

GLOBAL MEDIA AIDS INITIATIVE



# The Media and HIV/AIDS:

## Making a difference



Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

**UNAIDS**

UNICEF • WFP • UNDP • UNFPA • UNODC  
ILO • UNESCO • WHO • WORLD BANK

THE HENRY J.  
**KAISER  
FAMILY**  
FOUNDATION

Cover photo : MTV

Young people from around the world interacting with celebrities and AIDS experts during the launch of the MTV *Staying Alive* campaign at the XIV International AIDS Conference

---

UNAIDS/03.58E (English original, January 2004)

---

© Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) 2004.

All rights reserved. Publications produced by UNAIDS can be obtained from the UNAIDS Information Centre. Requests for permission to reproduce or translate UNAIDS publications—whether for sale or for noncommercial distribution—should also be addressed to the Information Centre at the address below, or by fax, at +41 22 791 4187, or e-mail: [publicationpermissions@unaids.org](mailto:publicationpermissions@unaids.org).

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of

UNAIDS concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The mention of specific companies or of certain manufacturers' products does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by UNAIDS in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. Errors and omissions excepted, the names of proprietary products are distinguished by initial capital letters.

UNAIDS does not warrant that the information contained in this publication is complete and correct and shall not be liable for any damages incurred as a result of its use.

WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

The media and HIV/AIDS : making the difference.

1.HIV infections – prevention and control 2.Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome – prevention and control 3.Mass media – utilization 4.Television – utilization 5.Information dissemination 7.Predjuce 6.World health I.UNAIDS.

ISBN 92 9173 350 4

(NLM classification: WC 503.6)

UNAIDS – 20 avenue Appia – 1211 Geneva 27 – Switzerland  
Telephone: (+41) 22 791 36 66 – Fax: (+41) 22 791 41 87  
E-mail: [unaids@unaids.org](mailto:unaids@unaids.org) – Internet: <http://www.unaids.org>

“ When you are working to combat a disastrous and growing emergency, you should use every tool at your disposal. HIV/AIDS is the worst epidemic humanity has ever faced. It has spread further, faster and with more catastrophic long-term effects than any other disease. Its impact has become a devastating obstacle to development. Broadcast media have tremendous reach and influence, particularly with young people, who represent the future and who are the key to any successful fight against HIV/AIDS. We must seek to engage these powerful organizations as full partners in the fight to halt HIV/AIDS through awareness, prevention, and education. ”

— Kofi Annan, *United Nations Secretary-General*

# The global HIV/AIDS epidemic

Today, 8,000 people will lose their lives to HIV/AIDS and another 14,000—10 people every single minute—will become newly infected.

The realities of today's global epidemic are graver than even the worst-case predictions of 10 years ago. AIDS killed more than 3 million people in 2003 and an estimated 5 million more became infected—bringing to some 40 million the number currently living with the virus. More than 20 million have already died since the first clinical evidence of the disease was reported in 1981.

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the worst-affected region of the world, with one in five adults across southern Africa now HIV-infected. In countries such as Botswana and Swaziland, adult prevalence is approaching 40%. In many areas, AIDS is erasing decades of progress made in human development as young, productive people die, households fall into poverty, and the costs of the epidemic mount. Average life expectancy in the region has declined from 62 years to 47, and continues to fall.

In other parts of the world, the epidemic also shows no sign of abating. Eastern Europe and Central Asia are experiencing exponential expansions in levels of HIV infection, especially among the young. More than 1 million people in Asia and the Pacific became HIV-positive last year, while, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the epidemic is well entrenched; HIV/AIDS is a leading cause of death in a number of countries in the Caribbean Basin.



UNAIDS / R. Bowman

Posters on bus stops in New York for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS

## ADULTS AND CHILDREN ESTIMATED TO BE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS, END 2003



**TOTAL: 34 - 46 MILLION**

Source: UNAIDS/WHO

Even in resource-rich nations such as the United States, where overall infection rates are relatively low, there has been no decrease in the number of new infections in over a decade and, among certain populations, HIV prevalence is increasing. A trend towards growing infection rates is also evident in the Middle East and North Africa, challenging the notion that any region has sidestepped the epidemic.

UNAIDS and WHO estimate that, without dramatic increases in HIV-prevention efforts, some 45 million new infections will occur worldwide by 2010.



Over the past three years, and in particular since the adoption by all members of the United Nations of a Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS in 2001, a new momentum has resulted in greatly increased resources and renewed political commitment to fight the epidemic. However, efforts still fall far short of what is needed and much remains to be done to reach the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV by 2015.



Billboard from KNOW HIV/AIDS campaign

Viacom

Reaching this target and substantially reducing the global impact of this devastating epidemic requires collaboration from all sectors of society: educational institutions, government, religious organizations, and the mass media.

In a landmark gathering in June 2001, Heads of State and Representatives of Governments met at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS and fashioned a set of global commitments for tackling the epidemic. They affirmed, for example, that :

*Beyond the key role played by communities, strong partnerships among governments, the United Nations system,... people living with AIDS and vulnerable groups,... the media, parliamentarians, foundations, community organisations and traditional leaders are important (para. 32).*

—From the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, adopted at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, 27 June 2001, New York.

# The media: a response to HIV/AIDS

The media have a pivotal role to play in the fight against AIDS. It is often said that education is the vaccine against HIV. Many media organizations are rising to the challenge by promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS and educating listeners and viewers about the facts of the epidemic and how to stop it.

According to national surveys conducted in the United States, 72% of Americans identify television, radio and newspapers as their primary source of information about HIV/AIDS, more than doctors, friends and family. Similar statistics have also been reported in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the world.

In a survey carried out in India more than 70% of respondents said they had received their information about HIV/AIDS from television.

Clearly, media organizations have an enormous influence in educating and empowering individuals to avoid contracting HIV. Doing so with maximum efficiency, however, requires a clear understanding of the challenges and the obstacles to widespread and effective HIV-prevention education.

Richard Stanley



Recording the *Tinka Tinka Suhk*, radio soap opera, India

## ● *Widespread lack of awareness*

UNAIDS/ Liba Taylor

Levels of awareness of, and knowledge about, HIV/AIDS vary widely around the world. According to recent surveys from over 40 countries, more than half of young people most at risk—those aged 15–24—have serious misconceptions about how the virus is transmitted.

A surprising number of people, especially the young, have simply *never heard of HIV*. In 21 African countries, more than 60% of young women, for example, have either never heard of the virus or have at

least one major misconception about how it is spread. In Lesotho, a country with a very high HIV prevalence rate, only 2 out of 10 girls have sufficient knowledge about it. While most young women in Ukraine have heard of HIV/AIDS, only about 10% can correctly identify the three primary ways to avoid infection: abstinence, fidelity and consistent condom use.



World AIDS Day activities in Ukraine

At the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in June 2001, governments of the world agreed that they would:

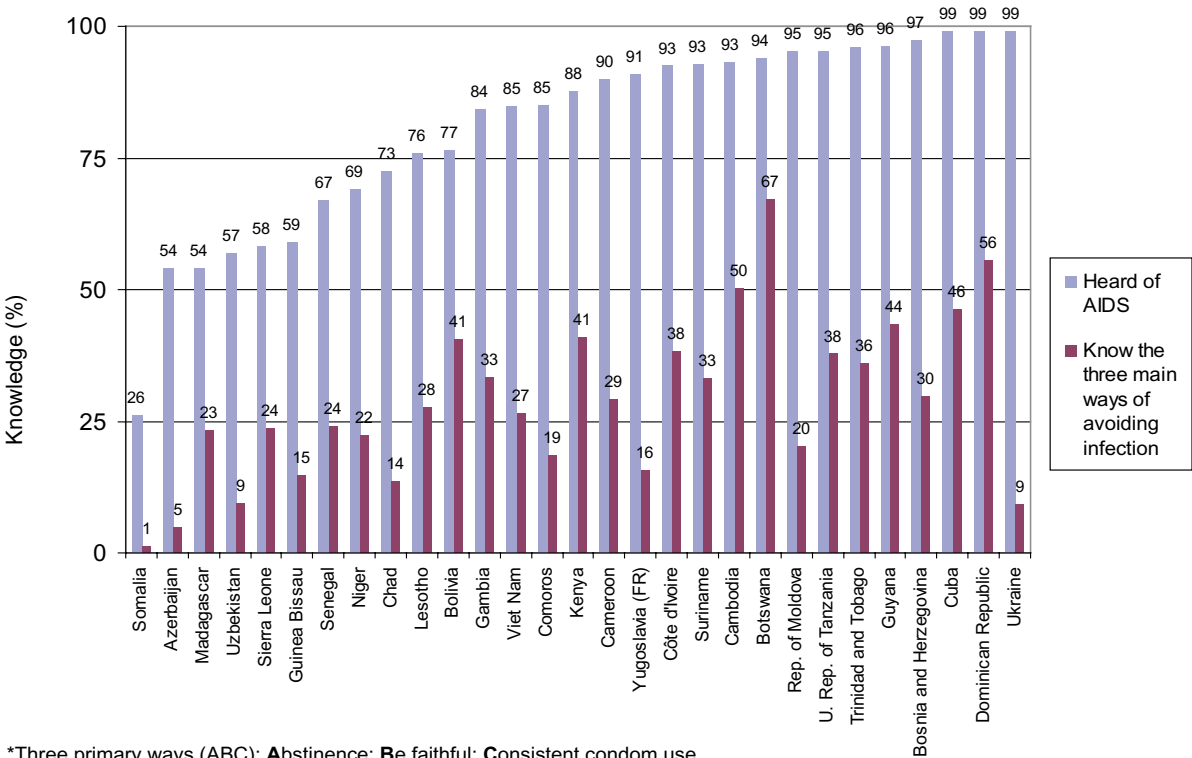
*By 2005, ensure that 90%, and, by 2010, 95% of youth aged 15–24 have information, education, services and life skills that enable them to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection (para. 53).*

—From the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, adopted at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, 27 June 2001, New York.



Most know little about HIV prevention

Percentage of young women (aged 15–19) who have heard of AIDS and % who know the three primary ways of avoiding infection\*



\*Three primary ways (ABC): **A**bstinence; **B**e faithful; **C**onsistent condom use

Source: UNICEF/MICS, Measure DHS, 1999-2001.

Even after 20 years, misconceptions abound. In Latin America and the Caribbean—a region severely affected by HIV—there are still large numbers of people who are not well informed. A study in the United States in the year 2000 found that 40% of respondents thought they could contract HIV from sharing a drinking glass, and a similar number believed the virus could be airborne and transmitted through a cough. A quarter of adults in the United Kingdom—more than 10 million people—feel they do not know enough about how the risks of HIV could potentially relate to them.



'Joseph', a character in the *Soul City* soap opera overcomes discrimination because of his HIV status, South Africa

## ● *The triangle of denial, stigma and discrimination*

Beyond lack of information, there is also denial. Many people in all parts of the world have not yet accepted that the risk of contracting HIV applies to them. For instance, more than 90% of adolescents in Haiti believe they have a tiny or non-existent risk of contracting it, while the nation actually has one of the highest prevalence rates outside sub-Saharan Africa.

Denial about the virus exists on both personal and societal levels. Many continue to believe that AIDS is an issue for 'others'. Equally damaging to the effort to disseminate factual information about the epidemic is the belief, widespread in a number of societies, that HIV/AIDS is something that happens to people who are immoral and socially deviant. In addition to strengthening the stigma and discrimination that keep many from seeking information or help if they are infected, these beliefs promote denial, allowing many in society to distance themselves from the realities of the epidemic, and therefore to be lulled into a false sense of security.

Passions and responses evoked by fear and misunderstanding over HIV/AIDS can be extreme. According to one Ukrainian quoted in a UNICEF report, “Sex workers and drug users are perverted elements of society ...HIV/AIDS is a disease of the depraved”.

Such a reaction is all too common. In a UK survey, 57% of respondents said those who became infected through unprotected sex “only have themselves to blame”. Nearly 20% of respondents in the US also believed that people who acquired HIV through sex or drug use had got what they deserved.

At the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in June 2001, governments of the world affirmed that :

*Stigma, silence, discrimination and denial, as well as lack of confidentiality, undermine prevention, care and treatment efforts and increase the impact of the epidemic on individuals, families, communities and nations (para.13).*

—From the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, adopted at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, 27 June 2001, New York.

These attitudes towards HIV/AIDS fuel both official and unofficial discrimination. Infected individuals, or those perceived to be at risk, have been shunned by their communities, have been denied access to services or health care, and have lost their job. Children have been forced out of schools. The results of stigma and discrimination can be far-reaching. According to UNAIDS, they are the “greatest barriers to preventing further infections, providing adequate care, support and treatment and alleviating impact”.

## ● *The impact of gender inequality*

Around the world, women are increasingly at risk from HIV and bear the brunt of stigma and discrimination. Because women often lack freedom of choice, they sometimes find it harder to avoid HIV infection. Many women may be aware of what they should do to protect themselves, but are unable to take precautions because of powerlessness, economic dependence on their



Women are especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS

partners and fear of violence if they refuse sex. Rape is also often a reality. Nearly 50% of young women in 9 Caribbean countries have said that their first sexual intercourse was forced.

Other women, for whom violence is not a factor, may feel that it is simply their duty to please their man, even to the detriment of their own well-being. Reversing rising HIV infection rates in women will require addressing these fundamental issues concerning how men and women relate to one another.

According to one Kenyan husband quoted in a book by the NGO Panos, *AIDS and Men: Taking Risks or Taking Responsibility?*, “I am the lion of the house and my wife does not have the right to say no”. Given such attitudes, women are at high risk of infection.

# What the media can do

There are a number of things that the media can do to stem the tide of HIV/AIDS infection, and indeed many organizations are already engaged in successful efforts to both raise awareness and promote sustainable behaviour change to reduce vulnerability to the virus.

- *Talking about it*

One of the most obvious roles of media is to open channels of communication and foster discussion about HIV and interpersonal relationships.

Addressing HIV/AIDS in entertainment programmes can have an enormous impact on a society at risk. A number of researchers have noted that the Radio Tanzania soap opera *Twende na Wakati* (*Let's Go with the Times*), which was first broadcast in 1993, has greatly increased listeners' willingness to discuss issues related to the virus. In short, the show got people talking. After the programme had been aired for several seasons, evaluations reported that 65% of respondents said they had spoken to someone about *Twende na Wakati* and more than 8 in 10 reported having adopted an HIV-prevention measure as a result of listening to the show.

Uganda has dramatically reduced its HIV infection rate, primarily through efforts to encourage frank and open discussion of the disease, its causes, and how to prevent it. The media have helped facilitate this discourse.

UNAIDS/G Pirozzi



Young people reading *Straight Talk*, a youth newspaper, Kenya



Ugandan experts believe that the simple act of talking has made a profound difference to the course of the country's epidemic. The fact that President Yoweri Museveni has allowed a free discussion on HIV/AIDS in the media, among organizations and in civil society is cited as a key element of the country's success in reversing the epidemic.

This discussion has been promoted and fostered across genders and generations, with men and women encouraged to talk to each other and to their sons and daughters.

There are numerous examples of Ugandans being given space to discuss HIV/AIDS. The Straight Talk Foundation, which has a strong media department, fosters an environment in which young people can explore delicate and intimate issues. The foundation publishes a range of newspapers and also produces a weekly radio programme in English and a number of local languages. Through these popular shows, made by and for young people, listeners can hear their peers discuss sex and relationships in a clear and straightforward manner, as well as how to keep themselves safe.

Richard Stanley



The radio soap opera *Tinka Tinka Sukh* being tested on an audience in Kerala, India

## ● *Creating a supportive and enabling environment*

Mass media can be instrumental in breaking the silence that surrounds the disease and in creating an environment that encourages discussion of how individuals can protect themselves and change their behaviour, if necessary. While this may mean combating existing social norms, values and conditions, it is not necessarily as difficult and daunting as it might appear. There are numerous examples in which media interventions have made positive changes in society. For instance, the Indian village, Lutsaan, turned its back on the dowry system after listening communally to a radio soap opera broadcast on All India Radio called *Tinka Tinka Sukh* (*Little steps to a Better Life*).

The popular South African soap opera, *Soul City*, developed by an NGO, the Soul City Institute of Health and Development Communication, has been aired by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) since 1994. It has brought about social policy change at a ***national*** level. The series, which primarily deals with HIV/AIDS, also examined domestic violence in its fourth run, when one character, a respected teacher, abused his wife. Advocacy pressure from *Soul City* and The National Network on Violence against Women, a grass-roots coalition of activists, led to the swift implementation of the Domestic Violence Act in 1999. Government departments acknowledged that their actions were influenced by the media campaign.

In each of these examples, broadcasters broke new ground and challenged what had previously been socially acceptable, in ways that did not alienate, but rather attracted, audiences.

## ● *Challenging stigma and discrimination*



Takalani Sesame

The UN Secretary-General appears with Kami, the HIV-positive muppet, in a public service message

HIV-related stigma and discrimination are major barriers to effective prevention and, in fact, have been identified as major risk factors for HIV transmission. A number of media campaigns have focused on the need to overcome prejudice and encourage solidarity with people who are infected with, or affected by, the virus.

South Africa's *Sesame Street*, known as *Takalani Sesame*, has demonstrated that it is never too early to challenge HIV/AIDS-related stigma. Kami (the Tswana word for 'acceptance') is an energetic and lively golden muppet with ginger hair, who joined the show in September 2002. Kami also happens to be HIV-positive. The show has included storylines wherein Kami has had to cope with being ostracized at school because of her status but has overcome the prejudice of her friends and taught them the value of tolerance.

## ● *Promoting HIV/AIDS services*

Collaboration between broadcasters, grass-roots organizations, service providers and government agencies can help to ensure that vital services, such as counselling and testing, condom provision, and even treatment and care, are available on the ground.

The weekly award-winning television soap *SIDA dans la Cité* (*AIDS in the City*), produced in Côte d'Ivoire and shown on Ivorian Radio and Television (RTI) and across French West Africa, is a good example of how the promotion of condoms can be linked directly to their subsequent availability. The series revolves around the life of a family affected by HIV/AIDS and is produced as the key part of a condom social marketing campaign by Population Services International (PSI), Côte d'Ivoire and a local partner. PSI promotes condom use through the programme and makes sure that condoms are available to the audience. A survey found that those who had seen 10 or more episodes

of the show were significantly more likely to have used a condom than were non-viewers.

Broadcasters can also join with partners to educate about HIV/AIDS and publicize the availability of services. The Kaiser Family Foundation, for example, partners with top media companies, such as Black Entertainment Television and Univision, the leading Spanish-language television company in the United States, to reach key populations – African American and Latino youths, respectively. These extensive public education partnerships promote dedicated toll-free hotlines and websites to direct viewers seeking more information to local HIV counselors or testing centers. Collectively, these efforts connect hundreds of thousands of young people with services every year.

UNAIDS/Stefan Attard



Billboard produced by the Health Promotion Department, Malta

## ● *Educating and entertaining*

To be effective, messaging about HIV/AIDS must be both educational and entertaining. These two goals should not be mutually exclusive. A number of programmes have served to inform their audiences about the virus while, at the same time, achieving market success.

In India, Doordarshan, the national television service, the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) and the BBC World Service Trust, (the international development arm of the British Broadcasting Corporation), joined forces in 2002 to launch the country's first-ever mass media campaign to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS. The campaign has been largely based on education through entertainment, with two key strands being the popular interactive detective series *Jasoos (Detective) Vijay* and the award-winning weekly 'reality' youth show, *Haath se Haath Milaa (Let's Join Hands)*.

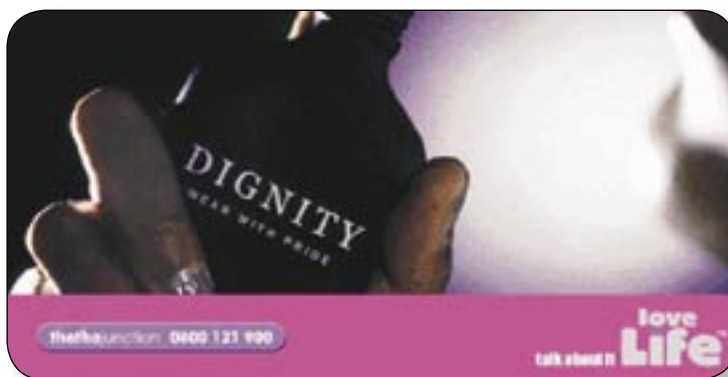


Both programmes have proved popular with audiences and *Jasoos Vijay* was voted ‘Best Thriller Series’ in the prestigious Indian Television Awards 2003. Viewers are therefore given information about the virus and how to protect themselves while watching an enjoyable programme at the same time. For example, according to an independent survey, 85% of respondents to the campaign said they had learned something new and almost a third said they had discussed messages with friends.

In Brazil, home of the extraordinarily popular ‘telenovela’, or television soap opera, the TV Globo company placed an HIV-themed serial at the heart of its programme schedule. *Malhação* (*Working Out*), dealing with issues facing young people in Brazil, captured huge audiences when its teenage protagonist learned that she was HIV-positive. The move by the Brazilian Government to begin distribution of free antiretroviral drugs was also mirrored in *Malhação*’s storyline. When dramatized in a compelling manner, ‘socially responsible’ soap operas can attract and help to educate large numbers of viewers and listeners.

One of the most keenly watched programmes in Nicaragua is *Sexto Sentido* (*Sixth Sense*), a hard-hitting ‘social soap opera’ that tackles issues such as sexuality, rape, domestic violence and substance abuse. It reaches 80% of 13–17-year-olds and is the highest-rated show in its time slot.

loveLife



Campaign material targeting youth, South Africa

South Africa’s *loveLife* campaign, launched in late 1999, combines a highly visible and sustained multi-media awareness and education campaign with

development of youth friendly services and support programmes countrywide. *loveLife* is able to greatly extend the scale and scope of its media campaign through cost-sharing partnerships with key media organizations. The South African Broadcasting Corporation is *loveLife*’s broadcast



partner providing extensive radio and television airtime, as well as co-production funding. Respondents in a national survey of youth reported changes in their sexual behaviour, including greater abstinence, delay of sexual debut and increased condom use, as a result of this programming. More than three quarters said *loveLife* had made them aware of the risks involved in unprotected sex.

There are numerous examples of other programmes around the world that have echoed this success. For example, NHK, the national television network in Japan, aired a serial called *Kamisama Mo Sukoshidake* (*Please God, Just a Little More Time*) that revolved around a schoolgirl who was HIV-infected after becoming a sex worker. During the programme's run, the number of HIV tests and requests for counselling more than doubled in Japan.

In China, CCTV and a number of partners, including PCI (Population Communications International), have brought the soap opera *Bai Xing* (*Ordinary People*) to millions of viewers. They have been able to follow the struggles of Lüye and her family as they tackle many issues, not least of which are the problems brought by HIV/AIDS. *Bai Xing* has proved a popular and award-winning show.

Broadcasters have also encouraged audiences to become actively involved in combating HIV/AIDS themselves. The French company, TV5, has played an integral role in promoting the *Scenarios from Africa* competition in which young people are asked to submit a proposal for a short film on AIDS. The winning concept is produced and aired by several national and international networks, including TV5. This competition reflects the company's policy of placing African voices at the very heart of its coverage of the epidemic.

Richard Stanley



Shooting of *Bai Xing* soap opera, CCTV, China

## ● *Mainstreaming*

Broadcasters are ‘mainstreaming’ the HIV issue across a number of programmes, ensuring that the message permeates a diverse range of output, not just outlets and public service messages dedicated specifically to the issue. The fact that the virus affects all sections of society and all walks of life is subtly reinforced if it is explored in this way. As a result, many people who might not necessarily pay much attention to a traditional AIDS campaign, or who would not choose to watch AIDS programming, are nevertheless exposed to HIV-related education messages.

The most effective media initiatives on HIV have many outlets. A coordinated, multifaceted campaign has greater impact than a single programme. A number of companies have implemented this model to great effect. Documentaries, news items, concerts, public service announcements, competitions, hotlines, books and websites can all be linked together to reinforce awareness, information and messages about HIV-related attitudes and behaviour.

For example Viacom, under its *KNOW HIV/AIDS* campaign partnership with the Kaiser Family Foundation, utilizes all the company’s properties to disseminate information about HIV/AIDS,

Viacom



including targeted public service messages on television, radio and outdoor, integrated messages in TV shows, special programming, in-store and in-product advertising, as well as complementary online and print resources. In the first two years alone, Viacom will have committed more than US\$240 million in media space across its properties to the effort.

Billboard from *KNOW HIV/AIDS* campaign

- *Putting HIV/AIDS on the news agenda and encouraging leaders to take action*

Another key area for media involvement in AIDS education efforts is ensuring that the topic is kept at the top of the news agenda. In recent years, several leading broadcasters from around the world have found innovative ways to report on the epidemic.

The BBC World Service launched a two-week season of programming, including news reports, documentaries, and online coverage of the epidemic to mark World AIDS Day 2003. The company's high-profile interviews with several world leaders and celebrities, along with phone-ins and 'webchats' with other public figures, generated broad coverage of HIV for audiences around the world.

The Chinese national station, China Central Television (CCTV), broadcast some 230 news items on HIV/AIDS in the first 10 months of 2003.

Since 1996, Spain's Radiotelevision Espanola (RTVE) has also worked to keep discussion of the virus in the public domain. Each year, this has led to two months of special programming, aimed at raising awareness, in the lead-up to World AIDS Day.

In the US, the Time Warner network, HBO, broadcast a five-part documentary series in the summer of 2003 entitled *Pandemic: Facing AIDS*. CNN has also run a special season of HIV-related programming, which included a large news component.

The NTV Channel and the radio station Echo of Moscow (*Gazprom*) have also ensured that the virus has received widespread coverage and been kept near the top of the news agenda, whether through medical news programmes, reports about the epidemic, radio call-ins or studio discussions.

Metro TV in Indonesia has consistently broadcast HIV/AIDS-related news and featured comment and analysis about the epidemic in talk-shows and documentaries.

Mounting an effective global response to AIDS is clearly an expensive challenge, and insufficient resources have been invested in this effort to date. In ensuring that HIV remains ‘headline news’, broadcasters play a vital role in encouraging world leaders and policy-makers to take the epidemic seriously and provide the resources necessary to fund adequate prevention and treatment programmes.

A virtuous circle should result: the more leaders see about HIV in the news, the greater the

resources they invest in anti-AIDS strategies, which in turn leads to increased media coverage of the issue and helps to sustain public awareness, which, again, has an impact on leaders’ priorities.

### ● *Sharing resources, pooling material*

Several successful campaigns have benefited from, and fully utilized, the opportunity of pooling resources with other outlets by sharing expertise and material.

*MTV Staying Alive*, the global, multi-partnership, mass media campaign targeting young people, has consistently offered its products rights-free to all other broadcasters. In 2002, this facility resulted in *Staying Alive* programmes being aired on television stations serving some 800 million households worldwide when rebroadcasts on CCTV were added. In 2003, the documentary *Meeting Mandela* was watched across the world and the 46664 concert, launched by Nelson Mandela in association with *MTV Staying Alive* and other partners, reached up to 2 billion viewers, thanks in part to MTV



*Staying Alive ‘Clinton Uncut’*: former US President Bill Clinton debates HIV/AIDS issues with young people.

encouraging rebroadcasts of the concert on other networks.

Broadcasters can also build partnerships to fully exploit their combined audiences and expertise. Viacom and BBC joined forces to develop messages in Africa and the Caribbean, providing a strong example of two major international broadcasters harnessing their collective resources and reach to bring awareness spots and longer-format programmes to millions of viewers and listeners from a diverse range of regions and backgrounds.

## ● *Capacity-building*

Successful partnerships need not necessarily be with other media outlets. Broad, symbiotic alliances with NGOs, government departments and foundations, for instance, can bring significant benefits for both parties. Broadcasters can trade resources with campaign partners, such as access to airtime, and in return receive the expertise that partners have to offer on HIV advocacy. Creative teams on drama series can be briefed about useful messages and how a specific audience might be reached, while editors, producers and reporters can be advised about the most pressing and relevant aspects of the HIV issue from a news perspective.

Again, as a result of the *KNOW HIV/AIDS* partnership, the Kaiser Family Foundation have offered the broadcaster expertise in terms of pinpointing key messages, giving access to up-to-date accurate information and building HIV knowledge within creative media teams.



MTV

Nelson Mandela interacts with young people in MTV *Staying Alive Special* – 'Meeting Mandela'



## Conclusion:

# Fighting HIV/AIDS — a corporate priority

The mass media are clearly vital in the world's fight against the virus. Broadcasters are already undertaking impressive work on HIV, but much more needs to be done. The media can make AIDS programming a key part of their output and, indeed, their corporate strategy. This can be done in a number of ways, including the following:

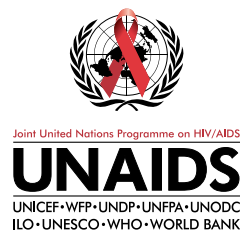
- Giving the epidemic prominent news coverage
- Dedicating airtime/space to HIV/AIDS public service messages
- Supporting the broadcasting of HIV/AIDS special programming
- Supporting the development of AIDS storylines in existing programming
- Making public service messages and original programming available to other outlets on a rights-free basis

The task at hand requires vision, dedication and, above all, creative programming that truly engages audiences. Broadcasters can talk to listeners and viewers about HIV in a language they understand, appreciate and find entertaining. They can build partnerships and alliances. They can put pressure on the powerful to take the disease seriously and give people the information they need to protect themselves and those they love. In short, the media have an essential role to play in reversing the progression of HIV.

Filming *Haath se Haath Milaa*, youth programme, India



Doordarshan/BBC World Service Trust/  
National AIDS Control Organisation



Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)  
UNAIDS – 20 avenue Appia – 1211 Geneva 27 – Switzerland  
Telephone: (+41 22) 791 36 66 – Fax: (+41 22) 791 41 87 – E-mail: [unaids@unaids.org](mailto:unaids@unaids.org) – Internet: <http://www.unaids.org>