was due to social stigma. Official censorship from the government and self-censorship were the second most common form, whereas editorial censorship was the least common.

Sources

Journalist respondents use numerous sources in their reporting of HIV/AIDS. The monitoring of the media discovered government health officials and departments, as well as some other HIV/AIDS-related NGOs and the World Health Organization were usually the main sources used in stories. Indirect quotes were most commonly used, and some HIV/AIDS stories, especially the short ones, were published or broadcast without any source.

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The results of the journalist survey agreed with the results of the media monitoring exercise that health officials were the most common source used in their reporting. However the journalists said their second most likely source was PLWHA and then HIV/AIDS NGOs. Other HIV/AIDS organisations were ranked fourth, local citizens fifth and government officials last. A significant number of respondents (24%) did not answer this question.

Most journalists (70%) were satisfied with the quality of information provided by their sources in state bodies and government: 39.4% of respondents rated the information as satisfactory, 17% good, 5% very good, and 9% excellent. However, 3% thought the information was biased, whilst the other 22.2% believed it was limited.

Similarly, the large majority journalists surveyed said they were satisfied with the quality of information provided by HIV/AIDS organisations: 34.3% said it was satisfactory, 22.2% said it was good, 15.2% thought it was very good, and 12.1% said it was excellent. A small number of respondents (2%) thought the information provided by HIV/AIDS NGOs was biased, 9.1% rated it as limited and 5.1% did not answer the question.

Generally, NGOs thought journalists were discouraged from reporting about HIV/AIDS because of a lack of information, especially about the treatments and medical breakthroughs. Also they believed journalists had difficulty getting materials that can help in reporting the issue from concerned institutions.

The NGOs surveyed agreed with the journalists about the quality of information provided by government and state bodies. 30 out of 51 respondents thought the quality of the information was satisfactory or good, whilst another 12 believed the information was limited, and two thought it was biased. Seven respondents believed the quality of the information was very good.

Getting HIV/AIDS in the news

NGOs use numerous methods to disseminate information on HIV/AIDS to the media. The most common ways are through personal contacts, seminars, leaflets, booklets, posters, newsletters, publications of their reports, press releases and through their websites.

Other ways respondents said they attempted to get media attention was by preparing HIV/AIDS training through workshops and seminars, having regular HIV/AIDS programs on television and radio, and providing information to journalists regularly. Other strategies used to maintain journalistic focus on HIV/AIDS are creating community media by volunteers and personalising the problem for journalists.

However, NGOs do face barriers in disseminating information and nominated journalists themselves as one of the most noticeable. There were complaints from several respondents that some journalists demand money from NGOs to publish stories.

Also, around one third of respondents said that their information was not easily accessible to journalists for several reasons. Firstly, they do not have time to do interviews with journalists; secondly, some organisations do not want their information, especially about PLWHA, to be published; thirdly, some reports are for donors and NGOs only. Language is also an obstacle as some documents are written in English, which many journalists do not understand. Besides these reasons, one third of NGO respondents believed that it was difficult for journalists to understand and to interpret their reports, although 61% believed they made the information they wanted journalists to read accessible.

Half of the NGOs surveyed said there is a media liaison or public relations position in their organisations. This person has a role to provide information to journalists, prepare round table meetings, seminars, and workshops, and invite journalists to join those meetings. They also exchange information with their partner organisations, and train journalists.

The NGOs had mixed success in getting the media's attention. 15.7% of NGO staff surveyed said they never have their HIV/AIDS press release or stories published. 62.7% had occasional

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publication, while 9.8% had their stories published regularly. The rest have their stories published every time.

Awareness and training

The journalists surveyed revealed that the majority of respondents did not have training on reporting HIV/AIDS. 62.6% of journalists said that the media institutions they work for have guidelines or training available on reporting HIV/AIDS. However, amongst those only 53.5% have participated in training whilst 14.5% of journalists whose media institutions have available HIV/AIDS training have not participated, and the rest did not answer. 31.3% of journalists said their media organisations do not provide training or have guidelines for journalists.

Of those journalists that have been trained, many of them have participated in courses that teach them how to write accurately, neutral and effective reports by not identifying PLWHA and not using discriminating words. Some of them have joined seminars on the role of media and HIV/AIDS, and training courses on how to report HIV/AIDS. Moreover, several of the journalists have participated in training courses abroad in Malaysia and the Philippines. The others have had training in Cambodia, conducted by NGOs, a state institution (NCHADS), the Club of Cambodian Journalists, or the Cambodian Communications Institute.

Just over half of respondents (56.6%) said that their awareness of HIV/AIDS was encouraged in their workplaces. 10.2% said that their media institutions provide education about HIV/AIDS to their staff. 2.04% said they told each other about HIV/AIDS, while 12.25% said they send or encourage staff to join HIV/AIDS workshops or seminars. However, only approximately half of journalists who said that their workplaces engage in strategies/campaigns to raise staff awareness of HIV/AIDS explained the strategies they have employed.

The journalists surveyed had only limited confidence in their knowledge of HIV/AIDS and their awareness of HIV/AIDS education materials available proved disappointing. 54.5% of respondents said that their understanding of HIV/AIDS, in particular its transmission and treatment was very informed, 34.3% thought that they were quite informed and 8.1% thought that they were slightly informed. Only half (50.5%) were aware of educational material available for them. Examples of educational materials given by those journalists include books, pictures, paintings, newsletters, posters, leaflets, HIV/AIDS-related documents, lists of NGOs and HIV/AIDS specialists, information from Ministry of Health, documentaries, outlets, and reports from concerned institutions.

No journalist could give an example of best practice journalism on HIV/AIDS. However, the elements of the best practice journalism on HIV/AIDS were given instead. Most of them believed that good reporting consists of accuracy, neutrality, credibility and use sources, and avoids discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. They also believe reporting should demonstrate respect for PLWHA and hope.

In regards to journalists' personal experience on HIV/AIDS, 24% of journalists surveyed thought that they were not directly affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. However, 60 journalists surveyed knew people with HIV/AIDS but no respondents declared they had HIV/AIDS.

NGOs were positive about developments in HIV/AIDS reporting. 80% of respondents believed reporting has improved in the last five years, although 15% of respondents disagree. The respondents believed that stories were better researched and sourced, and journalists were using a more professional and ethical language in their reports. The main reason NGOs believed reporting had improved was because of more financial support for running HIV/AIDS stories.

Action/Recommendations

The large majority (89.9%) of journalists believed they needed more information on HIV/AIDS to increase coverage of HIV/AIDS and improve reporting. Only 5.1% thought they had enough access to HIV/AIDS information.

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Specifically, most journalists (71%) thought that they needed more information about medical breakthroughs and research on HIV/AIDS. 60% want more information on PLWHA, HIV/AIDS orphans, transmission of HIV/AIDS, deaths by HIV/AIDS, and the treatments available.

Most journalists believed the best way to improve reporting on HIV/AIDS was through increasing cooperation with concerned institutions. 32% of journalists thought that training was the most helpful way to improve their understanding and reporting of HIV/AIDS, however 47% believed more training was unlikely to change the media culture in reporting HIV/AIDS. Preparing seminars and workshops was another way that journalists thought they would help improve the role of journalists in the crisis, while a few respondents believed that giving priority to HIV/AIDS stories could also help. Other suggestions were training manuals, handbooks for reporting HIV/AIDS, and leaflets on HIV/AIDS reporting. Practical examples of reporting HIV/AIDS, and lists of HIV/AIDS contacts, organisations and sources were not seen as helpful.

Journalists' opinions split on what they believed would be the most important change to improve reporting on HIV/AIDS. 28% of journalists thought that ensuring better quality control of published and broadcasted material on HIV/AIDS, and giving HIV/AIDS stories more prominence in the news rundown were the most important changes. Another important change suggested by some journalists was more access to PLWHA. Journalists believed the least important change would be having access to more NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS and identifying different angles on HIV/AIDS. 23% of respondents did not answer.

The journalists surveyed were enthusiastic about a proposed network to improve reporting of HIV/AIDS with 84.8% saying they would like to take part. Of this group, 30% said they would like to maintain contact with the network by e-mail, 22% by newsletters, 51% by meetings, 35% by phone calls, and 33% by text messages. 57% said they would not like to be contacted by email because they do not know how to use the Internet. 65% thought that a newsletter was not a good means to keep in contact, and around 53% do not want to be contacted by either phone or text messages. In general, journalists want to keep in contact via meetings.

The NGOs had a number of suggestions to improving their organisations' communication with journalists. One of these suggestions was creating an HIV/AIDS information centre that can coordinate HIV/AIDS information from NGOs to journalists. Other suggestions were increasing the involvement of journalists in HIV/AIDS campaigns, workshops, seminars, meetings, field trips and training. Informing journalists about up-coming reports was another suggestion.

NGO respondents believed that best way to improve reporting on HIV/AIDS was through better reporting skills, eliminating censorship, more dedicated space for HIV/AIDS reporting in media, support from government, attractive IEC, and more regular workshops.

NGO respondents believed more educational materials in reporting HIV/AIDS for journalists were needed. However, just over half (55%) of respondents said they knew of available materials. Common examples respondents could think of were leaflets, booklets, reports from NGOs and NAA, posters, audiotapes, media guides, pictures, and newsletters from concerned institutions

NGOs were positive about the access PLWHA had to the media. Survey results show that 39 HIV/AIDS NGOs recognise that generally people living with HIV/AIDS can have access to media. PLWHA can spread information by using newsletters from NGOs or appearing in spots to educate people about HIV/AIDS. PLWHA can also gain access to the media when there are workshops, seminars or other important meetings or discussions. However, only meetings attended by high-ranking officials usually attract the media's attention. Talk shows on radio or television are two other ways PLWHA can access the media.

Like the journalists surveyed, NGO respondents were equally enthusiastic about joining a network to improve HIV/AIDS reporting. 80% said they would like to join, and 20% said they did not want to. Most of those willing to join such a network want to maintain contact via email and have meetings once a month or once every three months.

India

By Arul Selvan

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) aims to increase the quality and quantity of fair and balanced news reports on HIV/AIDS in six target countries across Asia and Africa (India, Cambodia, the Philippines, South Africa, Zambia and Nigeria). “Strengthening Journalists’ Unions by Improving Reporting on HIV/AIDS in Africa and Asia” is a year and a half project funded by the LO-TCO, the Swedish trade union movement.

This research work was carried out to increase the quality and quantity of fair and balanced news reports on HIV/AIDS in the target countries in Africa and Asia, by building strong organisations of journalists able to represent their members’ interests on HIV/AIDS issues. The assumption here is that it is best to engage journalists on professional issues through strong collective journalists’ organisations.

Six project researchers/in-country co-ordinators were employed in each of the target countries. The coordinator in India conducted a two-week media monitoring “snapshot” on ten media outlets from November 28 – December 11, 2005, and two surveys (one for journalists, one for NGOs) to measure the quality (language, placement, accuracy etc) and quantity of news reports on HIV/AIDS in each of the countries. The major findings of this research are presented here.

Executive summary

India has a low prevalence of HIV infection; less than 1% of the population has HIV/AIDS. The most at-risk group are sexually active young people between 15–44 years of age who make up 87.7% of HIV infections in India. Also, 51% of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) are in rural areas far from assistance and information on HIV/AIDS.

There are a number of barriers preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS awareness amongst the public. A large percentage of the population are illiterate, and 75% of people live in rural areas with little access to information. Besides this, discussing issues related to sex is taboo in India.

The media would be an effective tool to help spread HIV/AIDS awareness throughout India, especially through regional media organisations who print or broadcast news in local languages. However, before this can happen, journalists need to be better trained in HIV/AIDS reporting. The IFJ research examined the current state of HIV/AIDS reporting in India, what is being done, and what can be done to improve it.

It was discovered that HIV/AIDS has infrequent coverage in the Indian media, but when the topic is covered it generally has a high prominence. The media monitoring exercise discovered 88 HIV/AIDS stories from a sample of Indian media over a two-week period. Most of these stories appeared in newspapers, where there was more sustained coverage over the two-week period. English speaking newspapers were the most likely to publish HIV/AIDS stories. A small percentage of stories were broadcast on TV and radio, and were clustered around World AIDS Day on December 1.

Contrary to these findings, the journalists surveyed were positive about the media’s coverage of HIV/AIDS. 80% of journalists said their media organisations published HIV/AIDS stories weekly. The majority of journalists (58.7%) said they filed 1 to 5 HIV/AIDS related stories a month, although 20% of these journalists said they had difficulty getting published. Most journalists thought HIV/AIDS had a moderate to high news value.

NGOs surveyed were also quite supportive of the media’s coverage of HIV/AIDS. 58% of respondents were satisfied with the coverage. However they also said that HIV/AIDS had a medium to low prominence in the news, and coverage was infrequent.

The media monitoring exercise found that newspapers had more varied topics on HIV/AIDS than TV and radio, however most news stories were once-off stories, generally based on events surrounding World AIDS Day.

IFJ research findings on reporting HIV/AIDS in six countries in Africa and Asia

Journalists said the most covered topics on HIV/AIDS were the transmission of HIV and the treatments available for HIV/AIDS, whilst people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), HIV/AIDS orphans and medical breakthroughs were considered to have low coverage. This is despite the fact that journalists thought PLWHA and HIV/AIDS orphans were media-friendly topics.

In contrast, NGO respondents surveyed believed that only the transmission of HIV/AIDS received moderate coverage, whilst all other topics on HIV/AIDS had low coverage. NGO respondents split over whether the media provides helpful information on organisations or avenues available for PLWHA. 58% said the media did whilst 42% believed they did not.

The media monitoring exercise revealed that reporting was of reasonable quality. Negative stereotyping of PLWHA was generally not found in reporting and the vast majority of reports were sourced. However PLWHA were generally referred to in reporting as “AIDS patients”.

The majority of respondents to the journalist and NGO surveys believed reporting on HIV/AIDS was balanced and did not contribute to negative stereotyping of PLWHA. However a significant minority of respondents disagreed. 26% of journalists believed reporting was imbalanced and 34% thought that it contributed to negative stereotyping of PLWHA. Whilst 25% of NGO respondents believed reporting was imbalanced and 42% believed it contributed to negative stereotyping of PLWHA.

In regards to censorship, both journalists and NGOs surveyed believed the most likely form of censorship was social or self-censorship. However NGOs and journalists disagreed on what was the least likely form of censorship, with journalists believing it was from editors or management of media organisations whilst NGO believed it was least likely from government.

Journalists' main sources for HIV/AIDS reporting were firstly health officials then HIV/AIDS NGOs. Only half of journalists surveyed were satisfied with the quality of information provided by government and state bodies, with roughly 50% believing the information was either biased or limited.

NGOs were more critical of information provided by state bodies with 75% believing the information was limited. In contrast, 66% of NGO respondents believed information provided by NGOs was good, although roughly 30% thought it was either biased or limited.

NGOs used a number of methods to encourage journalists to use their organisation as sources. 50% of respondents said their organisation had a media liaisons officer. They also published reports, sent press releases, leaflets and conducted seminars to get the media's attention.

Their methods had limited success: half of respondents said their stories appeared regularly in the media, whilst the other half said they appeared occasionally. No respondents used a website to present their information.

Training and information on HIV/AIDS reporting provided by media organisations for their staff appears to be limited. Only 25% of respondents said they had received training, and only approximately 33% had a copy of their media organisation's journalist code of ethics.

Despite this most journalists believed they were either highly informed or very informed about HIV/AIDS. However they showed less confidence in specific topics such as medical breakthroughs, PLWHA, treatments for HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS orphans.

NGOs were supportive of the media in HIV/AIDS reporting with 83% of respondents believing reporting on HIV/AIDS had improved in the last five years.

Journalists and NGOs believed the best way to improve reporting was through training, whilst journalists thought the least helpful way to improve reporting would be through examples of good reporting on HIV/AIDS and compiling a lists of contacts and sources for stories. In regards to improving the quality of news stories, both journalists and NGOs believed improvements could be made if HIV/AIDS stories were given a higher placement in the news run-down and were subject to more quality control.

IFJ research findings on reporting HIV/AIDS in six countries in Africa and Asia

Nearly all journalists and NGOs surveyed said they would like to take part in a network in HIV/AIDS reporting. Most journalists would like to maintain contact via email either weekly or fortnightly, and NGO respondents said they would like to maintain contact via meetings or newsletters either weekly or monthly.

Introduction: HIV/AIDS in India

According to India's National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), India still has a low prevalence of HIV infection in the country, accounting for less than 1% of the population. The EU India media manual on HIV/AIDS said that, "mainly young, sexually active people, 15-44 year-olds account for 87.7% of the HIV infections in India". The primary methods of transmission of HIV in India are through sexual contact (85.7%), followed by injecting drugs (2.2%), blood transfusions and blood production infusion (2.6%), and perinatal transmission (2.7%).

The states with the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence are Andhra Pradesh (16.4%), Karnataka (12%), Maharashtra (10.4%), Tamilnadu (8.4%), Nagaland (4.49%) and Manipur (7.2%). The situation in India appears alarming as the majority of PLWHAs – 51% – are from rural areas.

Scientists predict that it will take another ten years before a vaccine for HIV is developed. Currently, there are only drugs available to treat the virus and to extend life spans. In this context, an effective solution to prevent HIV from spreading is through education about causes, transmission and prevention. The mass media would be the most effective tool to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS throughout society.

In India, there are social and cultural impediments to the spreading of HIV/AIDS awareness throughout the country. A large percentage of the population are illiterate, and 75% of the population live in rural areas with less access to information. Besides this, discussing any issues related to sex is taboo in India.

The media plays an important role in society: it has the potential to increase its audience's knowledge on issues, as well as changing their behaviour. Therefore, the media would be an important ingredient in increasing HIV/AIDS awareness amongst the public. The research indicates that the best way to spread information through rural and regional India is through newspapers, radio and television in local languages.

Knowledge of HIV/AIDS among people in semi-urban and rural areas is very low, even though the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is higher than in urban areas. In this context, the local language/dialect is the only means of communication in these localities. Journalists in general, and journalists who speak local languages in particular, should have clear understanding of the HIV/AIDS situation and knowledge about the illness.

There are two important aspects of the news media industry in India. Firstly, the growing trend in newspaper circulation and ad spend in electronic media. Secondly, the lack of training facilities for journalists to enhance their reporting skills.

Two factors have been associated with the surging media circulation and ad spend – that is growing literacy rates and the increasing economic potential of the growing middle class. In developed countries, circulation shows downward figures, where newspapers are facing near saturation. Whereas in India, according to 2005 Newspaper Readership Survey, there is a steep increase in circulation, especially in newspapers written in local languages. We can assume the increase in newspaper circulation is a result of increased literacy levels.

Equally, electronic media is also growing: ad spend figures in the year 2005 prove this trend. There is a huge potential for media growth in the coming decade. This enormous growth of media is an important opportunity to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS throughout society.

To carry out socially oriented news materials, journalists need to have adequate knowledge, skills, training and understanding. However, the majority of Indian journalists accept that there are few avenues to enhance their reporting skills on topics that are under reported. In the past decade, there has been a growing number of graduate, diploma and certificate programmes in

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mass communication and journalism offered by government. However, privately run institutions with high fees offer the majority of these courses, and most Indian journalists cannot afford to have private training.

The media has been accused of negatively portraying PLWHA. Efforts have been made by a number of international organisations to educate journalists on how to report HIV/AIDS responsibly. However, large sections of journalists still need more education about HIV/AIDS.

Methodology

Media Monitoring

Ten media outlets were monitored for this study; they were four newspapers in English: *The Hindu*, *Times of India*, *Deccan Chronicle*, and the *Deccan Herald*; and two newspapers in Tamil: *Dinamalar* and *Daily Thanthi*. The English-speaking television stations DD news and NDTV, and the Tamil language station Sun TV were monitored, and finally, the English-language radio station AIR News was monitored.

In selecting these media outlets, regions with a high rate of HIV infection were considered. The six states with the highest rates of infection were Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, which are in mainland India, and Manipur and Nagaland that are in the North East. For logistical reasons, a sample of the media from the four states in mainland India were monitored.

The *Times of India* is India's highest-circulating newspaper, selling over two million copies per day and read by nearly four and a half million people. Its headquarters is in Mumbai, Maharashtra. *The Hindu* is a national newspaper concentrated in Chennai, with a current circulation of 900,000 copies and a readership of over three million. The *Deccan Herald* is based in Karnataka, the *Deccan Chronicle* is from Andhra Pradesh and the *Dinamalar* is based in Tamilnadu. In 2004 the *Dinamalar* published over 500,000 copies per day. *Daily Thanthi* is the second largest selling Tamil language newspaper; it is highly popular amongst lower middle class and neo-literates. It uses simple Tamil language.

The television stations DD News, NDTV, and the radio station AIR News have national coverage, as does Sun TV through its satellite channel, though its news bulletin's main focus is the region of Tamilnadu.

NDTV's 6–7pm Prime Time news broadcast was monitored for this study. DD News's 8.30–9pm News programme, SUN TV 1.30–2pm & 8–8.30pm news broadcast were monitored, and three news bulletins on AIR were monitored; they were 8.15–8.30am, 2–2.30pm and 9–9.15pm.

This media monitoring project was carried out between November 28 - December 11 2005. This was the week preceding World AIDS Day on December 1, and the week following.

Surveys

The surveys were carried out in January and February 2006. Project staff distributed survey questionnaires to 370 journalists and nearly 125 HIV/AIDS related NGOs across India, out of which 46 journalists and 12 NGOs responded.

63% of respondents to the journalist survey were journalists, 28% were editorial staff and 6.5% were news editors. Similarly, approximately 66% of respondents worked for newspapers and 25% for television. 6.5% worked for an online media outlet and 2.1% for a wire service.

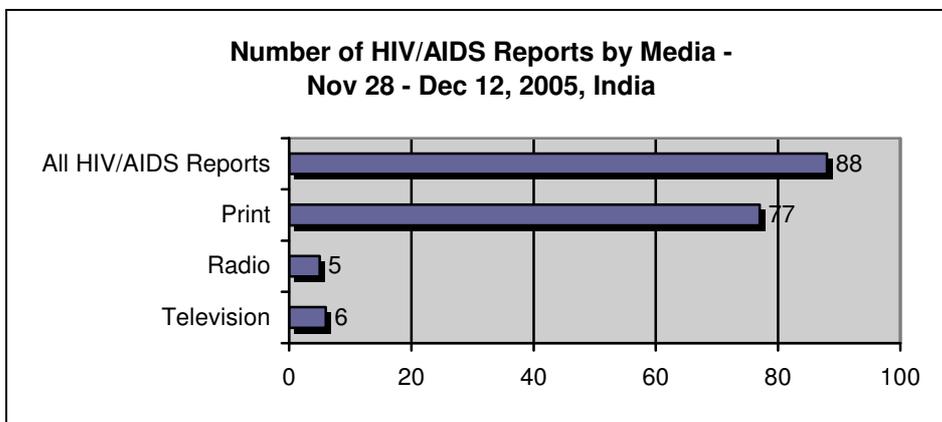
The majority of journalists surveyed were male (71.8%) whilst only 28.2% respondents were female. Nearly 75% of respondents were from metropolitan areas, 15% were from regional areas, 6.5% from suburban areas and 4.3% from rural areas.

Out of the 12 NGOs who responded to the questionnaire, eight were working within HIV/AIDS field and four were not. All the NGOs were based in India.

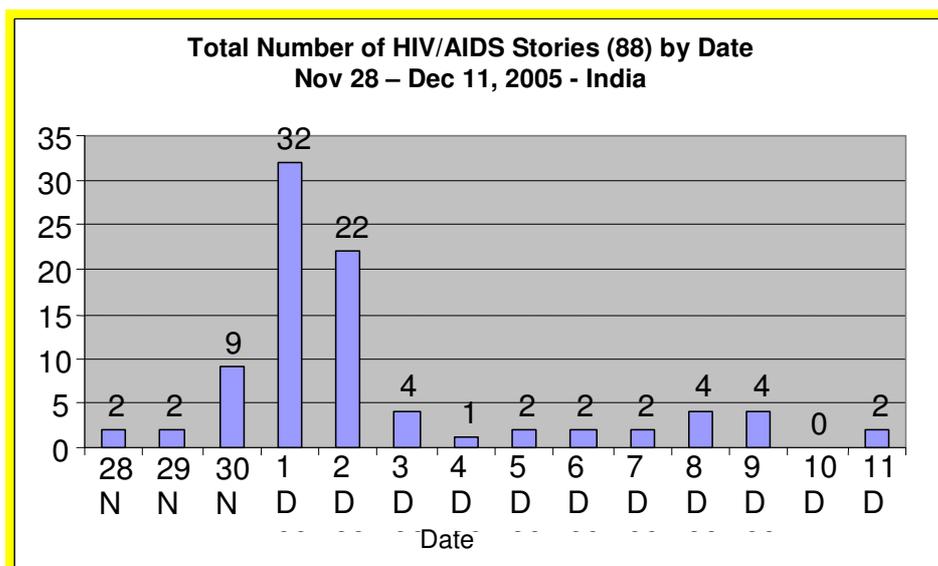
The Research Results:

Coverage

During the two-week monitoring of the media there was a total of 88 news stories on HIV/AIDS. Newspapers accounted for 87% (77), TV 7% (6) and radio 6% (5) of the total HIV/AIDS stories. 69% of the stories appeared in the English news media and 31% in Tamil.



The radio and television coverage of HIV/AIDS was clustered around World AIDS Day, whilst, most of the newspapers had a more sustained coverage over a number of days.



The most HIV/AIDS stories appeared in the Tamilnadu publication, *Dinamalar* with 20 stories, Tamilnadu is a region with a high HIV infection rate. After this, the national newspaper the *Hindu Times* had the most stories (17), which were spread over the largest time period, then, the *Times of India*, it is important to note that the *Times of India* has a young demographic who are in the age group that are at the most risk of contracting HIV. After this, the *Deccan Chronicle* from Andhra Pradesh and the *Deccan Herald* from Karnataka, two regions with a high HIV infection rate, had a comparatively high number of HIV/AIDS stories out of all the media outlets sampled.

Although *Dinamalar* had the most HIV/AIDS related stories, they were mostly focused around World AIDS Day. The other Tamil language media outlets, *Daily Thanthi* and Sun TV reported only a small number of stories on World AIDS Day events.

Most of the HIV/AIDS stories published (63%) had a medium prominence in the news rundown, whilst 21% of them had a low prominence. Only 16% of stories had a high prominence, the majority of which appeared on World AIDS Day.

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Also, 66% of HIV/AIDS-related stories appeared with visuals or sound (for television, a sound bite is considered as an additional element to the story). 33% of stories were not accompanied by visuals; these were usually stories with low prominence and editorials. In general, the sizes of the pictures in the newspapers were one or two columns wide; the larger the picture usually the higher the prominence of the story.

The journalists' survey revealed that the respondents believe the media is relatively focused on covering HIV/AIDS. 58.7% of the journalists surveyed said they publish one to five HIV/AIDS-related articles a month; the remainder said that their articles never come under HIV/AIDS classifications.

Nearly half of those who report on HIV/AIDS said that generally, their articles were published: 37% said every time and 39.1% said most of the time. Meanwhile, 20% of journalists said that they had difficulty getting their HIV/AIDS stories published. 15.2% said that they were rarely published and 6.5% said they never had a HIV/AIDS story published.

25.2% of respondents said that their news organisation published four or more HIV/AIDS stories per week, 28.3% of journalists surveyed said their organisations published two or three stories per week, whilst a further 26% of respondents said their organisations published one story per week. The remaining 20.5% of respondents said no articles on HIV/AIDS were published weekly.

43% of journalists believed the news value of HIV/AIDS stories was high, whilst 15.2% thought it was extremely high, 26% thought it was of moderate news value, 6.5% low news value and 6.5% very low. However the respondents believed that in practice, HIV/AIDS stories generally had a high or medium story prominence when they appeared in the media, but that was not frequently.

NGOs were generally positive about the media's coverage of HIV/AIDS. 58% of NGOs said they were satisfied with the media coverage of HIV/AIDS, 25% rated the coverage as good and 17% said it was poor. 75% of respondents said that the Indian media generally gives people with HIV/AIDS a voice, or an opportunity to speak to the media, whilst 25% believed the Indian media was not giving PLWHA the opportunity to speak. Respondents addressed perceptions that PLWHA might feel unable to speak to the media due to fear of discrimination although, ironically, feature stories that captured the PLWHA experience of pain and discrimination could help improve public sympathy. One respondent said there was no discrimination against PLWHA in the media.

33% of NGO respondents said that HIV/AIDS stories had a high news value, 42% said they had a moderate news value, 25% thought they had a low news value. However, in practice they believed HIV/AIDS stories generally had a medium to low prominence, and were not frequent in the media.

Topics reported

All TV and radio reporting on HIV/AIDS monitored during the two-week period was focused around World AIDS Day, whilst the newspapers covered more topics on HIV/AIDS.

During World AIDS Day, the *Times of India* had extensive coverage on HIV/AIDS, including facts from handbooks on HIV/AIDS and a lead article on how to report HIV/AIDS. *The Hindu* had a number of focuses on HIV/AIDS reporting: it looked at city news, the national focus, the regional situation and the international scenario in a varied format. *Deccan Herald* focused on state and national HIV/AIDS issues. The majority of stories were reports of events associated with the HIV/AIDS. The *Deccan Chronicle* looked at social and health issues related to HIV/AIDS; the state of Karnataka was their main focus. The Tamil language newspaper *Dinamalar* focused predominately on World AIDS Day; it used the event to publish stories on PLWHA and facts about HIV/AIDS.

Across all media outlets monitored, the format of the HIV/AIDS stories varied. 30% were features, whilst 70% were news. Most news stories (79%) were once-off stories. This is an

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indicator that stories were mostly events-based. However there were also regular columns (10%), and special AIDS day pages or supplement feature articles (9%) and editorials (2%).

A regional focus on HIV/AIDS captured the most attention in newspapers and electronic media. 48% of stories focused on a city, state or region. Whilst 38% of stories had a national focus, the majority of these were on the Prime Minister's address on World AIDS Day, as well as the health minister's press conference and other functions he attended to mark World AIDS Day. Five out of the eight media outlets monitored reported on PLWHA. In half of these stories, PLWHAs were quoted.

The survey of journalists gives us greater insight into the different topics related to HIV/AIDS that are covered in the media. The majority of journalists surveyed thought that the transmission and treatment of HIV/AIDS was covered moderately by Indian media. PLWHA, HIV/AIDS orphans and medical breakthroughs or research on HIV/AIDS were believed to have low coverage in Indian media. The results on the media coverage of stories on deaths by HIV/AIDS were unclear, as it was rated as having high and low media coverage.

Contradictorily, although journalists said PLWHA and HIV/AIDS orphans had low coverage in the media they were seen by journalists to be media-friendly topics. The transmission of HIV/AIDS was also seen to be a media-friendly topic. Treatments for HIV/AIDS were seen as moderately friendly, whilst deaths by HIV/AIDS, medical breakthroughs and research were not easy to cover.

NGOs surveyed felt that only the transmission of HIV/AIDS received moderate coverage whilst other areas of HIV/AIDS reporting had low coverage. 58% of respondents claimed that the Indian media gives helpful information on organisations or avenues related to HIV/AIDS, however 42% believed the media does not provide such information in their HIV/AIDS news articles.

Media's role

Perceptions about the role of the media in the HIV/AIDS pandemic varied amongst journalists. 56.2% of journalists said that the media plays a crucial role in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS by disseminating vital information, whilst 34.8% said the media observes and reports developments in HIV/AIDS.

NGO respondents similarly split over what they believed was the media's role in the HIV/AIDS pandemic. 58% of NGO respondents said that the media's role was to disseminate vital information to combat the spread of AIDS, and 42% said the media's role was to observe and report the developments of HIV/AIDS.

NGO respondents were also undecided on how important media attention was for their organisations. Nearly 42% of NGO respondents said that media attention on HIV/AIDS was very important to their organisations, whilst 58% said media attention was reasonably important.

Almost all NGO respondents agreed that media coverage had the potential to raise public awareness of HIV/AIDS and contribute to the decrease in the number of new infections.

Quality of reporting

The media monitoring exercise discovered HIV/AIDS reporting was of reasonable quality. Nearly 79% of stories have used sources in their reports, whilst only 20% the stories did not quote a source; they were usually stories with a low profile. Only half the stories used statistics in their reporting.

In the majority of news stories, PLWHA were referred to as "AIDS patients". "HIV infected", "deadly disease", "dangerous disease", and "infected patient" were some of the other phrases that appeared in reporting. During the monitoring exercise, the researcher could not find a meaningful number of new stories that used negative stereotypes of PLWHA.

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Common stereotypes of those infected by HIV (such as 'homosexuals spread HIV/AIDS') were not evident in the Indian media monitored. This may be due to the taboo attached to homosexuality in India and sex in general.

Journalists were generally positive about the quality of HIV/AIDS reporting, however a significant minority were not. Two-thirds of journalists surveyed believed that the media did not contribute to negative stereotypes of PLWHA, whilst the other third believed they did. Also, 58.7% of journalists surveyed thought the media's reporting of HIV/AIDS was balanced, however 26% of journalists surveyed disagreed. 15.2% gave no response to this question.

Journalists surveyed believed the general tone of media coverage on HIV/AIDS was neutral, sympathetic, accepting, unbiased, not degrading, not sensational and not offensive. They believed the language used in HIV/AIDS stories was analytical and balanced, and was not sensational, inflammatory, derogative or stereotypical.

Journalists believed the images used in HIV/AIDS stories were balanced, positive and appropriate. They were not stereotypical, derogatory, unnecessary or sensational.

Results from NGO respondents on the quality of reporting proved similar. 67% of NGO respondents said that the media's reporting on HIV/AIDS was balanced whilst 25% disagreed and 8% did not answer. NGO respondents were divided over whether the media contributed to negative stereotyping of PLWHA. 58% believed the Indian media did not negatively stereotype PLWHA, whilst 42% believed they did. However it should be noted that in another part of the survey NGO respondents stated that the mistake journalists regularly committed was negatively stereotyping PLWHA and imbalance in their reporting.

In general NGO respondents believed reporting was sympathetic, particularly in regards to PLWHA, HIV/AIDS orphans and deaths by HIV/AIDS. NGO respondents' views on the other tones evident in reporting were scattered and unclear.

NGO respondents believed that language used in articles on HIV/AIDS was analytical, balanced, emotional, sensational and stereotypical. It was not inflammatory, sympathetic, or derogative.

They also said that images used in HIV/AIDS stories were balanced and positive. They thought they were not stereotypical, derogatory or unnecessary.

Ethical reporting

The identity of PLWHA is usually reported in the media. However in the past, it was more common for the media to conceal the identity of PLWHA. The researcher only came across one article where the identity of the PLWHA was concealed. The *Times of India* reported on a woman with HIV/AIDS who gave birth in a remote area of Karnataka. A pseudonym for her was used in the story.

83% of NGO respondents said that the Indian media report the identities of PLWHA, whilst 17% of respondents said that the Indian media does not reveal the identities of PLWHA.

Censorship

Journalists said that social and self-censorship were the most common form of censorship. Social stigma, taboo and sympathetic feelings towards PLWHA were the main constraints behind revealing their identities. Government censorship was also common. However, owners/management and editors' influence over the HIV/AIDS reporting was cited as the least likely form of censorship.

NGOs perspective on censorship over HIV/AIDS news articles differed from that of journalists. Like journalists, NGOs have stated that self and social censorship were the most common forms of censorship. However, NGOs said that government officials were the least likely to censor journalists and that editors are more likely to be involved in the censorship of HIV/AIDS articles.

Sources

The most popular source used by journalists were health officials who were also seen as the most reliable. NGOs and HIV/AIDS organisations were also popular. Government officials were moderately used for newsgathering, whilst PLWHA were one of the least common source used. Local citizens were rarely approached for HIV/AIDS stories.

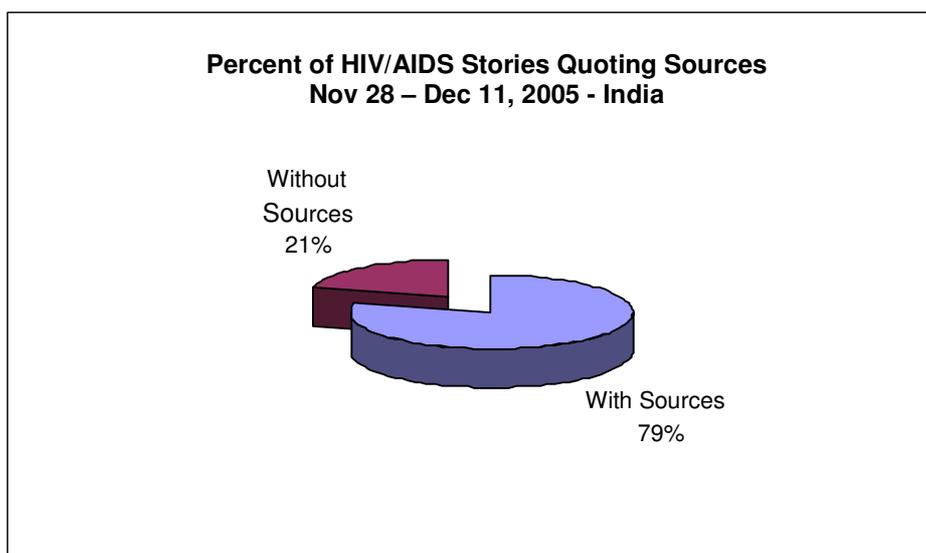
Half of the journalist respondents were satisfied about the quality of HIV/AIDS information available from state bodies and government: 32.6% said it was satisfactory, 15.2% said it was good and 4.3% said it was very good. The remaining half of the respondents said that the information was biased (21.7%) and limited (28.2%).

NGOs were more critical with 75% of NGOs saying that the quality of HIV/AIDS information available from state bodies and government was limited. In contrast, approximately two-thirds of NGO respondents were positive about the quality of HIV/AIDS information available from NGOs: 47.8% thought it was satisfactory, 15.2% thought it was good and 4.3% thought it was very good. One third of respondents disputed the quality of HIV/AIDS information available from NGOs, 28.2% thought it was limited and 4.3% thought it was biased.

Getting HIV/AIDS in the news

NGOs use a number of methods to get their information into the news. 50% of the NGO respondents said that their organisation had a media liaison officer. According to these respondents, the media officer's main aim was to reach their target audience through the media.

They perceived their role to include press liaison, creation and dissemination of public information tools, organisation of media briefings and development of links between public and private institutions for the dissemination of information.



Besides media liaison officers, NGOs use other means of promoting their information to the media. 17% of respondents presented information to the media in leaflets, 11% used seminars, and 28% through reports and 22% used press releases and personal contacts. No respondents used a website to present information.

Through these methods, NGOs had varied success in getting their stories published. 50% of NGO respondents said that their stories/press releases on HIV/AIDS appeared regularly in the media, the other 50% said they appeared occasionally.

NGO respondents said they do not involve journalists' unions and organisations in their HIV/AIDS campaigns. However 83% believed their information on HIV/AIDS was easily accessible to journalists.

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NGOs have limited awareness of education materials available for journalists, with 42% of NGO respondents stating they were aware of HIV/AIDS reporting manuals, and 58% saying they were not. NGO respondents mentioned the EU-India media manual on HIV/AIDS reporting, Kaiser Family Foundation Reporting Manual and WHO Reports.

Awareness and training

The training and guidance available to journalists through their media organisations appears to be limited. Approximately 66% of journalist respondents said that their news organisation has a journalism code of ethics; half of these respondents have a copy. Approximately 33% of respondents stated that their news organisation doesn't have a journalism code of ethics. 25% of respondents said that their news organisation has guidelines or training pertinent to HIV/AIDS reporting and all of them said that they have participated in these efforts. Nearly 66% of respondents claimed that their news organisation doesn't have any guidelines or training available for reporting HIV/AIDS.

73.9% of journalists surveyed said that their news organisation does not engage in any strategies or campaigns to raise staff awareness of HIV/AIDS and prevent staff members from being infected with HIV. Only 10% said that their organisation was taking efforts to increase HIV/AIDS awareness amongst staff. One respondent mentioned *The Pioneer's* (an English language New Delhi-based newspaper) 'Safe Sex' campaign.

25% of respondents have received prior training in HIV/AIDS reporting, whilst 75% of them have not received any training on HIV/AIDS reporting so far. Only two respondents clearly indicated their previous training was offered to them by HIV/AIDS organisations. One respondent received in-house training on HIV/AIDS reporting.

Despite the fact that most journalists had not received training on HIV/AIDS, 26% of journalist respondents believed they were very informed on HIV/AIDS, 43.5% believed they were quite informed about the pandemic, and 26% said they were slightly informed.

However journalists were less confident on their knowledge of specific topics on HIV/AIDS. 50% of respondents admitted that they have a lack of information about medical breakthroughs and research on HIV/AIDS. Approximately 33% said they do not know enough about PLWHA and 25% said they did not know enough about treatments for HIV/AIDS. Another 20% claimed that they did not know enough about HIV/AIDS orphans, and deaths by HIV/AIDS, and a handful of respondents said that they did not know about transmission of HIV/AIDS and causes of HIV/AIDS.

Approximately 66% of journalist respondents said they were not aware of any educational material available for journalists reporting on HIV/AIDS. Approximately 25% have published materials on HIV/AIDS, which include the Kaiser Family Foundation Reporting Manual, publications from International HIV/AIDS alliance, Path organization and from NACO. Respondents also mentioned that they use the Internet to gain information.

Very few journalists knew of an example of good journalism on HIV/AIDS. Two are quoted here:

"In its January 2000 issue, Mathrubhumi Arogyamasika (meaning Mathrubhumi Health Magazine) which I edit, conducted a novel investigative survey to find out how many private hospitals in Kerala would admit a person with HIV/AIDS as an inpatient. Our reporters talked to some 40 private hospital authorities posing as relatives of an AIDS patient. 36 of the hospitals said they were not ready to treat an AIDS patient. Results of this alarming survey were published in our millennium issue."

"Brian Deer's investigative piece on VaxGen's vaccine trials in the Sunday Times. The story was written by different journalists in US and UK on the illegal dissemination of contaminated blood plasma to unsuspecting haemophiliacs by big pharmaceutical companies in the US and Japan which led to several people contracting AIDS and the eventual court conviction of the companies. In India, the piece done on the increasing number of underage marriages by Arab men and the ditching of them (the underage girls) after the wedding night in Southern India as these men believed the myth that marrying a virgin would cure them of HIV and STD."

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None of the journalists said they have HIV/AIDS, although, approximately 66% of respondents said they know a PLWHA. Despite this, the majority of respondents stated that they were not directly affected by the pandemic.

NGO respondents were positive about improvements in HIV/AIDS reporting, with 83% stating that, in the past five years, reporting on HIV/AIDS had improved. The majority of respondents said that more HIV/AIDS news stories were appearing, and they were being presented more responsibly. However NGOs could not cite examples of good quality HIV/AIDS reporting. Specific improvements included positive images of PLWHA, compared to “earlier images, which were dreadful,” according to one respondent. Language had also improved, partly through training, although respondents believed there was still a way to go.

Action/Recommendations

Journalists are enthusiastic about improving their reporting on HIV/AIDS. 80.4% of respondents said they would like more information on HIV/AIDS. Approximately 75% said they were interested in learning more about the IFJ’s project to improve HIV/AIDS reporting in India, and approximately 66% of them wanted to know more about reporting HIV/AIDS training courses and HIV/AIDS media guides. Four respondents said they would like to know more about Peace Journalism as well as the availability of HIV/AIDS workshops in non-metro areas, awareness programme on HIV/AIDS and the latest research on HIV/AIDS.

According to journalists surveyed, training is the most helpful factor in improving HIV/AIDS reporting. Reporting guidelines, training manuals, handbook on reporting, and education on HIV/AIDS are rated as moderately useful. Leaflets on HIV/AIDS reporting are less useful and the best practical examples of reporting HIV/AIDS as well as a list of HIV/AIDS contacts and sources are thought to be the least helpful.

Journalist respondents believed better placement and quality control of news stories on HIV/AIDS was the most important contributing factor in improving the quality of stories on HIV/AIDS. Journalists believed identifying different story angles and having more access to HIV/AIDS NGOs would be moderately helpful to improve the quality of HIV/AIDS reporting. More access to PLWHA was considered to be the least useful way of improving the quality of AIDS reporting.

93.5% of journalists surveyed were willing to be apart of a network to improve reporting on the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Approximately 66% of them want to maintain contact through emails, whilst approximately 33% would like to maintain contact through newsletters and meetings. Fewer respondents want contact via phone or SMS. Approximately 33% of respondents would like to be contacted once a week, whilst roughly another 33% said once a fortnight and the rest once a month.

The majority of journalists said there was a need for more socially responsible reporting, and journalists needed to look at the issue from a more humane angle. Another important point shared by many respondents was external support – such as commissioning reporters, forming a network and even, one respondent suggested, to have a separate newspaper/journal for HIV/AIDS news – for journalists to do thorough and in-depth reporting.

Some specific suggestions from respondents included:

- *“A column in each journal/newspaper on HIV/AIDS and how to prevent it.”*
- *“Stop conducting media training courses and journalism workshops in the four metros only and conduct more of these in towns/villages/ suburban areas and invite the local political heads to attend these meetings as this will remove the social taboo for them to talk about HIV/AIDS in their own meetings. This will increase the willingness of people to talk to reporters about HIV/AIDS. Media can be effective only if they are able to file stories that people can sympathise with instead of staying indifferent except on World AIDS Day.”*
- *“Less sensation and more education helps fight HIV/AIDS.”*

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- *“A network/forum of like-minded journalists to take up this issue. Maybe you could sponsor some of them to cover some of the important HIV/AIDS conferences (Like the one scheduled at Toronto this August), because you get to network so much and meet all the people committed to this cause.”*
- *“A newspaper/journal dedicated to covering HIV news... where the reportage is unbiased and fact-based. This way we can cut down sensationalism and replace it with sensitivity.”*
- *“Commission some reporters to do a study or research on some of the crucial issues that PLWHA face.”*

NGO respondents believed the media culture on HIV/AIDS reporting could improve if there were more training sessions in reporting HIV/AIDS and greater dissemination of information about transmissions of HIV/AIDS. NGO respondents also thought journalists should actively seek stories about HIV/AIDS, and they themselves need to combat ‘compassion fatigue’ amongst journalists.

Like the journalists, NGO respondents believed the quality of reporting could be improved if there was better quality control of published and broadcast facts about HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS stories had a more prominent place in the new run down. Equally, identifying different story angles on HIV/AIDS and access to more HIV/AIDS NGOs are moderately important changes needed to improve HIV/AIDS reporting. Access to PLWHA was less important in improving HIV/AIDS reporting.

Individual recommendations from NGOs to improve HIV/AIDS reporting included:

- That the media look at the economic impact of HIV/AIDS, and public policy on HIV/AIDS as well as treatment and services for PLWHA;
- That NGOs learn how to ‘package’ the news. That NGOs make the effort to give *“lazy journalists... everything including the pix and sometimes even the ‘angle’ to the story! It works.”*
- Organise media advocacy workshops, orientation, training, interactive meetings, inter-personal communication, network building and information campaigns;
- Regular and frequent trainings, press conferences and personal contacts are the most important ways to break through to the media’s compassion and to enhance their interest in HIV/AIDS stories;
- If adequate contact lists with email address are used, an e forum can be created, like a virtual press club;
- If external supports can be gained NGOs could identify potential spokespersons in every state and give them training on how to liaise effectively with the media;
- There should be journalists who specialise in HIV/AIDS reporting;
- PR Officers often send entire reports (written for donors or for internal consumption) and this tires journalists. In addition, it is important to nurture relations with the press as an ongoing exercise;
- Study visits to areas with high infection rates;
- Provisions for on-the-job training in the form of incentives;
- Photography/reporting competitions.

NGOs also made suggestions on how to reignite concern about the HIV/AIDS situation in India amongst the media.

- Go beyond the news imperatives and explain the human dimensions of the issue;
- Build partnerships with those affected;
- Advocate the rights of PLWHA;
- Explore the politics of HIV/AIDS;
- Talk about the economic, social and medical cost of HIV/AIDS;
- Do independent investigative reports;
- If space is allotted then desk editors will ensure that some health stories fall into their laps...and in this way AIDS would get some coverage;

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- Target news agencies and ticker services used by both big and small newspapers (including local languages) since smaller newspapers are usually short staffed so they use these stories religiously, this way the information gets disseminated to even rural pockets.

Almost all NGO respondents want to take part in a network to improve reporting on the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Roughly, 33% want to receive information through emails, 66% would prefer to maintain contact through newsletters and meetings. A handful would like to receive information through phone calls and SMS. Nearly 50% would like to be contacted once a month and the other 50% would like to be contacted once a week.

Nigeria

By Tunde Aremu

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) aims to increase the quality and quantity of fair and balanced news reports on HIV/AIDS in six target countries across Asia and Africa (India, Cambodia, the Philippines, South Africa, Zambia and Nigeria). “Strengthening Journalists’ Unions by Improving Reporting on HIV/AIDS in Africa and Asia” is a year and a half project funded by the LO-TCO, the Swedish trade union movement.

This research work was carried out to increase the quality and quantity of fair and balanced news reports on HIV/AIDS in the target countries in Africa and Asia, by building strong organisations of journalists able to represent their members’ interests on HIV/AIDS issues. The assumption here is that it is best to engage journalists on professional issues through strong collective journalists’ organisations.

Six project researchers/in-country co-ordinators were employed in each of the target countries. The coordinator in Nigeria conducted a two-week media monitoring “snapshot” on ten media outlets from December 12-25, 2005. (No surveys were conducted.) The major findings of this research are presented here.

Executive summary

The media in Nigeria is reputed to be one of the more robust ones in Africa. It also has behind it a history of activism, especially the print media, right from the very first newspaper founded in Nigeria.

Reporting specific issues such as public health, rights and other developmental issues are not alien to the media. Its language in Nigeria for a long time, the period of military dictatorship in particular, was the language of advocacy.

The robust nature of Nigeria’s media meant that when the issue of HIV/AIDS became prominent in the media globally, the media in Nigeria did not find it hard to take it on. There is even a journalist organisation (Journalists against HIV/AIDS) with its own web site (<http://www.nigeria-aids.org/>).

Progress has also been made in terms of language and treatment of stories. The media in Nigeria, like the media elsewhere, has moved from the era of treating HIV/AIDS stories with fear to a more engaging, hope-filled and analytical writing. However, there still remain some challenges, as will be shown in the following analysis.

The research indicated that most news reports in Nigeria were event-driven rather than general coverage or ongoing reportage. Most of the stories were either on the health pages of newspapers or health programmes of the broadcast media. The broadcast media situation is such that in the television station¹ monitored, ChannelsTV, there was no single story on HIV/AIDS in the major news bulletin for two weeks.

The number of feature length stories have increased over time. In the past, feature stories were culled from foreign publications; stories are now generated locally with focus on local issues around HIV/AIDS. However, the stories revolve around events, incidents, on-going controversy and statements by public officials.

Editorial opinions about the pandemic are still sparse and very few materials on HIV/AIDS appear on the opinion and editorial pages of newspapers.

While there has been appreciable progress in the use of appropriate language, there are still instances of stigmatising words/phrases and “scare” words being used both in the print and electronic media.

¹ Channels TV monitored continues to be judged best TV station in HIV/AIDS reporting in Nigeria

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A noticeable trend was that reporters seemed to focus on more 'safe' stories; the impression is that HIV/AIDS reportage has reached a state of excellence.

Reporters on other specialised beats apart from health have not shown enough interest in HIV/AIDS reporting. For instance, most of the stories on the business pages of the newspapers in the period of the research were based on best workplace practice awards given to some corporate bodies. Interestingly, the reporters never got curious enough about HIV and AIDS in workplaces to make them do independent investigative stories on the real situation. In this period too, the wife of the governor of one of the states in the south part of the country organised a Christmas concert dedicated to HIV/AIDS awareness programmes. The pre-event reports of the concert were restricted to showbusiness pages and given off-hand treatment, with some of the reporters showing little awareness about appropriate use of language in HIV/AIDS reporting. The post-event reporting almost entirely neglected the awareness campaign.

Cartoonists seem to have gone to sleep on HIV and AIDS in Nigeria. There was a time in the media in Nigeria that the papers and magazines were awash with cartoons on HIV/AIDS. Now, there are few. In the two weeks of the media monitoring research, the eight newspapers and magazine monitored did not have a single cartoon on the issue.

Curiously, there were few reports that follow-up on issues that arose from the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA 2005). There were many issues that came onto the front burner at the international event, which eclipsed all other events in the country, especially the nation's capital Abuja, in the month of December 2005. Though there were reports in the papers on the issues, in-depth reviews and analysis that would have been expected in a robust media culture environment are lacking.

Introduction: HIV/AIDS in Nigeria

The Federal Republic of Nigeria has a diverse ethno-linguistic population, and is religiously diverse. Nigeria has a population of 131.5 million, the largest in Africa, just over 3% of those infected with HIV/AIDS. While this rate of infection is the lowest in the region, the large population means the number of people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) is the third highest in the world, after India and South Africa.

There are approximately 130,000 new cases of HIV infection per year and 200,000 deaths from AIDS per year. Since 1991, the Federal Ministry of Health has carried out a National HIV seroprevalence survey every two years. Comparison of recent surveys indicates the prevalence rate is dropping, although some states have much higher prevalence than others, with some as high as 12%. The 2003 survey suggested that 57% of PLWHA in Nigeria were women. It is estimated that 60% of new infections are in young people aged 15–25.

In 2005, it was estimated that there were 220,000 deaths from AIDS-related illnesses and 930,000 HIV/AIDS orphans living in the country. Approximately 80% of new transmissions are through heterosexual intercourse with another 10% through blood transfusion, since there is no nationally coordinated transfusion service and blood is not routinely tested for HIV. The remaining 10% are through mother to child transmission, injecting drug use and homosexual sex.

Lack of education around the HIV and AIDS is partially due to the stigma of HIV/AIDS in particular but also due to a cultural attitude towards sex and sexuality that sees such topics as intimate and private affairs not for public discussion.

The high level of infection in young women can also be traced to: female genital mutilation (60% of Nigerian women undergo a cultural practice of circumcision) using poorly sterilised equipment; a poor healthcare system; the fact that there is no minimum age of consent; and acceptable polygamy for men.

Methodology

The research was done through daily monitoring of newspapers and the broadcast media for HIV/AIDS reports in the period from December 12-25, 2005.

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Of the ten media organisations monitored, eight were print, six daily newspapers and two weekly magazines while two were electronic: one television and one radio. The distribution was determined by the prominence of the media and their appeal to the public in terms of news content.

Broadcast

Eko 89.5 FM (for radio) and Channels TV (for television) were monitored. Special attention was paid to major news bulletins. One was the first major news bulletin of the day which was always be made up of a repeat of the previous day's late night news and breaking news, along with news sourced from the dailies. The midday news was also monitored. The evening news, especially 1600hr and 1700hr newscasts were monitored for the strategic reason of their provision of recap of news of the day and breaking news.

Print

The following print media were monitored: *Daily Sun, Guardian, New Age, The PUNCH, The Comet, Tell, The News* and *This Day*. The varied orientation of the Nigerian newspapers, the impact they are acknowledged to have made in the area of HIV/AIDS and public health reporting as well as the target audience of the publications, were determining factors in their choice.

Of the dailies, all pages were read not just for stories focused on HIV/AIDS, but for mention of HIV/AIDS as well (even when such mention was gratuitous).

It is important to note that Nigeria has one of the most robust media cultures in Africa. Its papers are voluminous compared to what is produced in other places in the continent. Extra efforts had to be put in by the researcher to be able to cope with the monitoring exercise.

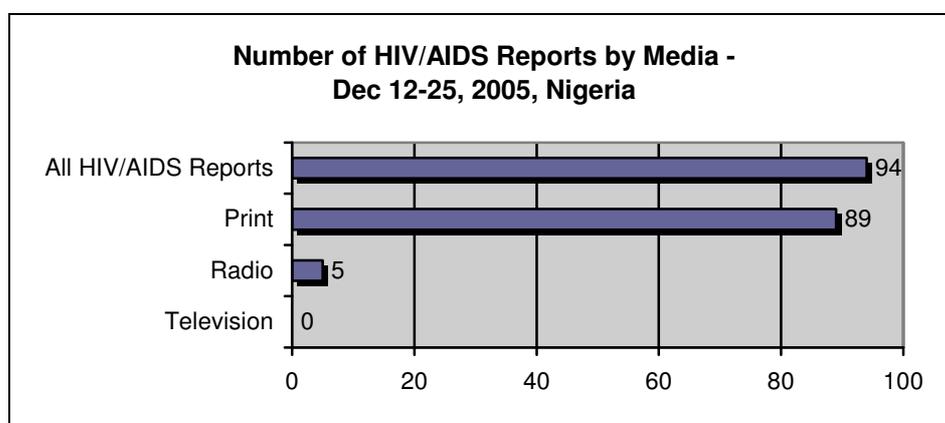
The Research Results:

Coverage

There were 94 items published or broadcast during the two-week monitoring period. The majority of these (89, or 95%) were published in the print media, with 5 in radio (5%) and none in television. The daily newspapers were more consistent in the allocation of space to HIV/AIDS stories. The broadcast media, interestingly, did not allot much time to the issue in spite of the fact that there was a series of activities in Nigeria around HIV/AIDS in this period.

This lack of HIV/AIDS news in the broadcast media was not due to lack of space, especially as some news items are repeated over a period of two days, and some three days.

The gap between the coverage of HIV/AIDS issues in the print and broadcast media was clearly very wide.



HIV/AIDS reports in the papers and on the radio had medium prominence. HIV/AIDS stories in the papers hardly made front page; however they did occupy prominent space in some special sections of the newspapers. In some of the papers, they led special sections or were located on pages in such a way that they could not be missed.

Eko FM in particular was impressive with the amount of time allowed for the use of facts in some of the reports. The overall impression though was that there is a great deal of room for improvement in terms of space allocation.

[It is important to note that the tragic incident of a plane crash in which several lives, including that of school children going home on holiday, took so much space in the news bulletins of the electronic media during the monitoring period, it disadvantaged other news items at this time.

It is suspected that the survey taking place immediately after ICASA 2005 may have also affected the opportunity of viewing a regular feature of coverage of HIV/AIDS in the media in Nigeria. It is suspected that some of the media houses may have reduced space allotted to HIV/AIDS news with the notion that they had given enough space in the week of the conference and weeks leading to the conference.]

Topics reported

Stories on HIV/AIDS were most frequently found in the health sections of papers. Even in instances where stories appeared on pages other than health, the context of the stories was still likely to be health.

In situations where the stories appeared in the context of religion, economy, politics or entertainment, they were often based on events and hardly on issues. It was only in the cases of opinions that there were some indications of issue-based approaches.

The small number of stories monitored that fell within the context of politics was also due largely to the fact that the coverage of HIV/AIDS in the media in Nigeria has not become issue-based enough. There has to be an issue-based approach to the coverage for it to appear in political context. This implies that reporters in Nigeria do not see HIV/AIDS issues as rights issues.

Quality of reporting

The tone of news reports on HIV/AIDS in the media in Nigeria has improved over the years. The preponderant tone has been informative, while following that is the traditional journalistic style: factual and neutral. Following these in some of the stories are the celebratory and promotional tones in which people, organisations and events that are outstanding are celebrated. Hope is also given at almost equal level with tones that are both sympathetic and hopeful.

There are however still concerns. During the monitoring exercise, some stories were found to be sensational, blaming, boastful, offensive or acerbic.

Actions/Recommendations

It is obvious that there is still need for training of journalists on coverage of HIV/AIDS. However, the focus of the training has to be improved. Anecdotal evidence suggests that while some reporters on the health beat appear to have been over-trained, there is a significant proportion of reporters yet to receive training at all.

Some reporters on beats other than health do not recognise the HIV/AIDS story as a news story that relates to them. There is a need to target reporters on other beats.

It is also important to note that in Nigeria, the mobility in the media environment is very high. Journalists move from one newsroom to another and some quit the profession after spending only a few years. An in-country training programme to address this would ensure that even on the health beat, journalists who are illiterate about the lingo of health reporting, especially HIV/AIDS, do not create havoc.

Emphasis should also be laid in future training on the rights aspect of HIV/AIDS. Unless the average reporter sees health issues from a rights perspective (i.e. right to life), s/he is not likely to recognise HIV/AIDS as newsworthy material.

Training isn't just needed by journalists: desk people, editors, sub-editors, news editors, proof-readers and other people that work on stories brought in by the reporter should also be trained.

The Philippines

By Diosa Labiste

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) aims to increase the quality and quantity of fair and balanced news reports on HIV/AIDS in six target countries across Asia and Africa (India, Cambodia, the Philippines, South Africa, Zambia and Nigeria). “Strengthening Journalists’ Unions by Improving Reporting on HIV/AIDS in Africa and Asia” is a year and a half project funded by the LO-TCO, the Swedish trade union movement.

This research work was carried out to increase the quality and quantity of fair and balanced news reports on HIV/AIDS in the target countries in Africa and Asia, by building strong organisations of journalists able to represent their members’ interests on HIV/AIDS issues. The assumption here is that it is best to engage journalists on professional issues through strong collective journalists’ organisations.

Six project researchers/in-country co-ordinators were employed in each of the target countries. The coordinator in the Philippines conducted a two-week media monitoring “snapshot” on various media outlets from November 28 – December 11, 2005, and two surveys (one for journalists, one for NGOs) to measure the quality (language, placement, accuracy etc) and quantity of news reports on HIV/AIDS in each of the countries. The major findings of this research are presented here.

Executive Summary

Currently, the Philippines have the lowest rate of HIV infection in Asia. However, the Health Department of the Philippines is concerned with the increase in HIV positive people in the country, which has almost doubled in the past three years, from 6000 to 11,168. It has also been found that the groups practising behaviours most at risk of contracting HIV – young people, homosexuals and sex workers – have little knowledge of HIV/AIDS. The Health Department believes that with the increase in HIV and little HIV/AIDS awareness amongst at risk groups, an HIV/AIDS crisis threatens the Philippines.

The media has the ability to combat this predicted HIV/AIDS crisis in the Philippines by spreading information about HIV/AIDS, and thereby increasing the public’s awareness of the issue. This research looks at the current state of HIV/AIDS reporting in the Philippines, what is being done, and what can be done to improve it.

The research found that coverage of HIV/AIDS in the Filipino media was small. A sample of Filipino media was monitored for two weeks, and only 34 stories on HIV/AIDS were discovered, mostly printed in newspapers. Most of these stories had a high prominence in the news run-down, probably because they were related to World AIDS Day, which fell in the middle of the time period of the media monitoring exercise.

The journalists surveyed believed HIV/AIDS had a moderate news value, with only some media organisations covering the topic every week. Most journalists were disappointed by this and would like to see HIV/AIDS as a weekly news topic. Staff from HIV/AIDS organisations were not supportive of journalists’ efforts in reporting. They believed the coverage of HIV/AIDS was poor, but they thought the topic had a moderate news value. These respondents had mixed success in getting journalists to cover their proposed story ideas.

It was found that HIV/AIDS reporting covered a broad spectrum of topics, and the reporting appeared to demonstrate journalists’ understanding of the social and political issues surrounding the problem of HIV/AIDS in the Philippines. Journalists said the most popular topic they covered was deaths from HIV/AIDS, and then people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), the transmission of the virus, and treatments for PLWHA. The least popular topics covered were HIV/AIDS orphans and medical breakthroughs. HIV/AIDS organisation staff thought the media did not provide enough information for PLWHA on the help that is available for them. They also thought there was low coverage of most topics about HIV/AIDS.

IFJ research findings on reporting HIV/AIDS in six countries in Africa and Asia

The media monitoring exercise found that the reporting on HIV/AIDS was of good quality; stories were found to be professional and supportive of PLWHA. However journalists believed the quality of their reporting was still compromised by biases, myths and negative perceptions about PLWHA and that they contributed to negative stereotyping of sufferers. HIV/AIDS organisation staff agreed: although they felt reporting was mostly professional, they thought coverage of PLWHA was usually sensational, biased and degrading. They also thought that journalists usually made the mistake of downplaying the crisis.

It was also discovered that censorship of HIV/AIDS reporting does occur. Both journalists and HIV/AIDS organisation staff thought the most common form of censorship was official censorship from the government, then censorship due to social stigma and then unofficial censorship. The least likely form of censorship was from editors or by the journalists themselves.

In the Philippines, the law also restricts what can be published: the Philippines AIDS Prevention and Control Law prevents any PLWHA from being identified by name, photo or any other means in the media.

The research discovered that journalists used numerous sources for their stories: the most popular source was health officials, then non-government organisations (NGOs) and lastly PLWHA, government officials and local citizens. Generally, journalists felt the quality of information available from government bodies and NGOs was limited.

HIV/AIDS organisations used numerous methods to get their story ideas published. The most popular methods were press conferences, interviews, publishing updated statistics, studies and analysis, as well as posting information on websites. Half of respondents said their organisation had a public relations officer and used press releases and personal contacts within the media to get stories published. Currently, HIV/AIDS organisations are not involving journalists in HIV/AIDS campaigns or activities. From these methods HIV/AIDS organisations only had limited success in getting their information published.

The results on journalists' knowledge of HIV/AIDS and the training available for them were disappointing. 77% of journalists said that their media organisations do not provide training or guidelines on how to report on HIV/AIDS. Only 30% of respondents had received training, but this was through NGOs, government agencies, international organisations and by using the South African journalists' guidelines on HIV/AIDS reporting. 88% of journalists said they wanted access to more information on HIV/AIDS, especially about medical breakthroughs, research, treatments and HIV/AIDS orphans.

Journalists thought the best way to improve reporting was through training handbooks and reporting guidelines. HIV/AIDS organisation staff thought they could improve reporting by providing more materials on HIV/AIDS, training and sharing information and research. They also felt journalists needed to be exposed to HIV/AIDS activities and PLWHA.

90% of journalists and HIV/AIDS organisation respondents said they would like to take part in a network for improving the reporting of HIV/AIDS. The preferred means of contact was email either weekly or monthly.

Introduction: HIV/AIDS in the Philippines

The Philippines has one of the lowest rates of HIV infection in Asia, a situation that baffles experts because the country has all the conditions that could hasten the HIV spread. The prevalence rate even among groups associated with high risk behaviours – like sex workers, men having sex with men and overseas workers – has remained below one percent.

The Philippines AIDS registry has 2,942 cases listed since 1984 when the first AIDS case was reported in the Philippines, with the death of a foreign national from pneumonia. The registry was established in 1987 by the Department of Health as a passive form of monitoring the HIV epidemic in the country. Of the cases listed, 69% are between 20 to 39 years old and 63% are males. The most common mode of transmission is through heterosexual contact.

IFJ research findings on reporting HIV/AIDS in six countries in Africa and Asia

The HIV prevalence in the Philippines is said to be low, and transmission is slow, but maybe not for long. The Health Department said in 2005 that an AIDS crisis threatens the Philippines as the number of people who are HIV carriers has doubled in just over three years. The department projected the number of HIV carriers to have risen to 11,168 from about 6,000 in 2002.

A 2000 report of the Health Action Information Network have identified a societal group known as 'population at risk' who have a higher risk of contracting HIV than others due to economic, societal or biological characteristics. These are women, young adults, sexually active homosexuals, sex workers and overseas Filipino workers.

HIV is passed more easily from men to women, rather than from women to men. The reproductive tract of young women is prone to injury during sexual intercourse, increasing the risk of contracting sexually transmitted infection (STI). Women are less capable of protecting themselves or negotiating for safe sex with their husbands or partners.

A 2001 survey of young adults' attitudes towards sex and sexual practices shows that many young people know little about HIV/AIDS, but are taking risks. Almost one in four (23%) Filipinos aged 15 to 25 are sexually active. Half of the sexually active young male population has multiple partners. Only 40% use condoms in their first sexual encounters. Three out of four young persons thought they were immune to AIDS, and one in three thinks AIDS can be cured.

More than 20% of reported HIV cases involve male-to-male transmission but because of the stigma attached to same-sex sexual activity, many men who are having sex with men do not access information and medical services. The same stigma is faced by sex workers, especially the freelance and child sex workers. But unlike sex workers working in regular bars and entertainment establishments, freelance sex workers and child sex workers have little access to HIV/AIDS information and are less likely to be able to negotiate for safe sex.

About 30% of reported HIV positive cases are overseas Filipino workers. This could be due to low knowledge of HIV/AIDS, low condom use, poor health-seeking behaviour and machismo. A survey of seafarers conducted by the government labour agency noted that only 49% of seafarers practice safe sex.

In the 1990s, HIV/AIDS was often in the news, influenced by the international opinion on the expected economic impact of the pandemic worldwide. In 1995, the First National Media Practitioners' Symposium on AIDS brought together 100 journalists to listen to senior colleagues and assess the reporting of HIV/AIDS. The speakers agreed that many years after news of the first case of HIV/AIDS, there is still a lack of extensive reporting. The reporting sometimes departed from sensationalism but it was also event-driven, focused on the individual person and weighed down by cultural biases against sex workers and homosexuals. To improve reportage, the AIDS Society of the Philippines launched the annual AIDS Media Award.

The first survey of journalists' awareness on HIV/AIDS took place in 2000 during the Third National Congress of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines and was conducted by the AIDS Society of the Philippines. Ninety journalists answered questions about their knowledge and perceptions of HIV/AIDS and their attitudes toward sex and sexual behaviour.

The results were disappointing for HIV/AIDS advocates. Only 58% of the respondents knew that AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and no one knew the correct meaning of HIV, although 31% were quite close when they wrote "Human Immune Deficiency Virus." The respondents also did not fare well when answering questions on the transmission of HIV. More than 80% said "yes" to the question that male and female sex workers are causing the spread of HIV/AIDS while 70% said the same about male homosexuals.

Between 2000 and 2004, media workshops on reporting on HIV/AIDS were held back-to-back with conferences on HIV/AIDS for government, NGOs and local governments. One of the features of these gatherings was an interview with a person living with HIV/AIDS, a rare opportunity for many journalists, especially those in the region.

IFJ research findings on reporting HIV/AIDS in six countries in Africa and Asia

The AIDS Society of the Philippines distributed media handbooks to help journalists improve their reporting on HIV/AIDS entitled, "12 Steps to Understanding AIDS for Media Practitioners". It contains basic information on the HIV/AIDS situation in the Philippines, a chapter with tips on how to improve the quality of coverage, the Filipino laws on the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS (Republic Act 8504) and guidelines on HIV/AIDS reporting. The handbook was adapted from the manual for media prepared in Indonesia by the AIDS Media and Training Center for Journalists.

All over the country there are scores of government organisations and NGOs that are involved in HIV/AIDS prevention and advocacy. Many of them have opened their doors and shared their databases with journalists. They have recognised the media's role to make the public better informed about HIV/AIDS.

There are groups monitoring media reports on HIV/AIDS in the Philippines. Among them are the AIDS Society of the Philippines, which published its findings in the media handbook and gives out annual awards for best HIV/AIDS reports in newspapers, radio and television. The Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, an independent media-watch organisation, also monitors media coverage on many issues, among them HIV/AIDS. Most of the monitoring is focused on the quality of reporting and the ethical approach taken.

Methodology

Media Monitoring Snapshot

The media monitoring snap shot was conducted from November 28 - December 11, 2005, in the days approaching and succeeding the World AIDS Day on December 1. Monitored were four newspapers, two television news program, 2 current affairs television program and 2 weekly news programs.

Newspapers: *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (broadsheet); the *Philippine Star* (broadsheet); *Abante* (tabloid) and *Bandera* (tabloid).

Television: Daily News - *Insider* of ABS-CBN Channel 2; *24 Oras* (24 Hours) of Channel 7; Weekly Shows: *Payong Kapatid* (Peer Advice) of ABS-CBN Channel 2 and in addition, *Maala-ala Mo Kaya*, weekly advice program turned into drama on the topic HIV/AIDS and a television plug on HIV/AIDS, all from ABS-CBN, were also recorded.

Radio: (Weekly) *Babae Ka, May Say Ka*

The newspapers, radio and television programs were chosen because of their reach, audience share and limitations of the researcher and volunteers. The study was confined to two widely circulated broadsheets and two tabloids circulating all over the Philippines. The broadsheets are English dailies: one tabloid (*Bandera*), is a mix of English and Tagalog, and the other one, *Abante*, is all in Tagalog.

The two television networks are top-rated, and have tried to outdo each other to capture audience share. The radio programs selected tackles current affairs issues, with Gabriela geared towards gender issues. Gabriela is the umbrella of women's groups that has a partylist seat in the Philippine Congress. All television and radio programs are broadcasts in *Tagalog* but English is conveniently woven into the newscasts and conversation.

The newspapers were examined daily for stories that mention or are about HIV/AIDS. The daily scan, done from November 28 – December 11, 2005, covered all sections of the newspapers, including main news section, world news section, health, business and entertainment.

The selected programs in radio and television were recorded everyday of the two-week period. Selected television current affairs program (*Payong Kapatid*) and drama/documentary (*Maala-ala Mo Kaya*) were included because they discussed HIV/AIDS and sexuality issues. Other current affairs programs were monitored but yield no news or segment on HIV/AIDS.

For radio, the sole weekly program monitored was *Babae Ka, May Say Ka*, over DZXL. There were two other radio programs monitored but the tapes cannot be obtained, making the sampling for radio a problem.

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Surveys

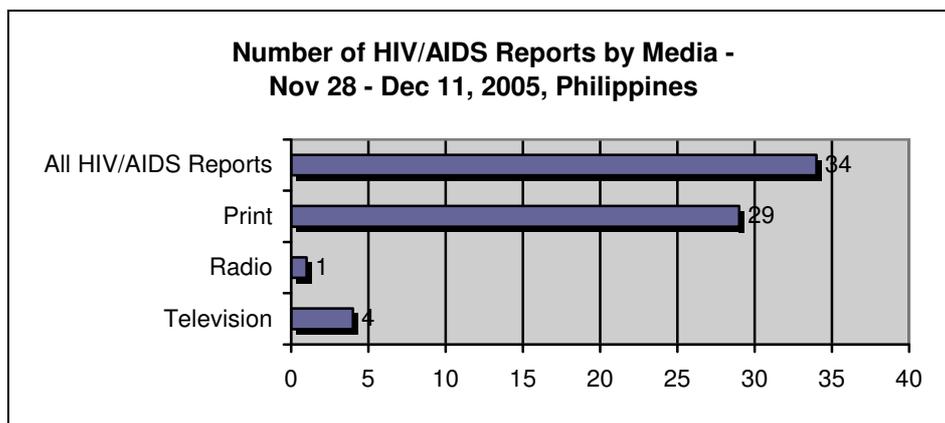
Two parallel surveys were conducted by the IFJ and the National Union of Journalist of the Philippines (NUJP) in November 2005 to January 2006 to explore the current state of media reporting in the Philippines and identify the problems and challenges faced by journalists in reporting on HIV/AIDS. One involved journalists, the other was for organisations that are directly or indirectly working on HIV/AIDS issues. There were 61 usable responses for the journalist survey, and 10 for the NGO survey.

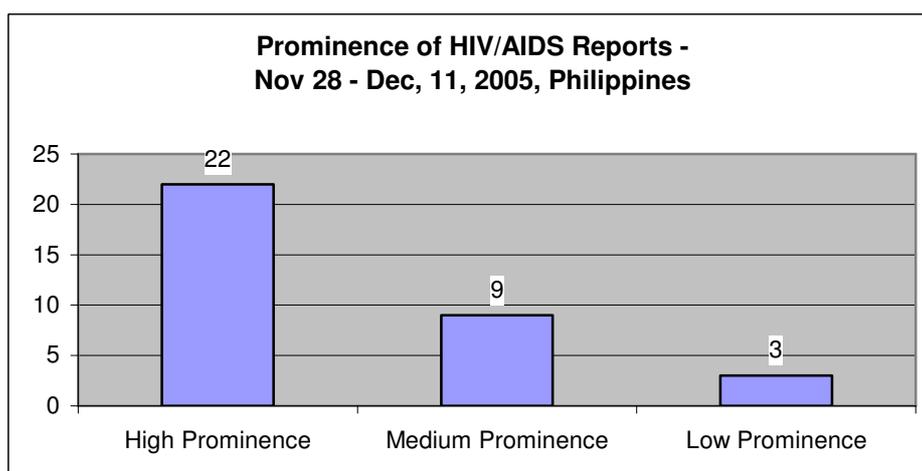
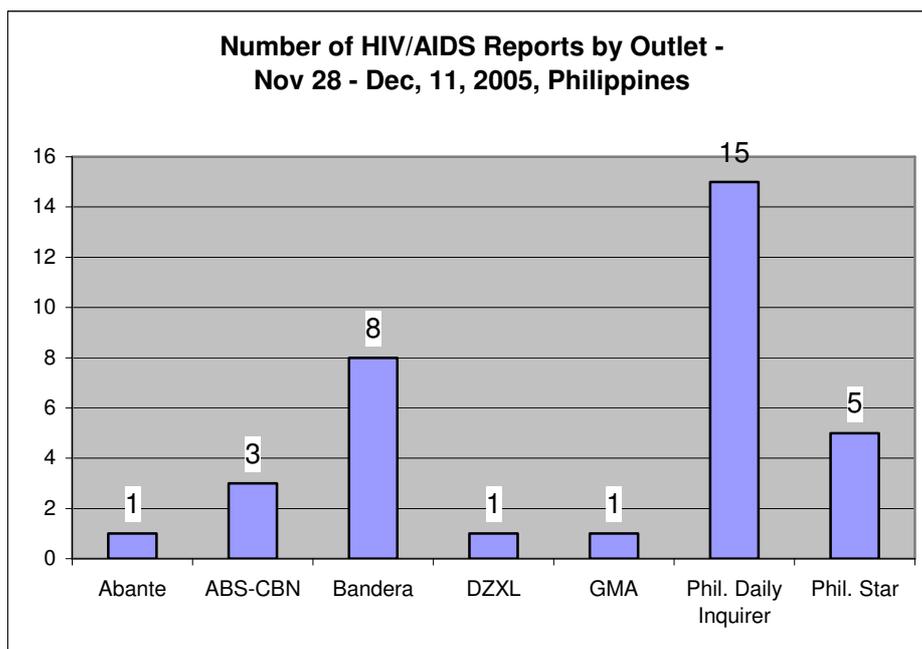
There were differing perceptions on media's coverage on HIV/AIDS, especially on the quality of the reports and well as assessment on how sensitive were the images and the language used in HIV/AIDS stories.

The Research Results:

Coverage

The media monitoring exercise discovered 34 stories on HIV/AIDS reported during the two-week period. The monitoring of the Filipino media discovered that the reporting of HIV/AIDS was events-based and was not a regular news item. It was discovered that HIV/AIDS stories gained the most coverage in newspapers, then television and lastly, radio. Of the stories that were documented, 64% of the stories had high prominence either in the newspapers, television or radio.





The findings from the survey of journalists support the results of the media monitoring exercise. 40% of journalists surveyed said HIV/AIDS news stories had moderate news value, and 19% said they had low news value. 36% of journalists said HIV/AIDS stories were not part of the weekly news agenda of their news organisations, whilst 34% said they were. The large majority of journalists regretted that reporting was based around events and wished reporting on HIV/AIDS was a regular news item.

The journalists surveyed believed most of the HIV/AIDS stories they filed reached print or were broadcast. 42% said their stories ran every time, whilst 4.9% said their stories never saw print or broadcast.

HIV/AIDS organisations' staff appeared to be disappointed with the media coverage of HIV/AIDS. 60% of respondents believed coverage was poor, and generally if reported on, its prominence within the news run-down was low. However, 60% of respondents believed HIV/AIDS should have a moderate news value. HIV/AIDS organisation staff also stated that

IFJ research findings on reporting HIV/AIDS in six countries in Africa and Asia

their press releases were not printed all the time, however, the chances of their press releases reaching print was increased leading up to World AIDS Day.

Topics reported

Through monitoring the media, it was discovered that the topics on HIV/AIDS reporting varied: some stories looked at the role of religion in the spread of HIV/AIDS, or the shortcomings of government, raising awareness, breaking the silence, proposed laws for more access to treatments, monogamy and abstinence, openness in discussing sexuality issues, street children, drug-use and prostitution. In many stories, discussion of HIV/AIDS was linked to social and political issues, demonstrating journalists' awareness of interrelated issues. However it was discovered that there was a distinct lack of regional reporting on HIV/AIDS and accounts of PLWHA.

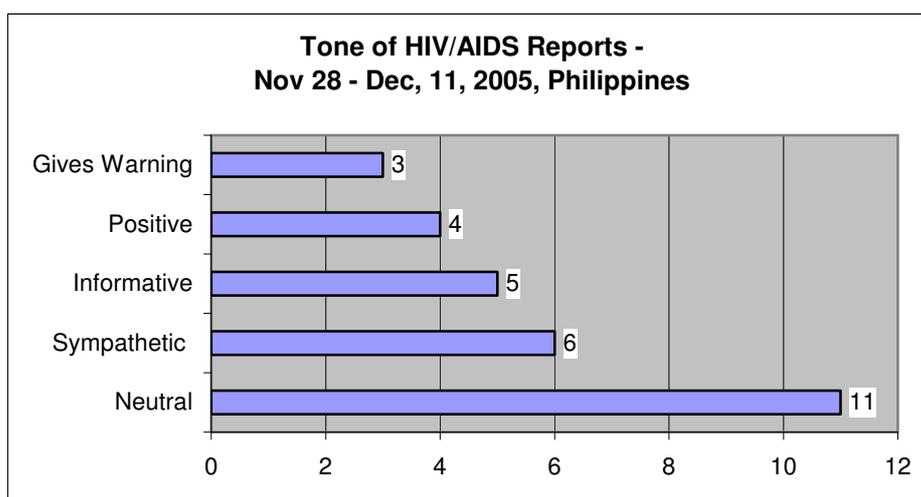
The journalists surveyed believed the most covered topic was deaths from HIV/AIDS. Stories on PLWHA, the transmission of HIV/AIDS and treatments for the disease received medium coverage, whilst HIV/AIDS orphans, medical breakthroughs and research into HIV/AIDS received low coverage.

Similarly, journalists said the topics that got their attention were firstly deaths by HIV/AIDS, then PLWHA and then the transmission of HIV/AIDS. The least likely to get their attention were orphans of HIV/AIDS, medical breakthroughs and research into HIV/AIDS.

Respondents to the survey of HIV/AIDS organisations' staff mentioned a number of shortcomings in journalists' reporting of HIV/AIDS. They believed journalists failed to provide information on organisations or avenues that could help PLWHA in their news stories. 60% of respondents also thought that the media had a low coverage of stories about PLWHA, HIV/AIDS orphans, transmission of HIV/AIDS, treatments and deaths by HIV/AIDS.

Quality of reporting

The media monitoring research discovered that most stories were presented in a professional and positive manner. The stories had a neutral and detached tone, or were sympathetic, positive and informative. Other stories were found to be analytical, celebratory, explanatory, emotional and moralising.



Only two stories were found sensational; one looked at "garlic as a cure" ("Garlic can be for HIV, acupuncturist says," *Bandera*, December 2, 2005) and another discussed risk of HIV infection in tourist areas, ("Don't ignore HIV/AIDS threat, health execs warn," *Daily Inquirer*, December 3, 2005). The facts presented were not confirmed or investigated in-depth.

In the two weeks of media monitoring, the language used in HIV/AIDS stories was fairly positive but these were still some slips, such as the use of words like "victims" "HIV holocaust," "scourge," "epidemic," and "deepest wound in society".

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Journalists surveyed believed the quality of reporting was still compromised because biases, myths and negative perceptions still surfaced when writing, either consciously or unconsciously.

Journalist felt that stories on PLWHA were generally covered in a sensational, sympathetic or neutral manner, whilst stories on HIV/AIDS orphans were sympathetic. They thought stories on the transmission of HIV/AIDS or deaths by HIV/AIDS were either neutral or sensational. Treatments and medical breakthroughs were seen as generally being reported in a neutral tone.

HIV/AIDS organisations believed the coverage of HIV/AIDS orphans, transmission of HIV/AIDS and deaths by HIV/AIDS was sympathetic and the coverage of treatments neutral.

HIV/AIDS organisations' staff surveyed believed the top three mistakes of journalists when reporting on HIV/AIDS was sensationalism, reinforcing stereotypes and downplaying the crisis. Although, they also recognised the media's recent attempts at improving its reporting by providing accurate, balanced and fair information.

Ethical reporting

An area of concern was the negative stereotyping of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). 59% of journalists believed that the media was contributing to negative stereotyping of PLWHA, although 37% disagreed with this. HIV/AIDS organisations were equally negative about the reporting of PLWHA: respondents found coverage was usually sensational, biased or degrading.

A majority of journalists surveyed said they wanted to receive training in reporting HIV/AIDS, particularly the ethical side of reporting the issue.

Censorship

The survey results found that journalists were ideologically opposed to censorship of any kind, however their reporting on HIV/AIDS was most commonly subject to official censorship, secondly, censorship due to the social stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS, and thirdly, from unofficial government censorship. The least likely forms of censorship were from editors or self-censorship.

HIV/AIDS organisation respondents also believed censorship took place. The most common source of censorship they believed was from the government, official and unofficial, and also censorship due to the social stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS. They believed censorship was least likely from the owners of the media organisations, the editors or through self-censorship.

The law also restricts what may be published: the Philippines AIDS Prevention and Control Law prevents any PLWHA being identified by name, photo or any other means in the media.

Sources

The media monitoring research showed that the sources cited in news stories were both official and unofficial. Access to the latest statistics on HIV/AIDS cases were found online through monthly bulletins issued by the Department of Health. International resources were also found online.

Some stories did not give attribution or cite the studies and sources of statistics and information. A third of the stories were single-sourced stories, mostly announcements from a government official, non-government organisation or a prelate during a press conference. But there were also a number of stories that cited sources and studies on HIV/AIDS.

Journalists surveyed said they firstly used health officials for information, then NGOs and other HIV/AIDS organisations. The three least common sources journalists used were PLWHA, government officials and lastly local citizens.

Journalists generally found the quality of information from sources disappointing. 63% of journalists said information from state bodies and government was limited, and 42% of respondents said information provided by NGOs was limited.

Getting HIV/AIDS in the news

HIV/AIDS organisations use numerous methods to get HIV/AIDS in the news. 50% of HIV/AIDS organisations respondents said that their organisation had a media liaison officer or a public relations position. Half of respondents also said that they sent out press releases and 60% said they had established personal contacts with journalists.

The most common way respondents got the media's attention was through press conferences, interviews, publishing up-dated statistics, studies and analysis, and publishing information on their websites. However, respondents said they had not tried working with journalists as partners in activities and campaigns.

The survey results show their methods are usually unsuccessful, with most respondents saying their stories get published occasionally but only during World AIDS Day.

Awareness and training

For the last 22 years, Filipino journalists have been reporting on HIV/AIDS but studies have shown that their efforts have not been enough to raise awareness and provide useful information to the public. Full-bodied, well-researched stories on HIV/AIDS are rare; instead the reportage has always been seasonal, and centered around World AIDS Day, December 11.

From the panic that met reports of persons who died of AIDS in 1984 and 1985, many journalists have moved on to deepen their understanding of HIV/AIDS and improve their reportage that had been criticized as wanting by advocates and experts.

However it seems they still have a fair way to go: the survey found most journalists (77%) do not receive training on HIV/AIDS reporting from their media organisation nor are they given guidelines on how to report HIV/AIDS. Only 30% of journalists surveyed had received training on reporting HIV/AIDS from either NGOs, government agencies, international organisations and also by using the South African journalists' guideline on reporting HIV/AIDS. 40% of respondents were aware of current information provided by NGOs on HIV/AIDS and how to report it, whilst 44% were not aware.

The survey found that journalists' personal experience and knowledge of HIV/AIDS was also limited. Only 9–14% of journalists felt they were informed about HIV/AIDS, specifically transmissions and treatments, whilst 88% felt they needed to have access to more information about HIV/AIDS, particularly in regards to medical breakthroughs, research, treatments and orphans of HIV/AIDS. A small percentage of journalists (16%) surveyed said they knew someone with HIV/AIDS.

90% of HIV/AIDS organisation staff surveyed believed reporting on HIV/AIDS in the Philippines had improved in the last five years. They believed more journalists were being trained to report on HIV/AIDS. A current initiative to improve reporting of HIV/AIDS in the Philippines is the annual AIDS Media Award by the AIDS Society of the Philippines.

Action/Recommendations

The majority of the journalists surveyed believed they needed more training on reporting HIV/AIDS, specifically reporting of HIV/AIDS ethically. The journalists would like training, handbooks and reporting guidelines. 9% of journalists said they want to take part in a network to improve reporting of HIV/AIDS and they would like to be contacted by email.

HIV/AIDS organisations' staff believed they could improve their communication with journalists by producing more information and education materials, giving training and sharing research and information. They also believed journalists needed to be exposed to HIV/AIDS activities and to talk to PLWHA to improve their reporting. 90% of NGOs surveyed would like to be apart of a network to improve reporting on HIV/AIDS, they would like to remain in contact through meetings and email.

IFJ research findings on reporting HIV/AIDS in six countries in Africa and Asia

The large majority of journalists surveyed believed that if they became more knowledgeable on HIV/AIDS, and how to report it, they could change the media culture on HIV/AIDS. They could come up with better stories and therefore give the issue a more prominent place in the media

South Africa

By Themba Ceda

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) aims to increase the quality and quantity of fair and balanced news reports on HIV/AIDS in six target countries across Asia and Africa (India, Cambodia, the Philippines, South Africa, Zambia and Nigeria). “Strengthening Journalists’ Unions by Improving Reporting on HIV/AIDS in Africa and Asia” is a year and a half project funded by the LO-TCO, the Swedish trade union movement.

This research work was carried out to increase the quality and quantity of fair and balanced news reports on HIV/AIDS in the target countries in Africa and Asia, by building strong organisations of journalists able to represent their members’ interests on HIV/AIDS issues. The assumption here is that it is best to engage journalists on professional issues through strong collective journalists’ organisations.

Six project researchers/in-country co-ordinators were employed in each of the target countries. The coordinator in South Africa conducted a two-week media monitoring “snapshot” on seven media outlets from December 11-24, 2005, and two surveys (one for journalists, one for NGOs) to measure the quality (language, placement, accuracy etc) and quantity of news reports on HIV/AIDS in each of the countries. The major findings of this research are presented here.

Executive summary

Very few stories about HIV/AIDS appeared in the media monitored during the monitoring period. Some of the media outlets did not cover any HIV/AIDS related stories at all.

It is interesting that only a small majority of journalists surveyed (55%) felt that the media in South Africa had taken adequate steps to provide accurate, balanced and fair information. This serves to highlight a gap or an area where the media is lacking. Indeed this is where the media is failing in its role of alleviating the epidemic.

The majority of NGOs surveyed said that the coverage of HIV/AIDS was good. NGO respondents felt that the media gave people with HIV/AIDS a voice and on the whole balanced its identification of people with HIV/AIDS by name only where they had consented.

Neither journalists nor NGOs said that the government had applied pressure on media coverage in terms of censorship and they also portrayed an environment that is very conducive to media production.

Journalists and NGOs differed over the amount of coverage certain topics received, with journalists thinking HIV/AIDS coverage was higher than NGOs. NGOs thought the level of coverage was moderate with regards to PLWHA, HIV/AIDS orphans, transmission of HIV/AIDS, treatments for HIV/AIDS, deaths by HIV/AIDS.

The majority of journalists and NGOs felt that the role of the media was to disseminate vital information about HIV/AIDS, and said language was less likely to be analytical. Instead, the majority of reports used sensation and emotion to convey information about the epidemic. However, language used was not perceived to be inflammatory or derogatory. NGOs agreed that the tone used by the media was relatively neutral and accepting and that the media in South Africa avoids offensive, degrading and biased tones. NGOs also felt that the language used by the media seems to lack analysis but was sensational.

By contrast, most journalists and NGOs thought images used were mostly stereotyped and derogatory pictures.

Controversy around the provision of treatments to people living with HIV/AIDS by the government seemed to dominate the media coverage and this is indeed confirmed by the majority of journalists.

Unlike journalists, NGOs thought that the media had not taken adequate steps to produce accurate and fair reportage and this difference of opinion is interesting. The majority of these

IFJ research findings on reporting HIV/AIDS in six countries in Africa and Asia

organisations thought that the media has perpetuated stereotypes although they also thought that the media's focus on their organisational work is very important. As a result, the majority of these NGOs had employed a media liaison practitioner in their organisations. Surprisingly, they do not involve journalists directly in their work, they said they were generally satisfied with the journalists' interpretation of their work.

It is also interesting to note that the media does publish NGO stories and they perceived media reporting to have improved in the past five years.

According to NGOs, journalists must show willingness to see the work NGOs are doing. NGOs reported they realised the media has the potential to raise awareness and contribute to a decrease in the number of infections.

Few of the media outlets had a code of ethics for journalism let alone a specific manual for HIV/AIDS reportage. Though the majority of journalist respondents had not received any training on HIV/AIDS reporting, they nonetheless thought that they were in a position to alleviate the pandemic, give a voice to people with HIV/AIDS and alleviate stigma for PLWHA.

There was a significant gap between the journalists' assessment of their understanding and the reality of their lack of training. One area they acknowledge they lack information, however, is medical research and breakthroughs. Only 50% said training was essential to improve their understanding and reporting of HIV/AIDS. Instead, journalists think that actively seeking stories and becoming more informed through other means will greatly assist them. On the positive side, almost all the journalists realised that the following would improve their skills:

- Ensuring better quality control of published/broadcast facts about HIV/AIDS
- Giving HIV/AIDS stories more prominent placement in newspaper/broadcast
- Having access to more people affected by HIV/AIDS
- Having access to more NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS
- Identifying different story angles on HIV/AIDS

However, without further training, it is unlikely that journalists can fulfil these roles. The lack of workplace strategies to deal with the epidemic further confirms that although individual journalists may view this epidemic in a serious manner, this has not inspired action at all on the media institutions' part. NGOs also emphasised the critical role that training could play.

It is also critical to note that all NGO respondents say that to change the culture around HIV/AIDS reporting, journalists must become more informed about HIV/AIDS, actively seek stories about HIV/AIDS, overcome stigmas attached to people with HIV/AIDS, disseminate vital information about transmissions of HIV/AIDS and undergo training session in reporting HIV/AIDS.

No journalist or NGO respondents advised they were aware of educational material available for journalists reporting on HIV/AIDS. The majority of journalists could not cite an example of best-practice in journalism when dealing with HIV/AIDS reporting.

The majority of those interviewed, both NGOs and journalists, said they would like to be involved with a network to improve their reporting on the pandemic and e-mail was their preferred form of contact. It would be very easy to set up an e-mail network which would suit the needs of 98% of respondents. Only 2% of journalists chose meetings as the form of contact they would prefer, which could indicate a lack of commitment to formal training and engagement.

Introduction: HIV/AIDS in South Africa

South Africa has a population of approximately 47.5 million, with diverse ethno-linguistic backgrounds and 11 official languages

The HIV/AIDS statistics for South Africa are quite shocking, given the population size. One estimate suggested approximately 6.3 million South Africans were living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2004. Around 50,000 children were in need of ARVs at the beginning of 2006 according

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to one NGO, but only around 10,000 were receiving them. UNAIDS estimates that there were 1.2 million HIV/AIDS orphans in South Africa in 2005 compared with 780,000 in 2003. It is difficult to calculate deaths from HIV/AIDS in South Africa as the Medical Research Council of South Africa says most deaths from HIV/AIDS related illnesses are misclassified due to stigma, which complicates communication of prevention and treatment strategies also.

The most common form of transmission is currently heterosexual sex, although male-to-male transmission has risen in recent years, possibly as homosexuality has become more acceptable but without a concomitant rise in HIV/AIDS prevention education. A major issue in South African HIV/AIDS education is the position of President Mbeki who has consistently supported a minority scientific position in the country that HIV does not cause AIDS. Widespread misinformation and false beliefs about the transmission of HIV/AIDS are also serious issues: in April 2006, a prominent politician, former Deputy President Jacob Zuma, confessed to unprotected sex with an HIV-positive woman saying he believed it was difficult for the disease to be transmitted from women to men and that he had showered afterwards.

The South African media is vast and multi-faceted and caters for divergent markets. A number of television stations broadcast in African languages rather than English or Afrikaans. More significantly it prides itself on media freedom and freedom of speech that is enshrined in the constitution of South Africa.

Methodology

Media Monitoring

Two radio stations were simultaneously monitored by recording news bulletins using a tape recorder. The stations were also phoned to find out whether the next news bulletin would cover HIV/AIDS stories.

Two television stations, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and ETV (an Independent Television station) were monitored. Nightly news on each station was videotaped but the current affairs programmes of both channels had closed for festive seasons and for this reason therefore this research could not cover these programmes.

Three daily newspapers were monitored: *Sowetan*, *The Star*, *Daily Sun* and one magazine called *Drum*. These three newspapers are distributed nationally and they are the most dominant because they are widely read.

Each serves a distinctly different market. *The Star* caters for middle and upper class markets and it is the only daily that caters for different races unlike the other dailies which seem to draw their audience from a specific race. Secondly the *Daily Sun* caters for the lower middle class whereas *Sowetan* caters for middle and lower class markets. On the other hand *Drum* is a magazine distributed once a week and it is especially extremely popular amongst the young and middle aged group.

The Research Results:

Coverage

Very few stories about HIV/AIDS appeared in the media monitored during the monitoring period. Some of the media outlets did not cover any HIV/AIDS related stories at all.

The fact that the two week media monitoring fell within the Christmas festive season became a grave concern for most editors and journalists surveyed, since, they argued, this is the quietest period in the news calendar and most people working for the news departments are on leave and on holiday.

They felt that findings would be distorted because the period chosen would not accurately capture and reflect the dominant trends with respect to news reporting as opposed to other time periods.

Most of the stories covered were one-off articles rather than regular columns, which indicates that there were no concerted sustained efforts aimed at constantly driving specific messages.

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Most of the stories were not prominently placed and as a result could have been easily missed by readers. Only one story was placed on the front page and that dealt with HIV/AIDS orphans.

Both radio stations monitored gave prominence to one high profile story that dealt with doctors and nurses who were sentenced seven years ago for infecting children with HIV/AIDS.

The results of the media monitoring painted a picture of miniscule coverage of HIV/AIDS stories across the country. This finding is confirmed by the majority of journalist respondents who indicated that no stories are filed monthly.

Most of the news covered fell within a general news category with a few health-related stories. There were no stories during the period monitored that fell within the political news category possibly because during this holiday period most political personalities were on recession. Nor were any stories monitored under sport or economics.

The low incidence of stories during the monitoring period is not surprising if reports from journalist respondents are accurate. The vast majority said that they file no HIV/AIDS stories at all per month. Of the small minority that do, 60% said they were run every time, 30% said most of the time and 10% said scarcely at all. Logically, then, it makes sense that respondents estimated their media institutions published or broadcast two to three stories per week (50%) or generally their outlet ran no stories on HIV/AIDS (40%). Despite this, and surprisingly, 60% of journalists felt that the general level of HIV/AIDS coverage in South Africa was at a moderate level and 30% thought it was high.

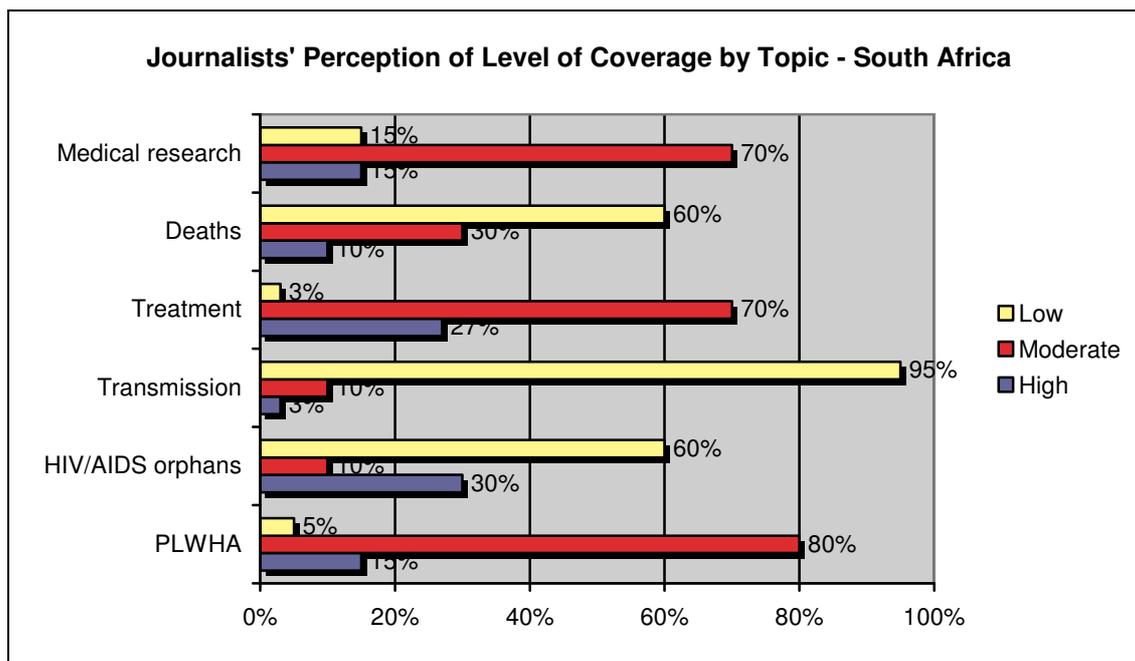
Topics reported

Most of the stories monitored dealt with HIV/AIDS orphans. Other stories covered a diverse range of topics but lacked depth seemed to be too general. Mostly these stories dealt with low profile developments.

Journalists' perceptions did not tally with this monitoring: 85% and 80% of respondents respectively reported that they saw treatments and deaths as more media-friendly topics than PLWHA (60%), HIV/AIDS orphans (60%), HIV transmission (65%) and medical breakthroughs (60%).

90% of NGO respondents felt that the media generally featured useful information on avenues for help in reports on HIV/AIDS. No NGO respondents thought that story frequency or placement was excellent. The majority thought it was at acceptable levels while a small percentage thought it was poor.

There were also significant discords between journalist and NGO perception of coverage. More journalists were highly critical, saying that coverage of certain topics was low, while others thought coverage was high. NGOs on the whole thought coverage was medium across the board with very few dissenters.



Media's role

Journalists felt that the media's primary role in the HIV/AIDS crisis was to reduce and prevent the spread of HIV (90%) and to observe and report developments (10%). By contrast, 98% of NGO respondents felt the media's role was to disseminate vital information to reduce and prevent HIV/AIDS and only 2% said it was to observe developments. None said that the media had no role to play or that they should shield the public from the harsh reality of the crisis. 85% felt they were in a position to alleviate the crisis although 60% said they were not directly affected and none acknowledged having HIV/AIDS themselves. Almost all (99%) said journalists could play a vital role in distributing HIV/AIDS information and alleviate stigma.

Most NGO respondents (95%) said HIV/AIDS had high news value and 5% said it was moderate. It is a concern that 10% of journalist respondents said that the news value of HIV/AIDS was low. 70% of NGO respondents said media coverage in South Africa was good and 80% said it generally gave PLWHAs a voice or an opportunity to speak to the media. 60% said that media attention was very important and 40% said reasonably important to the organisation's work. Many said that media coverage had the potential to raise public awareness of HIV/AIDS but that journalists must be willing to see the work of NGOs in the field, implying that they currently have difficulty in arranging this.

Quality of reporting

There seemed to be no major difference in terms of how different media outlets reported HIV/AIDS, although the print media's coverage was marginally better. The tone of most of the stories monitored ranged from neutral, accepting, and informative to hopeful. However, one story was highlighted that claimed that HIV/AIDS contributes to the occurrence of accidents, arguing that an HIV-positive person who drives for a very long time will most likely become tired which will affect their ability to drive.

The language used mostly was neutral and balanced. However, stories monitored did not deal strictly with people living with HIV/AIDS per se or name them. 94% of NGO respondents thought reportage of the topic had improved in the last five years.

On the whole, NGO respondents thought that stories relating to PLWHA were accepting (95%), that stories about HIV/AIDS orphans were sympathetic (97%) and that other topics were effectively neutral.

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Visuals scored in the monitoring exercise were mostly appropriate though in the researcher's view did not add much to the stories. The researcher felt this could be ascribed to the fact that the stories were not of high prominence.

Journalist respondents had mixed attitudes to the images used. Although 60% said images could be balanced and 50% said they could be positive, 90% said they were stereotypical, 80% said they could be derogatory, 60% said they could be sensational and 5% went as far as to say they were unnecessary. NGOs went even further: 98% said images could be derogatory, 97% said they were stereotypical and 98% said they were unnecessary at times. Despite this overwhelming negativity, 95% also said they had seen positive use of images with HIV/AIDS stories.

Stories monitored confirmed stereotypes carried by the media by associating HIV/AIDS with orphans, ordinary people and the poor. The media still continue to create impressions that the effects of this epidemic are mostly felt by these groups or that it is a disease of the less privileged in society.

45% of journalists surveyed felt that the media had not taken adequate steps to provide accurate, balanced and fair information on HIV/AIDS, while 90% of NGO respondents felt that way.

The vast majority of journalists surveyed felt that the media did not contribute to negative stereotypes of PLWHA in South Africa, while 95% of NGOs felt that they did. This is a fairly serious misunderstanding between the two groups.

NGO respondents said that the main errors made by journalists in reporting on HIV/AIDS was lack of balance (90%), stereotypical reportage (80%) and sensationalism (97%).

Ethical reporting

85% of journalist respondents reported that their media institution had a journalism code of ethics. 85% of respondents said that PLWHA were not identified in articles whether by photograph or name.

There were few stories in the monitoring exercise that quoted statistics and those that did seem to have done so within the context of the stories.

Censorship

NGOs did not feel there was official government censorship but almost all of them felt that self-censorship, social censorship due to stigma and censorship from owners and managers of media institutions were significant issues. They felt that unofficial censorship from the government was common but that censorship from editors was not at all common.

The view expressed by the majority of journalists was that they were satisfied with information available from government and state bodies.

Sources

The type of sources used ranged from doctors, researchers, professionals to the youth. There seemed to have been diversity in the monitoring exercise when it came to sources.

Journalists reported that they were most likely to rely on health officials, PLWHA and NGOs as sources for stories on HIV/AIDS, while government sources, local citizens and other HIV/AIDS organisations scored very low. They rated the quality of information available from state bodies as satisfactory on the whole although 20% said it was limited and only 5% said it was good. By contrast, 86% of respondents thought that information from NGOs was satisfactory, with only 2% each saying information was limited or good. 99% of NGO respondents thought information available from state bodies was satisfactory.

Getting HIV/AIDS in the news

80% of NGOs said they had a media liaison or public relations position in their organisation. 90% said their stories or press releases were published occasionally whereas 10% said they

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never got a run in the media. NGOs used a variety of methods to supply information to journalists, including reports (60%), press releases (70%), leaflets (30%) and seminars (40%). Surprisingly, 98% of NGO respondents thought that the information about HIV/AIDS that they provided to journalists was not easily accessible. Despite this, 99% said they thought it was easy for journalists to understand and interpret the materials.

Awareness and training

Only 5% of journalist respondents said their organisation had guidelines or training available for reporting on HIV/AIDS. Only 6% said they had received any training on reporting HIV/AIDS, predominantly on language to be used when reporting on HIV/AIDS and on media ethics. 98% said their workplace did not engage in any strategies or campaigns to raise staff awareness of the virus. Despite this, the overwhelming majority of journalist respondents reported that they were 'very informed' about HIV/AIDS. The majority (94%) did acknowledge, however, that they would need more information in order to improve their reportage and 95% said that the gaps in their knowledge related to medical breakthroughs and research. 98% said that to improve the role journalists play in reporting the pandemic, training is required, however, 95% said they were unaware of any educational material on the topic designed for journalists.

Those that were aware of educational materials cited information booklets published by the IAJ, materials on how to report on HIV/AIDS by NGOs and through workshops, journalism web sites and a course run by the University of Johannesburg.

The most popular methods of education were direct training (desired by 50% of respondents) and a list of HIV/AIDS organisations and sources (also 50%). 40% said they would appreciate best practical examples of reporting HIV/AIDS while other suggested methods (training manuals, handbooks, leaflets, guidelines or other HIV/AIDS education) were desired by less than 4% of respondents. 99% of NGOs said they were aware of educational material available for journalists reporting on HIV/AIDS but did not give any examples.

Action/Recommendations

Although the South African media appears well equipped to tackle the HIV/AIDS epidemic, capacity and commitment seem to be critical issues. Many media outlets argued that news reporting during the period monitored was slow because it is considered the quietest period in the news calendar.

This argument is insufficient as an excuse for not covering HIV/AIDS issues during the holiday season. The media takes note that people drink a lot during this period, which contributes to reckless driving and road accidents and as a result publish adequate information on the road safety news items in every news bulletin whether it is on radio or television. Holiday drinking has equally been implicated in high-risk sexual behaviours. It would be just as easy to publish HIV/AIDS messages cautioning the public about links between drinking and not practising safe sex.

Impact will only be made on the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa with more specific health messages. The current general news focus on what is happening and what has already happened is insufficient. What is needed are sustained media strategies that demonstrate consistency in dealing with the epidemic.

On a positive note, the language used by the media was reasonably balanced and sensitive. But few journalists seem to specialise in reporting about HIV/AIDS and even fewer have gone through formal education that relates to the epidemic .

As far as actions to influence a change in media culture, 97% of journalists thought becoming more informed about HIV/AIDS through training would help (99% of NGOs agreed), 98% said actively seeking stories about the subject, 98% said overcoming the stigma attached to PLWHA. 98% felt that better quality control was needed for fact-checking with HIV/AIDS stories, 99% felt HIV/AIDS stories needed more prominent placement in the newspaper or broadcast, 94% felt that greater access to NGOs dealing with the illness would help, and 87% thought different story angles would be useful. All NGO respondents agreed with all of these statements

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and added that journalists needed to be balanced ('tell both sides of the story') and should stop using provocative pictures in print and televised stories.

98% of journalist respondents would be willing to be part of a network to improve reporting on the pandemic and 91% of those preferred e-mail as the method of contact. Half of the respondents wanted contact once a week. 99% of NGO respondents also wanted to participate in a network, with 98% preferring e-mail. It was unclear how often would be ideal for NGO respondents.

Zambia

By Amos Chanda

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) aims to increase the quality and quantity of fair and balanced news reports on HIV/AIDS in six target countries across Asia and Africa (India, Cambodia, the Philippines, South Africa, Zambia and Nigeria). “Strengthening Journalists’ Unions by Improving Reporting on HIV/AIDS in Africa and Asia” is a year and a half project funded by the LO-TCO, the Swedish trade union movement.

This research work was carried out to increase the quality and quantity of fair and balanced news reports on HIV/AIDS in the target countries in Africa and Asia, by building strong organisations of journalists able to represent their members’ interests on HIV/AIDS issues. The assumption here is that it is best to engage journalists on professional issues through strong collective journalists’ organisations.

Six project researchers/in-country co-ordinators were employed in each of the target countries. The coordinator in Zambia conducted a two-week media monitoring “snapshot” on ten media outlets from December 11-24, 2005, and two surveys (one for journalists, one for NGOs) to measure the quality (language, placement, accuracy etc) and quantity of news reports on HIV/AIDS in each of the countries. The major findings of this research are presented here.

Executive summary

Zambia’s HIV/AIDS prevalence rates according to government and UN figures stand at 16.5% as of December 2005. Although this has reduced over the last ten years, this is still too high and efforts to scale it down must be scaled up especially in the information and communication fields.

While HIV/AIDS reportage has greatly improved, particularly in quantity, gaps still remain that can best be addressed by more specific training programmes for media personnel. Although the quantity of HIV/AIDS reportage has improved in Zambia and it is less sensational than it once was, the quality has not improved significantly, focussing on donations and events rather than transmission and effects.

There is a need to increase HIV/AIDS reportage on radio and television stations. For radio, it is crucial that it takes a frontline position in the HIV/AIDS information dissemination because it remains the main source of information for the less literate majority, has a wider outreach into the countryside and also broadcasts in local languages.

The emergence of community radio across the country also offers great opportunities to combat HIV/AIDS through effective communication.

At 16.5% HIV/AIDS prevalence rate, this is a major socio-economic problem on Zambia and therefore it is essential that newsrooms set-up specialised HIV/AIDS desks from where media personnel can both learn about the disease and also derive the critical material resources to use in communication.

The surveys identified major problems in reporting HIV/AIDS in the region including AIDS story fatigue, ethical dilemmas, cultural, moral and socio-economic constraints.

The *Times of Zambia* and the *Post* have HIV/AIDS workplace policies on care and treatment. This must be extended to skills training for reporting on HIV/AIDS.

The lack of HIV/AIDS workplace policies reduces concentration on HIV/AIDS reporting, coupled with denial and stigma in the media, makes journalists detached from the AIDS story at a personal level.

Despite the positive developments recorded in the quality and quantity of HIV/AIDS reporting there is need for fine-tuning. The visibility of people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHAs) and expert opinion is still far lower than the political voices that dominate news. There is need for investigative and issue-based reporting on HIV/AIDS.

What is required in this regard is training and retraining of journalists to build their individual and institutional capacity to empower them to cover HIV/AIDS effectively. This training will invariably turn out to be a confidence-building mechanism that will enable journalists to interrogate issues, sources of news and trends from an informed point of view.

HIV/AIDS is not — as journalists and even some editors in this survey suggested — a beaten story. It is an active story that can find practical expression across all branches of journalism. HIV/AIDS is still as much a business story as it is a political and health story; it is a major socio-economic story and an ethical question just as much as it is a moral and cultural question. Together with poverty, it forms a lethal combination of twin emergencies especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Effective communication will remain one of the greatest arsenals to deconstruct certain stereotypes and misconceptions that help to spread the pandemic, hamper efforts at treatment and stigmatise those afflicted.

Introduction: HIV/AIDS in Zambia

Zambia's HIV/AIDS prevalence rates according to government and UN figures stand at 16.5% as of December 2005, a remarkable reduction from the high 20s in the past decade. This reduction may be due to government campaigns to reduce transmission and an ambitious antiretroviral (ARV) treatment program.

Despite this, approximately 98,000 people died of AIDS-related illnesses in Zambia in 2005. The current estimates for HIV/AIDS orphans stands at 710,000. As a result of this and other diseases, life expectancy at birth has fallen to below 40 years of age.

UNAIDS/WHO estimates at the end of 2005 suggest that 17% of 15–49 year olds are living with HIV/AIDS and that of these million individuals, 57% are female. Young women and girls are at greatest risk of transmission — girls aged 15–19 are around six times more likely to be infected than boys the same age. While these figures remain high, indications are that the figure has significantly reduced since its peak in the early 90s, particularly among educated women. Around two-thirds of the country's sex workers are PLWHA, although this population is relatively small as a percentage of the PLWHA population as a whole.

Perhaps surprisingly, HIV/AIDS in Zambia is equally prevalent among wealthier citizens as among poorer people although there is a slightly higher concentration in urban areas.

Most new transmissions are from unprotected heterosexual sex with the next most frequent category being mother-to-child transmission. Approximately 30,000 infants contract HIV/AIDS during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding each year in Zambia. The majority of these will die before they turn five.

Homosexuality is illegal in Zambia and figures on male-to-male transmission are very hard to come by. There is a fair amount of stigma still attached to HIV/AIDS, which is presumed to be a result of promiscuity.

Methodology

The country's mass media market is dominated by three daily newspapers — two state and one private — with a combined circulation not exceeding 60,000 copies. The electronic media is much more diverse with state radio and television having the widest reach. There has been a phenomenal growth in radio since the country returned to democratic governance in 1991 after 27 years of a single party dictatorship under the United National Independence Party (UNIP). From only one radio station — the state Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) — in 1996, there are now more than 30 community and commercial radio stations countrywide, one private TV station, MUVI TV, and a satellite pay TV station, Multi-Choice. More than 20 community radio stations are doing test transmissions and are most likely going to be granted operating licences.

The major newspapers are: the *Times of Zambia*, *Zambia Daily Mail* (state-owned dailies), *The Post* (leading private daily), *The Monitor & Digest*, *The Guardian Weekly*, and *The Weekly*

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Angel (weeklies). There are others but their circulation is erratic because of financial viability problems.

The Zambian media is fairly robust and free but technically still faces legal constraints because of the retention of colonial media legislation. The constitution guarantees freedom of the press under the broader context that protects freedom of expression for all citizens. Despite the legal threats, the Zambian media enjoys abundant freedom because political authorities rarely invoke the rather draconian legislation to muzzle the media. The media is therefore vibrant and plays a major role in public policy discourse on key issues including the debate around the complexities of HIV/AIDS.

Media monitoring

The study, which occurred from December 11-24, 2005, involved a selection of ten media outlets, carefully balanced between electronic and print media and conscious that this selection would be widely representative of the general picture of the media landscape in Zambia.

The three mainstream print media chosen were:

- the public print media: the *Zambia Daily Mail (ZDM)* and *Times of Zambia (TOZ)*;
- the privately owned media: *The Post*, *The Guardian Weekly*, *The Monitor & Digest*, and *The Weekly Angel*.
- Commercial and community media: *Radio Phoenix* was fairly representative of the commercial and community media that have rapidly developed in recent years,
- Public service: the *Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC)* was also assessed for radio and television reportage of HIV/AIDS.

Apart from the editorial merit of the news reports on HIV/AIDS, the researcher inquired into the motivation that prompted each particular news idea(s) leading to a report and the context in which it was put. Special attention was paid to the prominence of the story in terms of space and airtime for print and electronic broadcast respectively.

Equally, particular attention was paid to the frequency of HIV/AIDS stories in each media outlet monitored; the tone, language used and the general level of journalistic understanding of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, to establish the extent of the Zambian media's impact on this global emergency. Comparisons were also made between print/television/radio reportage of HIV/AIDS stories. This is particularly illustrated in the graphs below.

Surveys

A total of 20 questionnaires were distributed to journalists in print and electronic media, in full employment and freelance. Four questionnaires were not returned and three were not fully answered.

Even those that successfully returned the questionnaires raised issues with the length of the document, which they said made it difficult to concentrate fully on each of the questions posed.

A total of 13 HIV/AIDS organisations were selected to be respondents. The choice was based on closeness of such organisations to the media. The chosen ones were in fact media/information-based NGOs but also dealing in a wide range of HIV/AIDS work.

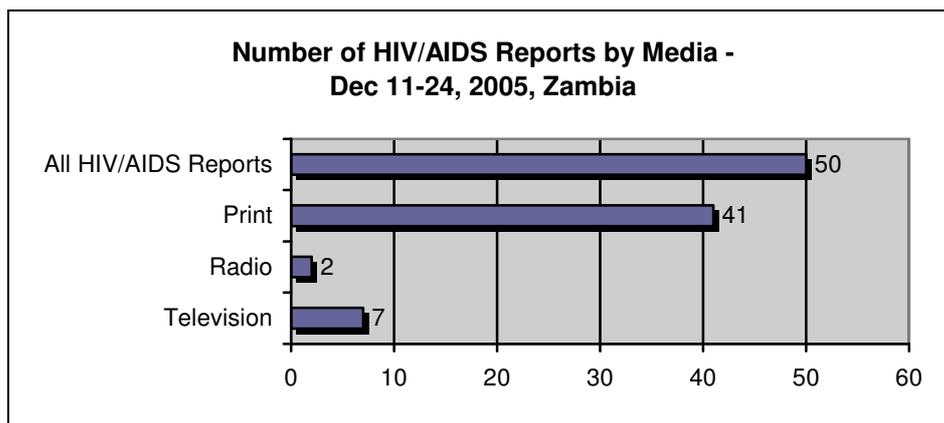
Like the survey for journalists, NGOs respondents cited the lengthy questionnaires as part of the drawback in their quest to answer effectively and return the documents.

The Research Results:

Coverage

Between December 11-24, 2005, there were a total of 50 stories, the majority of them prominently placed and with a good tone.

The frequency and prominence of reports was high, the context was mainly in feature form, and the tone was quite informative.



Print

Print coverage far outweighed radio and television coverage during the period examined. The *Post* newspaper had the highest number of stories, 15 in the 10 days the paper carried HIV/AIDS stories. Of the 14 days under consideration, four editions of the paper did not carry any story on HIV/AIDS.

Eight stories were in-depth news features and the remaining seven were ordinary news stories. All but one were one-off articles. Manasseh Phiri, a medical doctor and leading anti-AIDS campaigner, wrote an analytical article on voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) under his regular column, "Reflecting on HIV/AIDS".

The paper also had a fairly high number of issue-based stories at 46.7 percent. Issue-based reports in other media were below 40 percent.

The majority of the 15 articles in the *Post* were below average in prominence but the in-depth ones were very prominent.

Among the in-depth analysis articles, two were in the opinion columns, one an opinionated write-up by an outsider and the other, a strong editorial comment calling for more attention to the impact of HIV/AIDS on children who the paper argued "continue to face a brutal existence". The others were in the main news segment of the paper.

The *Zambia Daily Mail* carried a total of 13 stories in the period under review. There were no stories on six days of the 14 days of the survey. 61.5% of its articles were event-driven.

Eleven of the stories published were one-off articles, while two were follow-ups. The majority of the stories were prominently placed with eight in the regular news area, four in-depth news in the features area, and one in the foreign news category.

Although it is a national daily, in proportional terms, the *Times of Zambia* had the second fewest number of stories published, five in the 14 day period of the research after Radio Phoenix. There were nine days when the paper did not carry any story on HIV/AIDS. A large proportion, 65.5%, of the *Times'* articles were event driven.

All the five stories were one-off; three were in-depth news and two were under local news. Four of the five stories were very prominent (two were half page stories and another two a quarter page each). The others were small and difficult to see.

The Guardian Weekly is published every Saturday and so the evidence presented here contains a representative percentage of the 14 days period when the research was done.

The paper had three stories in one edition, all of them well written, all of them issue-based. One was a regular general column that normally discusses politics, media, social issues, among others, but this time was dedicated to a hotly debated question of voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) for HIV/AIDS. The other was an in-depth news article and the third was a news

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story under local news. The stories were also fairly prominent with at least quarter page space for each one of them.

The *Monitor & Digest*, a bi-weekly that circulates mainly in three of Zambia's nine provinces, had five stories in the three editions captured in the survey. Three were features/news-in-depth, one a weekly column on HIV/AIDS (faith-based angle), and the fifth was a business story on HIV/AIDS.

The weekly column discussed abstinence from a conservative Christian religious angle presented by a leading anti-AIDS campaigner, the reverend Joshua Banda, of a popular evangelical movement.

The feature articles were full-page publications while the column was half page in prominence. But the business story was a small piece in a position not easily seen.

Of the articles in the *Monitor*, 62.2% were event driven.

Broadcast

Radio Phoenix broadcasts both as a commercial and community radio station across four of Zambia's nine provinces. In the survey period, two main news bulletins were analysed and only two bulletins were on HIV/AIDS. Both stories were event-driven.

The stories were prominently placed, one a minute and half with a voice insert and another a minute broadcast without a voice-cast.

In proportional terms therefore, Radio Phoenix had the least number of stories of the media assessed.

During the monitoring period, Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) had a total of seven stories, all of them fairly prominent but all event driven, apart from a documentary that advocated for increased access to anti-AIDS drugs. The national public broadcaster had 85.7% of its stories driven by events and the remainder were issue-based.

It is not too far fetched to suggest that the prominence of the stories was motivated by high positioned officials who gave public statements rather than the issues raised.

For four days of the days under examination, the public broadcaster did not carry any story on HIV/AIDS. This could mean there were no public statements from the government or the NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS.

Of the seven stories, two were lengthy reports on a multi-million dollar HIV/AIDS financing NGO (the Zambia National AIDS Network or ZNAN) that gives grants to NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS.

One story was a three-minute headline news item with visuals showing the executive director of ZNAN presenting cash donations and equipment to several NGOs that qualified for the grants under the Global Fund against HIV/AIDS, T.B and Malaria while the other, on a different day, was a two-minute prominent story, also on the same ZNAN announcing a grand donation to various NGOs.

On another day, two prominent stories accounting for a total of five minutes with a picture of Rotary Club of Lusaka officials presenting gifts to people with HIV/AIDS at a hospice for the terminally ill were aired. Both were driven by events: a Rotary Club donation to a hospice caring for people living with HIV/AIDS in Chilanga, and a sports function using community football to spread messages on safe sex and other prevention methods in Matero township.

A one-and-a-half-minute story from an interview with a visiting Catholic missionary from Britain aired prominently with visuals. This was also event driven just like the two others, one involving a government minister officiating at a graduation ceremony and the Lions Club donating to a hospice. Only one current affairs segment produced a well-researched story on the need to

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extend the provision of antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) to the urban and rural poor worst hit by the epidemic.

HIV/AIDS stories accounted for only 20.5 minutes of the 700 news minutes broadcast on television and radio combined.

For ZNBC, almost all major HIV/AIDS stories that were broadcast on television were also repeated on its two radio channels and on the local channel that broadcasts in seven languages.

Perception of coverage

On average, respondents' views tally with the findings reached in the Media Monitoring sections of this report that considerable improvement has been recorded both in quality and quantity of reporting on HIV/AIDS.

Journalists were split on whether HIV/AIDS stories were given a high placement (50%) or high prominence (40%) but thought they appeared quite frequently (55%). Sixty percent said they filed between one and five stories per week and a further 35% said they filed between six and ten stories per week. Five percent said stories were rarely used, while the majority of respondents (65%) said that their media outlet published six or more HIV/AIDS stories per week while a further 20% said they published stories on HIV/AIDS four to five times per week. Thirty percent said their stories were used every time they filed, while 60% said their stories were used most times.

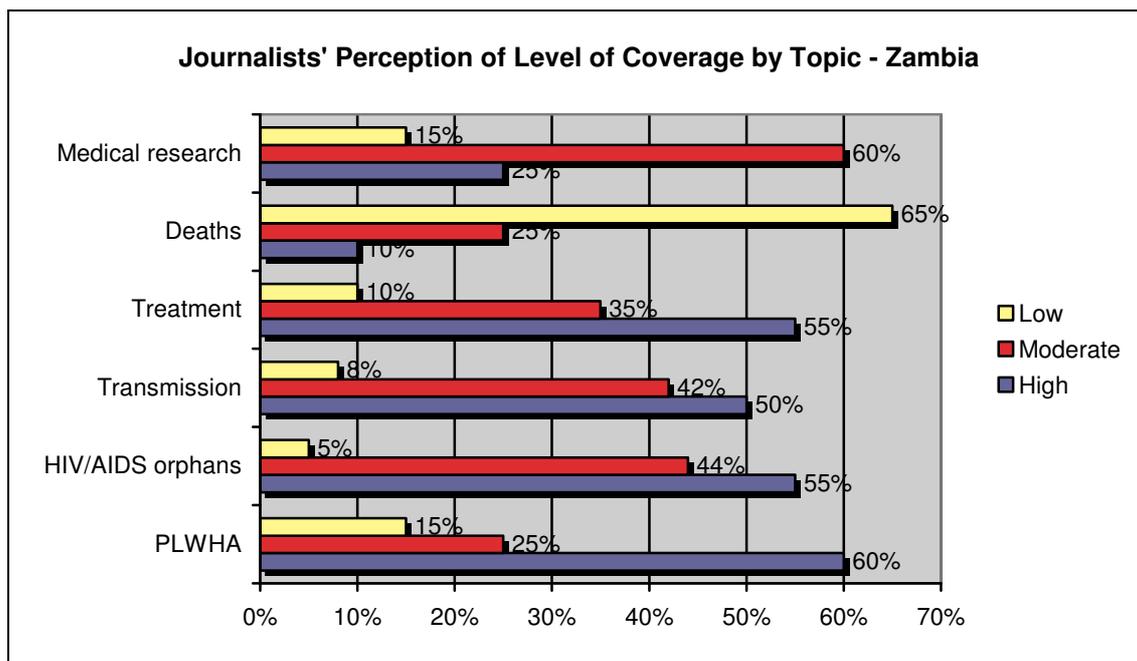
NGO respondents disagreed, with only 30% saying story placement was high, 25% saying story prominence was high and only 30% saying stories appeared frequently.

Topics reported

The media monitoring exercise indicated that HIV/AIDS reporting in the Zambian media is largely event-driven rather than research-oriented and issue-based. The majority of news reports on HIV/AIDS were prompted by events such as ceremonies, donations, and statements by government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) officials, among others. Of the 50 stories analysed, 28 (56%) of them were event-driven, and the remainder issue-based.

The articles in the *Post* covered a wide range of themes but the majority of them were on prevention, and orphans due to AIDS deaths (three stories). Poverty, voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), and treatment each had one story.

Feature articles showed considerable effort and indicated media had engaged in detailed research to produce such articles. The massive amount of information available, mostly generated by NGOs, the United Nations and the government greatly helped with this, coupled with various training programmes that many journalists have attended.



Media’s role

The survey established that the media’s role in generating and dissemination of information and the quality has increased over the years. Although several other means of HIV/AIDS dissemination exist, campaigners report the media is seen as the most suitable method of getting information out about HIV/AIDS. Governmental bodies and NGOs involved in HIV/AIDS programmes have increasingly relied on the media as a tool for dissemination of HIV/AIDS information.

37% of the journalists surveyed in Zambia thought that HIV/AIDS had extremely high news value and another 50% thought it had high news value.

80% of journalists thought that the role of the media was to reduce and prevent HIV/AIDS by disseminating vital information while 20% thought it was to observe and report developments. None thought it was to shield the public from the harsh reality of the crisis. NGOs agreed although they thought both roles were equally important. Journalists on the whole perceived themselves as being in a position to help alleviate the pandemic (85% agreed with this) although they did not see themselves as directly affected (70% of journalists surveyed answered this way). The key ways they thought journalists could help was to distribute information (96%), give a voice to PLWHA (95%) and alleviate stigma associated with the disease (98%).

All NGO respondents said that media focus on HIV/AIDS was very important to their organisation’s work and that media coverage could raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and contribute to a decrease in new infections. 80% said that media in Zambia generally gave people living with HIV/AIDS an opportunity to speak to the media, however 50% said that the media did not give PLWHA useful information about avenues for help or organisations that were available to assist them.

Quality of reporting

80% of NGO respondents said that reporting on HIV/AIDS had improved in the past five years. Out of 50 stories assessed in the media monitoring exercise, only five contained language such as ‘dreaded’ or ‘killer’ or referred to infidelity and forced testing that could promote stigma and discrimination.

Whilst language use was generally good, the refining of information from medical and scientific terminology into simple language that could reach out to the ordinary people was generally problematic among journalists.

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The reporting on HIV/AIDS also indicates a rapid move from the previous poor understanding of the issues around the pandemic to a more informed scenario, which demonstrates reasonable understanding of the socio-economic, legal, political, health, and ethical matters.

Such language as “killer disease” or “victim” has drastically reduced. In all the stories, only two used language that could stigmatise those infected. The media’s interaction with different players in the field, especially people living with HIV and AIDS, has greatly increased journalists’ inclination to the human aspect of the pandemic.

The tone of shame, blame and widespread denial in reports on HIV/AIDS in the Zambian media is steadily reducing.

It is interesting to note, as reported in the PANOS Southern Africa report, *Lessons for today and tomorrow: An analysis of HIV/AIDS Reporting in Southern Africa* (PANOS, 2004), that in 1984 — a year before the first case of AIDS was reported in Zambia — the pandemic was seen as a disease of infidelity that belonged to foreigners.

The report cites a Zambian Health Minister who told Zambian journalists to stop reporting on AIDS because it was a disease for “foreigners and as long as Zambians did not have sex with foreigners, they would be safe”. This report was carried in the *Times of Zambia* newspaper edition of January 15, 1984.

It was common in the Zambian media, even as recent as the first half of the 1990s to use crude language and pictures as shock treatment to scare people away from unsafe sex that could give them HIV/AIDS. Images of a well-fed person would occasionally be placed against a sickly severely thin person representing one with HIV/AIDS, with a caption “before and after”, especially on poster campaigns.

Such images and language are absent from media reports today. Instead frightening images which engendered fear, denial, and therefore, induced reluctance for VCT, have been replaced by positive, forward-looking messages and pictures that show PLWHAs as healthy people like any other persons, such as those on diabetes or blood pressure treatment.

Furthermore the PANOS report measured an increase in HIV/AIDS reporting as follows: that in 1985, the *Times of Zambia* had 11 stories on HIV/AIDS, 30 in 1992, 75 in 2000 and 124 in 2003. The *Zambia Daily Mail* had 28 stories in 1989, 43 in 1995 and 71 in 2003. *The Post*, as this survey also independently established, was leading with 75 stories in 2002, and 170 in 2003, up from only two in 1993.

But generally, the quantity of HIV/AIDS reportage has not corresponded with quality because as earlier alluded to, the stories are largely motivated by official government and NGO statements, statistics, workshops, donations and other such ceremonies.

Those reports that were not event-driven were of higher quality because they had room for critical analysis rather than those that were written in hard news formats under the local news pages.

Journalists on the whole thought that there was an accepting tone for stories about PLWHA (85%) and treatments (85%). Stories about HIV/AIDS orphans (100%) and deaths by HIV/AIDS (90%) were seen as having a sympathetic tone. 50% thought that stories about transmission were biased and 80% thought that stories about medical breakthroughs and research were neutral. By contrast, 60% of NGOs thought stories about HIV/AIDS orphans were sensational.

The majority of NGO respondents to the survey (80%) said media made efforts to be accurate, balanced and fair, yet 50% also said that the media contributed to negative stereotypes of PLWHA. In contrast, only 15% of journalists thought that the media contributed to negative stereotypes. Surprisingly, only 65% of journalists thought that media in general had taken adequate steps to ensure reports were accurate, balanced and fair. According to NGOs, the main errors journalists made when reporting on HIV/AIDS was lack of balance (60%), stereotypes (30%), publishing identities of people with HIV/AIDS (11%), sensationalism (25%)

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and down-playing the crisis (8%). 78% of NGOs said that the media in Zambia generally identified PLWHA by name or using a photograph.

Ethical reporting

The majority of the stories that appeared were informative, with seven of the 50 stories neutral, five persuasive, four sympathetic, two negative and one each sensational or celebratory.

However, two stories in the *Zambia Mail* had language that stigmatised by imputing infidelity for some people infected with HIV/AIDS. One negative story, in the *Post*, portrayed a leading politician as a victim who “must accept he is sick”. Only one story contained stereotypes, which dismissed the use of condoms as an act of immorality.

Only six stories in the *Post* had visuals; three were pictures of government officials at ceremonies and three were action pictures: one shows a Catholic sister with children at a foster home, the other shows youths and the head of the United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA) and another is a head-shoulder picture of Dr Manasseh Phiri in his weekly column.

Censorship

Journalists responding to the survey mostly cited censorship as coming from self-censorship (35%) and social censorship around stigma and taboo (25%). Censorship from owners and managers was cited by 18%, while 10% mentioned censorship from editors, and government (4% official, 8% unofficial). NGO respondents were more likely to perceive censorship as governmental, with 10% citing official interference and 6% unofficial censorship. They also thought owners, managers and editors were more likely to censor (70%) with self-censorship cited at 40% and social censorship at 25%.

Sources

On the whole, sourcing for stories was generally good. Reports covered a range of good authorities: expert reports, United Nations (UN) special reports and publications, government officials, the church, and individuals with reasonable authority on the subject. The vast majority of the stories were accurate and ethical.

As an interesting contrast, journalists' who completed the survey said that PLWHA were their most common sources followed by HIV/AIDS organisations and NGOs. Even local citizens scored higher as a preferred source for a story than health officials or government officials. Nonetheless, 55% of journalists rated the information available from state bodies and government as very good or excellent. They also rated the information available from NGOs as very good or excellent and less than 5% said information from either source was limited or biased. While NGOs also thought the information from government was, on the whole, satisfactory, good or very good, a significant proportion thought it was limited (30%) or biased (12%).

Getting HIV/AIDS in the news

This journalistic perception that sources for stories do not come from government or organisations was not borne out by the media monitoring exercise, which showed a large number of stories covered government or NGO events.

That is less surprising with 100% of NGOs reporting they have a media liaison or public relations officer in the organisation and that 60% said their stories are published occasionally and 40% regularly. NGOs made their information available to journalists in a variety of ways, including leaflets (30%), seminars (70%), reports (60%), press releases (40%) and a web site (30%). 98% said they thought their information was easily accessible to journalists and 99% said they thought it was easy to understand and interpret. 97% said they directly involve journalists' unions in campaigns on HIV/AIDS.

Asked what they could do to improve communication between journalists and NGOs on this issue, all respondents said training and access to new materials were the key.

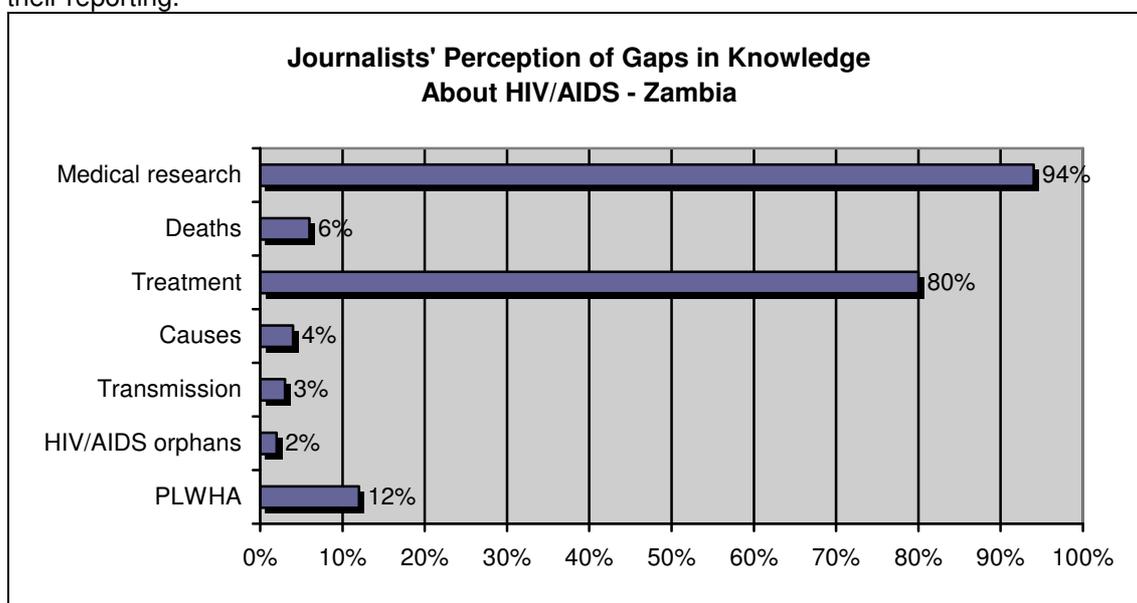
Awareness and training

Throughout both surveys, it became clear that journalists still need more training and retraining in HIV/AIDS reporting given that the pandemic is always presenting new challenges in disease progression, treatment and financing among others.

It is interesting to note that none of the respondents said they themselves had HIV/AIDS. It is possible that none of those who received and returned the questionnaires had HIV/AIDS but in a country where the prevalence rate is as high as 16.5%, there are possibilities that stigma was high among journalists themselves. Perhaps that is why up to this day no single Zambian journalist has publicly tested and declared their status. Only workers at the *Post Newspapers* undertook a communal VCT which showed that out of the 150 workers tested, only 16 were positive. Only one individually obtained the results and he was HIV negative.

90% of journalists reported that their media outlet had a code of ethics but only 20% had any sort of guidelines or training available for reporting on HIV/AIDS. Nonetheless, 65% of journalists reported that they had had some form of HIV/AIDS training and 96% said that their workplace had engaged in strategies to raise staff awareness of HIV/AIDS.

Journalists felt they were very or quite informed about HIV/AIDS, particularly its transmission and treatments, although 90% said they needed access to more information in order to improve their reporting.



Journalists cited a number of examples of quality information on the topic, all from Panos, including *HIV/AIDS Reporting in Zambia: Lessons for Today and Tomorrow*, Panos Institute Southern Africa, 2003; *Reporting AIDS: An Analysis of Media Environments in Southern Africa*, Panos Institute London, 2005 and *Missing The Message: 20 Years of Communicating the HIV/AIDS Pandemic*, Panos London, 2003, while best-practice journalism was harder to find with only 16% able to cite an example, mostly mentioning workplace policies and reporting guidelines that promote compassion rather than blame in reporting on HIV/AIDS.

Action/Recommendations

One result of the survey was that training was overwhelming supported: 86% of journalists said training was critically important; 100% of NGO respondents agreed. 93% of journalists thought a change in media culture could be achieved by journalists actively seeking stories about HIV/AIDS, 90% by undergoing training sessions, and 81% by becoming more informed in general about the disease. By contrast, 100% of NGO respondents said journalists needed to become more informed, actively seek more stories, and disseminate vital information about HIV/AIDS.

For the NGOs, 98% said giving HIV/AIDS stories more prominent placement was most important for improving reporting; 92% said having access to more people affected by HIV/AIDS

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or better quality control of published/broadcast facts. 94% of NGO respondents said journalists needed to overcome stigma to improve reportage.

98% of journalists would be willing to be part of a network to improve reporting on the pandemic and 92% of those would prefer e-mail to stay in touch. All NGO respondents agreed and were happy with e-mail, newsletters or meetings to stay in touch. 98% said they would like to have that networking happen once a week.

The least popular solutions for improving reporting of HIV/AIDS were leaflets and a list of sources for use. A significant proportion of journalists (66%) also said a handbook for HIV/AIDS reporting would improve the quality of reportage.

Appendix 1: SURVEY FOR JOURNALISTS: REPORTING ON HIV/AIDS

Please tick:

I am:

A journalist ()

An editor ()

Sub-editor ()

Cartoonist ()

Artist ()

Photographer ()

Other (please specify): _____

I work in:

Print ()

Online ()

Radio ()

Television ()

Wire services ()

Agencies ()

Other (please specify): _____

I am

Male ()

Female ()

My employer is _____

I am based in a:

Metropolitan area ()

Regional area ()

Suburban area ()

Rural area ()

Section 1: Journalists' experience with reporting HIV/AIDS

1. How many HIV/AIDS stories do you file every month? (please tick one)

None ()

1-5 ()

6-10 ()

More than 10 ()

2. Who are the sources you use when reporting on HIV/AIDS? (Please rank in order from 1 –6, 1 being the most common source and 6 being the least common source)

Health officials ()

- Government officials ()
- People affected by HIV/AIDS ()
- Local citizens ()
- Non-Government Organisations ()
- Other HIV/AIDS organisations ()
- Other: _____

3. If you do file stories on HIV/AIDS, how often are they run? (please tick one)

- Every time ()
- Most times ()
- Rarely ()
- Never ()

4. Censorship can often affect accurate and impartial reporting on HIV/AIDS. In your opinion do any of the following forms of censorship affect your reporting? (Please rank from 1-6, 1 being the most common form of censorship and 6 being the least common form of censorship).

- Government (official) ()
- Government (unofficial) ()
- Social (such as stigma around sex work, sexuality, injecting drug use etc) ()
- Self-censorship ()
- Owners/management ()
- Editors ()
- Other: _____

5. In your opinion, what is the quality of HIV/AIDS information available from state bodies and government? (please tick one)

- Limited ()
- Biased ()
- Satisfactory ()
- Good ()
- Very good ()
- Excellent ()

6. In your opinion, what is the quality of HIV/AIDS information (including accurate figures or rates of HIV infection) available from Non-Government Organisations dealing with HIV/AIDS? (please tick one)

- Limited ()
- Biased ()
- Satisfactory ()
- Good ()
- Very good ()
- Excellent ()

Section 2: the media's role in the HIV/AIDS crisis

**7. In your opinion, what news value does HIV/AIDS have in your country?
(please tick one)**

- Extremely high news value ()
- High news value ()
- Moderately news value ()
- Low news value ()
- Very low news value ()

8. In your opinion, what is the media's role in the HIV/AIDS crisis? (please tick one)

- Reducing and preventing HIV/AIDS by disseminating vital information ()
- Observing and reporting the developments ()
- The media doesn't have a role to play ()
- Shielding the public from the harsh reality of the crisis ()

9. In your opinion, has the media in your country taken adequate steps to provide accurate, balanced and fair information on HIV/AIDS? (please tick one)

- Yes ()
- No ()
- I don't know ()

10. Do you think the media contributes to negative stereotypes of people with HIV/AIDS? (please tick one)

- Yes ()
- No ()

Section 3: the media's approach to HIV/AIDS reporting

11. How many HIV/AIDS stories does your media institution publish/broadcast in a week? (please tick one)

- None ()
- 1 ()
- 2-3 ()
- 4-5 ()
- 6 or more ()

12. What is the general level of coverage of HIV/AIDS in the media in your country? (please circle)

- Story placement high medium low

Story prominence	high	medium	low
Frequency	high	medium	low

13. How do you rank the general level of media coverage of the following stories? (please circle)

People living with HIV/AIDS	high	moderate	low
HIV/AIDS orphans	high	moderate	low
Transmission of HIV/AIDS	high	moderate	low
Treatments for HIV/AIDS	high	moderate	low
Deaths by HIV/AIDS	high	moderate	low
Medial breakthroughs/research	high	moderate	low

14. What is the general tone of media coverage of HIV/AIDS in relation to the following issues: (please mark according to the following scale: N=neutral, B=biased, S=sensational, O=offensive, D=degrading, A=accepting, S=sympathetic).

People living with HIV/AIDS	()
HIV/AIDS orphans	()
Transmission of HIV/AIDS	()
Treatments for HIV/AIDS	()
Deaths by HIV/AIDS	()
Medial breakthroughs/research	()

15. How would you classify the language used in stories about HIV/AIDS? (please circle)

Analytical	yes	no
Balanced	yes	no
Emotional	yes	no
Sensational	yes	no
Inflammatory	yes	no
Sympathetic	yes	no
Derogative	yes	no
Hopeful	yes	no
Stereotypical	yes	no
Other:	_____	

16. How would you classify the images used in HIV/AIDS stories? (please circle)

Balanced	yes	no
Positive	yes	no
Stereotyped	yes	no
Derogatory	yes	no
Unnecessary	yes	no
Sensationalist	yes	no
Appropriate	yes	no

Other: _____

**17. What element of HIV/AIDS is the most likely to get media coverage?
(please rank from 1 to 7, with 1 being the most media-friendly element and
7 being the least media-friendly element).**

People living with HIV/AIDS	()
HIV/AIDS orphans	()
Transmission of HIV/AIDS	()
Treatments for HIV/AIDS	()
Deaths by HIV/AIDS	()
Medial breakthroughs/research	()

Other: _____

Section 4: HIV/AIDS and you

18. Does your media institution have a Journalism Code of Ethics?

Yes ()
No ()

If 'yes', do you have a copy of it?

Yes ()
No ()

**19. Does your media institution have any guidelines or trainings available on
reporting HIV/AIDS? (please tick one)**

Yes ()
No ()

If 'yes', have you participated in them?

Yes ()
No ()

20. Have you received any training on reporting HIV/AIDS? (please tick one)

Yes ()
No ()

If 'yes', please explain:

21. How do you place yourself as a journalist in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic? (please circle)

I am in a position to help alleviate the pandemic	yes	no
I am not directly affected by the pandemic	yes	no
I can play a vital role in HIV/AIDS information distribution		yes no
I can give a voice to people with HIV/AIDS	yes	no
I can alleviate stigmas attached to people with HIV/AIDS	yes	no
I know people living with HIV/AIDS		yes no
I have HIV/AIDS myself	yes	no

22. Does your workplace engage in any strategies/campaigns to raise staff awareness of HIV/AIDS and prevent staff members being affected? (please tick one)

- Yes ()
No ()

If 'yes', please explain:

23. How developed is your understanding HIV/AIDS, in particular its transmission and treatments? (please tick one)

- Very informed ()
Quite informed ()
Slightly informed ()
Not informed at all ()

24. Do you feel you need access to more information about HIV/AIDS in order to be able to improve and increase your reporting of the issue? (please tick one)

- Yes ()
No ()

25. Where do you feel you have gaps in your knowledge of HIV/AIDS? (please tick)

- People living with HIV/AIDS ()
HIV/AIDS orphans ()
Transmission of HIV/AIDS ()
Causes of HIV/AIDS ()

Treatments for HIV/AIDS ()
Deaths by HIV/AIDS ()
Medical breakthroughs/research ()
Other: _____

Section 5: Transforming the media's role

26. In your opinion, what needs to be done to improve the role journalists play in reporting HIV/AIDS?

27. Are you aware of any educational material available for journalists reporting on HIV/AIDS? (please tick)

Yes ()
No ()

If 'yes', please give examples:

28. Would any of the items below improve your understanding and reporting of HIV/AIDS? (please rank in order from 1-8, with 1 being the item that would be the most helpful, and 8 being the item that would be least helpful).

Training ()
Training manuals ()
Handbook for reporting HIV/AIDS ()
Leaflets on HIV/AIDS reporting ()
Education on HIV/AIDS ()
Reporting HIV/AIDS guidelines ()
Best practical examples of reporting HIV/AIDS ()
List of HIV/AIDS contacts/organisations and sources ()

29. How do you think journalists could influence a change in media culture around the HIV/AIDS issue? (please rank in order from 1-5, with 1 being the most likely influence and 5 being the least likely influence).

By becoming more informed about HIV/AIDS ()
By actively seeking stories about HIV/AIDS ()

- By overcoming stigmas attached to people with HIV/AIDS ()
- By disseminating vital information about transmissions of HIV/AIDS ()
- By undergoing training session in reporting HIV/AIDS ()

30. In your opinion, which of the following changes are most important for improving HIV/AIDS reporting? (please rank from 1-5, with 1 being the most important change and 5 being the least important change).

- Ensuring better quality control of published/broadcast facts about HIV/AIDS ()
- Giving HIV/AIDS stories more prominent placement in newspaper/broadcast ()
- Having access to more people affected by HIV/AIDS ()
- Having access to more NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS ()
- Identifying different story angles on HIV/AIDS ()

31. Can you cite some examples of best-practice journalism on HIV/AIDS?

32. Would you be willing to be part of a network to improve reporting on the HIV/AIDS pandemic?

- () Yes
- () No

If 'yes', how would you like to maintain contact with such a network:

- () Emails
- () Newsletters
- () Meetings
- () Phone calls
- () Text messages

If 'yes', how often would you like to have contact with the network?

- () Once a week
- () Once a fortnight
- () Once a month
- () Once every three months
- () Once every six months

33. Do you have any final comments or suggestions about reporting on HIV/AIDS?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix 2: SURVEY FOR HIV/AIDS ORGANISATIONS

I am responding on behalf of:

- () An non-government-organisation working within the HIV/AIDS field
- () A non-government organisation not working within the HIV/AIDS
- () A government organisation
- () Another organisation (please specify organisation's field_____)

Name of organisation: _____

Based in _____(country)

Section 1: Media coverage of HIV/AIDS

1. How do you rate media coverage of HIV/AIDS in your country?

- () Poor
- () Satisfactory
- () Good
- () Very good
- () Excellent

2. Does the media in your country generally give people with HIV/AIDS a voice or an opportunity to speak to the media?

- () Yes
- () No

If yes how:

3. Does the media in your country generally identify people living with HIV/AIDS by name, photograph or other means?

- () Yes
- () No

4. Does the media in your country generally feature useful information on organisation or avenues for help in reports on HIV/AIDS?

- () Yes
- () No

5. In your opinion, what forms of censorship affect accurate and impartial reporting on HIV/AIDS? (please rank from 1-6, 1 being the most common form of censorship and 6 being the least common form of censorship).

- Government (official) ()
- Government (unofficial) ()
- Social ()
- Self-censorship ()
- Owners/management ()
- Editors ()
- Other: _____

6. In your opinion, what is the quality of HIV/AIDS information available from state bodies and government? (please tick one)

- Limited ()
- Biased ()
- Satisfactory ()
- Good ()
- Very good ()
- Excellent ()

7. What is the general level of coverage of HIV/AIDS in the media in your country? (please circle)

Story placement	high	medium	low
Story prominence	high	medium	low
Frequency	high	medium	low

8. How do you rank the general level of media coverage of the following stories? (please circle)

People living with HIV/AIDS	high	moderate	low
HIV/AIDS orphans	high	moderate	low
Transmission of HIV/AIDS	high	moderate	low
Treatments for HIV/AIDS	high	moderate	low
Deaths by HIV/AIDS	high	moderate	low

9. What is the general tone of media coverage of HIV/AIDS in relation to the following issues: (please mark according to the following scale: N=neutral, B=biased, S=sensational, O=offensive, D=degrading, A=accepting, S=sympathetic).

- People living with HIV/AIDS ()
- HIV/AIDS orphans ()
- Transmission of HIV/AIDS ()
- Treatments for HIV/AIDS ()
- Deaths by HIV/AIDS ()

10. How would you classify the language used in stories about HIV/AIDS? (please circle)

Analytical	yes	no
Balanced	yes	no
Emotional	yes	no
Sensational	yes	no
Inflammatory	yes	no
Sympathetic	yes	no
Derogative	yes	no
Hopeful	yes	no
Stereotypical	yes	no
Other:	_____	

11. How would you classify the images used in HIV/AIDS stories? (please circle)

Balanced	yes	no
Positive	yes	no
Stereotyped	yes	no
Derogatory	yes	no
Unnecessary	yes	no
Other:	_____	

Section 2: the media's role in the HIV/AIDS crisis

12. In your opinion, what news value does HIV/AIDS have in your country? (please tick one)

Extremely high news value	()
High news value	()
Moderately news value	()
Low news value	()
Very low news value	()

13. In your opinion, what is the media's role in the HIV/AIDS crisis? (please tick one)

Reducing and preventing HIV/AIDS by disseminating vital information	()
Observing and reporting the developments	()
The media doesn't have a role to play	()
Shielding the public from the harsh reality of the crisis	()

14. In your opinion, has the media in your country taken adequate steps to provide accurate, balanced and fair information on HIV/AIDS? (please tick one)

Yes	()
No	()

I don't know ()

15. Do you think the media contributes to negative stereotypes of people with HIV/AIDS? (please tick one)

Yes ()

No ()

Section 3: Connecting with the media

16. How important do you think media focus on HIV/AIDS is to your organisation's work?

- () Very important
- () Reasonably important
- () Not very important
- () Not important at all

17. Is there a media liaison or public relations position in your organisation?

- () Yes
- () No

If 'yes', please detail their job description:

18. How often do your stories / press releases on HIV/AIDS get published?

- () Never
- () Occasionally
- () Regularly
- () Always

19. How do you make your information on HIV/AIDS available to journalists?

- () Leaflets
- () Seminars
- () Reports
- () Press releases
- () Web-site
- () Personal contacts

() Other: _____

20. What are the main mistakes that journalists make when reporting on HIV/AIDS? (please rank in order from 1-5, with 1 being the most common mistake and 5 being the least common mistake).

- () Lack of balance
- () Stereotypes
- () Publishing identities of people with HIV/AIDS
- () Sensationalism
- () Downplaying the crisis
- () Other (please specify):

21. Has reporting on HIV/AIDS improved in the past 5 years?

- () Yes
- () No

If 'yes', please explain how and why:

22. What strategies do you employ to break through the media's 'compassion fatigue' and to keep the media interested in the HIV/AIDS story?

23. Do you involve journalists' unions and journalists' organisations directly in any campaigns on HIV/AIDS?

- () Yes
- () No

If 'yes', in which ways?

24. Is the information about HIV/AIDS that you provide easily accessible to journalists?

- () Yes
- () No

Please comment on your answer:

25. In your opinion, is it easy for journalists to understand and interpret the facts about HIV/AIDS as presented in your promotion materials?

- () Yes
- () No

26. In your opinion, what could you do to improve the communication with journalists on this issue and to get your message across more effectively?

Section 4: Combating the problem

27. Do you think media coverage has the potential to raise public awareness of HIV/AIDS and contribute to a decrease in the number of new infections?

- () Yes
- () No

28. In your opinion, what needs to be done to improve the role journalists play in reporting HIV/AIDS?

29. Are you aware of any educational material available for journalists reporting on HIV/AIDS? (please tick)

Yes ()
No ()

If 'yes', please give examples:

30. How do you think journalists could influence a change of media culture around the HIV/AIDS issue? (please rank in order from 1-5, with 1 being the most likely influence and 5 being the least likely influence).

- By becoming more informed about HIV/AIDS ()
- By actively seeking stories about HIV/AIDS ()
- By overcoming stigmas attached to people with HIV/AIDS ()
- By disseminating vital information about transmissions of HIV/AIDS ()
- By undergoing training session in reporting HIV/AIDS ()

31. In your opinion, how can journalists reignite the story on HIV/AIDS in your country?

32. In your opinion, which of the following changes are most important for improving HIV/AIDS reporting? (please rank from 1-5, with 1 being the most important change and 5 being the least important change).

- Ensuring better quality control of published/broadcast facts about HIV/AIDS ()
- Giving HIV/AIDS stories more prominent placement in newspaper/broadcast ()
- Having access to more people affected by HIV/AIDS ()
- Having access to more NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS ()
- Identifying different story angles on HIV/AIDS ()

33. Can you cite some examples of best-practice journalism on HIV/AIDS?

34. Would you be willing to be part of a network to improve reporting on the HIV/AIDS pandemic?

- () Yes
- () No

If 'yes', how would you like to maintain contact with such a network:

- () Emails
- () Newsletters
- () Meetings
- () Phone calls
- () Text messages

If 'yes', how often would you like to have contact with the network?

- () Once a week
- () Once a fortnight
- () Once a month
- () Once every three months
- () Once every six months

35. Do you have any final comments or suggestions about reporting on HIV/AIDS?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.