

Local Resource Mobilisation Through the Media: based on the Case Study of IPP Media in Tanzania, presented by Ruta Mutakyahwa at the 11th Eastern Africa Regional Fundraising Workshop.

The social and economic impact of HIV/AIDS extends beyond the loss of labour force and productivity, and leads to an ever-escalating cost for the families affected, and the government for providing treatment to infected individuals.

HIV/AIDS and related diseases remain a huge burden on health care systems. In Tanzania, more than 30% of the resources are spent on diseases related to HIV/AIDS, but there is still insufficient funding to combat the HIV/AIDS problem. The 2003 Public Expenditure Review revealed spending to be at US \$6 per capita, leaving a gap of US \$3 per capita from the target set by the Ministry of Health of US \$9 per capita¹.

Considerable strain has been placed on available health resources and facilities, as medical wards flood with patients. The demand for equipment and drugs outstrips budgets, leading to chronic shortages. HIV/AIDS is considered to be the single greatest threat to the country's security and socio-economic development, as well as to its citizens' survival and well-being.

Despite widespread knowledge of HIV and some successful local initiatives in its prevention and control, there have been steady increases in HIV prevalence since 1996, and there are no significant signs to show that the infection and prevalence trends have been halted and/or reversed. Prevalence is higher in women than in men and the gap between male and female infection rates has increased.

However, it is not just adults who are affected, but their children also, leading to the alarming problem of AIDS orphans. The 1999 Tanzania Reproductive Health Survey (TRHS) shows that about 9% of all Tanzanian children under the age of 15 are orphans mostly due to AIDS. ESAURP has estimated the total number of HIV/AIDS orphans at 2,549,885² and the number is projected to reach 4 million by 2010³. These orphans face a shortage of basic needs⁴; run the risk of not being enrolled in school, of being withdrawn from class, of becoming working children, of living on the streets, and of being sexually abused.

Project

Little attention is paid to the rural areas engaged in agriculture, a fact true for both government agencies and non-governmental organisations. Victims far away from the centre live in desperate situations. Most of these victims are tired of research conducted in their respective areas which subsequently provides them with little assistance after the researchers have collected the required information regarding this killer disease.

In response to this, the IPP Media launched **UKIMWI NI HUU** Project aiming to:

- Create awareness among government authorities at various levels, NGOs and the society as a whole of the gravity of HIV/AIDS problem

¹ *URT (2004)*

² *ESAURP (2002)*

³ *UNICEF (1999)*

⁴ *ESAURP (2002)*

- Make/sensitise Tanzanians to feel obligated to provide necessary care and support to the unfortunate and disadvantaged fellow citizens
- Arouse and stimulate positive public response (in terms of financial and non-financial support) to reduce the sufferings of the HIV/AIDS victims

Resource Mobilisation Campaign

The Independent Television company (ITV), a member of the IPP Media Group, visited some regions in the country, collecting and documenting information on the HIV/AIDS situation and its effects on the affected population. The programme targeted all HIV/AIDS victims including the infected, AIDS orphans and orphan caretakers (in most cases, either very old or very young).

The results of the study were made into a series of TV programmes that have been shown on ITV. The programme showed the real living conditions of the victims including poor housing and sanitation, scarcity of health services, poor nutrition and many others. The pictures they showed demonstrated the real poverty situation in which the people live.

The programme producer, Mrs. Betty Mkwasa, appealed to the government, NGOs and the public at large to do something about the situation facing the HIV/AIDS victims and especially orphaned children.

“Seeing is believing” so the saying goes. The TV programmes touched the hearts of most viewers and created sympathy for the victims and more so for the orphans. This resulted in a considerable public response. People donated food, clothes and other items to the TV company.

“I did not understand the seriousness of AIDS until I saw it on the ITV, I feel I have an obligation to assist these disadvantaged children”, one person responded when asked what made him provide support.

The distribution of aid materials to the victims and beneficiaries was also shown on the TV. Viewers witnessed the relief and happiness of the intended beneficiaries as they received assistance, which motivated others to provide assistance themselves.

Significant achievements of the campaign:

- The message was able to reach a large number of people including the main target groups, the government, the AIDS commission (TACAIDS), NGOs and the Tanzanian society as a whole.
- Individuals, corporate organisations and training institutions have responded by providing material support in terms of clothing, food items, medicines, mattresses and other domestic utensils.
- Through the programme producers, materials valued at 5.2 million shillings were handed over to the victims in Makete District.
- Public and private organisations, training and faith-based institutions have come up with various strategies of addressing the issue of orphaned children. A few examples include: The Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) organised a fundraising event that fetched 24.4 million shillings towards the establishment of a centre for orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC). A football match between the

Members of Parliament and CRDB Bank was held, and the gate collections were earmarked for orphans and other children in need of special protection measures. The African Inland Church in Dodoma has raised 10.3 million shillings for the same cause, while students of the Dar es Salaam based Institute of Finance Management have visited an orphan centre and provided assistance in the form of some basic items.

- People have been sensitised and are now committing themselves to assist the needy children, especially the orphans. “We should help them”, one of the CEOs of the private media company was heard saying at one of the fundraising campaigns, “We should not wait for foreigners. That’s our primary responsibility”.

Challenges:

The project was not without challenges. Some people thought that there was a political agenda behind this programme particularly given that the 2005 General Elections were around the corner. Also, as mentioned above, many people living in the rural areas had not received significant assistance from various groups who had all visited the area before. The TV crews also had their own challenge of convincing victims of their role in the project, i.e. mobilising Tanzanians, TACAIDS and the government to fully understand their living conditions to take positive action.

Valuable lessons learned:

- People living in urban environments tend to be ignorant of the gravity of the sufferings rural people face.
- People are ready to respond positively if well informed about certain issues or areas of concern.
- A television programme is the best way to deliver messages effectively – seeing is believing.
- A TV programme can be a powerful way of promoting one’s cause or raising resources – but can be expensive. It can be extremely successful in raising resources at the time of disaster or when an issue has hit the headlines. The information will reach people at a time when you know that something needs to be done – and you are offering them a way of helping.
- Assistance, however small, gives a big relief to the one in a desperate situation.
- There are untapped local sources that can contribute to the improvement of people’s living conditions.

Future local resource mobilisation

The future of the media’s role in resource mobilisation is bright. More NGOs are seeing the important role the media can play in educating society on various issues and thus motivate people to give. A quick survey on resource mobilisation methods has revealed that the media fundraising method is yet to be exploited although it is estimated that its use is to increase. It should be noted that the media is willing and ready to give a helping hand provided they are asked.

Financial sustainability is probably the biggest challenge that many NGOs face in Eastern Africa. Every indication is that this will remain the case unless NGOs and their

stakeholders begin to define new resource mobilisation strategies and start exploring creative alternatives to traditional sources of funding. With traditional sources of funding for NGOs becoming ever more scarce and unpredictable, the civil society sector needs to continue thinking of coping strategies to have in place for financial sustainability, bearing in mind that almost 70% of its budget comes from foreign (and in most cases very limited) donors. Mobilising resources from local sources is an alternative means.

Local resource mobilisation will not only reduce the level of dependency of Tanzanian organisations but also strengthen “local ownership” of projects. Finally, we have to contribute to the welfare of the disadvantaged fellow citizens.

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