

Executive Summary

In February and March 2008 a study was conducted on the implementation of the African Broadcast Media Partnership Against HIV/AIDS and its impact in a select number of participating broadcast companies. The research took place in seven African countries namely Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Swaziland and Tanzania. Eighteen broadcasting companies and 36 external stakeholder organisations were surveyed, resulting in a dataset of 100 face-to-face interviews. The aims of the survey were to:

- a. Assess the extent to which the key objectives of the ABMP are being implemented across the sample companies. The key objectives are:
 - develop policies, strategies and structures to ensure integration of HIV/AIDS as a core business priority of the company;
 - dedicate resources, including financial, technical and other expertise, from their own existing resources in support of the above objective;
 - identify and develop programme content across programme genres and schedules with consistent, clear and forthright messaging within a comprehensive communications approach to HIV reduction;
 - engage with government and other in-country partners to co-ordinate with in-country HIV/AIDS campaigns and to leverage additional resources in support of these objectives; and
 - commit a minimum of 5 per cent airtime (radio and TV) per day in an 18-hour daily schedule (06h00-24h00), half in prime time and the balance across the schedule, across all stations and programme formats.
- b. Find out how the sample companies perceive the benefits and challenges of participating in the ABMP.
- c. Examine the institutional opportunities and limitations in the sample companies to the implementation and supplementation of the ABMP's programmes, and the sustainability of the sample companies' commitment to HIV/AIDS programming.
- d. Gauge the perceived contribution to national HIV/AIDS efforts of the sample broadcasters, the ABMP generally and the YOU campaign in particular through short interviews with leaders of the national AIDS councils, relevant government officials and non-government leaders.

Implementation of the key ABMP objectives across sample companies

The surveyed broadcasting companies are meeting most of the five ABMP objectives. Seventeen out of 18 broadcasters indicated that the ABMP caused an increase in the amount of HIV/AIDS programming they are putting on air. In some of these countries a key factor was the ABMP's role in educating broadcasters about HIV/AIDS. Half the sampled companies claim that they are meeting or exceeding the target of 5 per cent of their airtime devoted to HIV/AIDS programming. More than a third of the respondents indicated that their companies had developed policies and strategies/structures to ensure integration of HIV/AIDS as a core business priority.

The objectives where companies are falling short are the formulation of workplace HIV/AIDS-related policies; securing both internal and external funding for HIV/AIDS-related programming; and improving the level of co-ordination between broadcasters and their government, between broadcasters and NGOs, and among the broadcasters themselves.

Perceived benefits and challenges of participation in the ABMP

The ABMP has succeeded in creating a pan-African value-adding platform from which most of the broadcasters in the sample are benefiting. Benefits named by respondents included being able to contribute visibly to the fight against HIV/AIDS and responding to calls from governments for more action against HIV/AIDS. More specific benefits included sharing ideas and experiences around HIV/AIDS programming with fellow broadcasters, building production capacity and broadcast programming skills through ABMP workshops, accessing rights-free, good-quality and ready-to-air content, working in synergy with other broadcasters in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and utilising resources more cost-effectively than before. For many of the broadcasters a key benefit has been their introduction to new creative approaches to HIV/AIDS messaging and reporting, which they say has deepened their understanding of how to appeal to viewers and has increased their audiences. In the process, the ABMP content has challenged them to improve the quality of their own local programming. For many of the

broadcasters in the sample, the ABMP core content is serving as a benchmark of what HIV/AIDS programming should go on air.

At the same time the broadcasters sampled pointed to a number of challenges associated with participating in the ABMP. The most common challenge is their lack of resources, particularly financial resources, with which to increase the production of their own HIV/AIDS programming. This introduces a concern about whether they can ever meet the production quality benchmark set by the ABMP core content. Other challenges mentioned include lack of infrastructure and skills, and the costs associated with modifying the ABMP core content to suit local needs.

View of ABMP and production of company content

The ABMP core content (the YOU campaign, *Imagine Afrika* and the pilot radio edu-dramas) was well received in all seven countries and was aired by all the broadcasters in the sample. The YOU campaign received widespread acclaim both from broadcasters and from external stakeholders. Respondents commented favourably on its production quality, its appeal to a wide range of age groups, and for being a call to action. At the same time (even though all core content is distributed in English, French, Portuguese and Arabic) there is consensus across the seven sample countries that core content needs to be translated into even more local or common regional languages. This was most strongly articulated in the non-English-speaking countries (Madagascar, Senegal and Mozambique). In countries with large Muslim populations such as Senegal, Nigeria and Tanzania, respondents felt that the ABMP core content needs to be more responsive to religious and cultural sensibilities of those societies.

The YOU campaign was adapted into local campaigns against HIV/AIDS in four of the sample countries (Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania and Swaziland), in one case at the request of government and in another at the initiative of an NGO. This indicates strong resonance across the public sector and in civil society.

Institutional opportunities, limitations and prospects for sustainability

The sampled broadcasters experience financial constraints in extending the range of local productions on HIV/AIDS. No revenue was generated through the flighting of the core content supplied by the ABMP. However, most said that their company management is very supportive of the ABMP and see this as key to sustaining the initiative. External stakeholder respondents indicated that their respective governments had increased national budgets for HIV/AIDS communication and made it clear that the broadcasters would be able to access the funds, provided they submit sound proposals. Some of the broadcasters were less confident of this outcome.

Co-ordination between the sampled broadcasters and other in-country partners (such as government, NGOs and other broadcasters) is still at an early stage of infancy, but respondents indicated that collaboration had improved since initiation of the ABMP.

Impact assessment

Broadcasters were asked to share the single most important impact of the ABMP on their companies. Five key impacts emerged: learning about HIV/AIDS and about innovative approaches to HIV/AIDS programme production; collaboration; increased broadcasting of HIV/AIDS programmes; targeting youth; and increasing viewership. Most of the respondents also indicated that the *Imagine Afrika* reality show and the YOU campaign had made a positive impact on the target audiences, especially youth. Respondents also indicate that the ABMP is assisting broadcast companies align their communications activities more closely with national efforts against HIV/AIDS. In regard to plans for the future, respondents intend improving their co-ordination with in-country initiatives against HIV/AIDS, sourcing funds and broadcasting a larger number of HIV/AIDS programmes in local languages.

Suggestions/recommendations

Respondents suggest localisation of content as the key means of strengthening the ABMP core content. Two strategies are proposed: using local or common regional languages and producing the programmes within a local context, introducing local personalities into dramas and drawing on local experiences. The key objective is to help the target audience identify more readily with the messages and facilitate easier acceptance. Respondents also indicated that the ABMP could improve its impact by strengthening training and providing financial assistance for programme production to member broadcasters.