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**Harnessing the Entertainment-Education Strategy in Africa: The Soul City
Intervention in South Africa¹**

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Abstract

In recent years, the entertainment-education (or “edutainment”) strategy in development communication – the use of communication to bring about social change - has gained prominence in developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Entertainment-education is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate. Entertainment-education media can influence audience individuals’ awareness, attitudes, and behaviors about a social issue, shift social norms, and also serve as a social mobilizer and media advocate. The key elements in an entertainment-education campaign are identified, and the “Soul City” edutainment initiative in South Africa is analyzed. The “Soul City” case demonstrates that the effects of the entertainment-education strategy are boosted significantly when combined with ground-based partnerships, social mobilization activities, and media advocacy.

Harnessing the Entertainment-Education Strategy in Africa: The Soul City Intervention in South Africa

If entertainers can sing of sexual abstinence and of modifying sexual behavior, while generating income...then social and commercial marketing become one. Considering that so much of popular culture supports unhealthy and at-risk life styles, the edutainment movement is one of the greatest communication revolutions of the 20th century (McKee, 2000, p.155).

Developing countries, especially on the African continent, face the brunt of many development problems: For instance, poverty, high rates of HIV/AIDS, high fertility, high infant mortality, and gender inequality. While the entertainment media have a high potential to educate the African public about these development problems, little of this potential has been tapped to date, barring some notable exceptions.

For at least three compelling reasons, national policy-makers, media practitioners, and international donor agencies in both developed and developing countries should more seriously consider the potential of entertainment media to bring about social change (Singhal & Rogers, 1999):

1. Development problems loom large all over the world: Ethnic conflicts, poverty, environmental catastrophes, infectious diseases, and unsupported population growth. Resources to tackle these problems are scarce. Pragmatic media strategies are needed as part of a broad approach to address such problems. These media strategies must (1) appeal to the audience members, (2) be commercially viable, and (3) be socially responsible. Using the entertainment media for educational purposes provides an unusual opportunity to achieve these objectives.

2. Leisure and entertainment represent one of the most important megatrends of recent decades. Entertainment media, spurred (1) by advances in such new communication technologies as satellite and cable television, VCRs, and multimedia, and (2) by economic progress, reach expanding audiences worldwide. The hard-to-reach rural poor are now increasingly accessible through the mass media, and at a relatively low cost.

3. The entertainment media needlessly suffer from the stigma of being a “mindless” genre. Audience research shows that carefully-designed entertainment media messages can spur audience reflection, promote public discussion and dialogue on social issues, and move audience members to consider new patterns of behaviors (Piotrow, Kincaid, Rimon II, & Rinehart, 1997; Japhet & Goldstein, 1997; Singhal & Brown, 1996; Valente & Saba, 1998). Further, research in many countries shows that viewers prefer to consume more socially-responsible and “wholesome” entertainment, if only it were available.

THE ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION STRATEGY

The entertainment-education (or “edutainment”) strategy in development communication abrogates the needless dichotomy in almost all mass media content: That mass media programs must either be entertaining or educational (Singhal & Rogers, 1989; Fischer & Melnik, 1979). Entertainment-education is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members’ knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes, shift social norms, and change overt behavior. The larger purpose of entertainment-education programming is to contribute to the process of directed social

change, which can happen at the level of an individual, community, or society. The entertainment-education strategy contributes to social change in two ways:

1. It can influence audience awareness, attitudes, and behaviors toward a socially desirable end. Here the anticipated effects are located in the individual audience members. An illustration is provided by a radio soap opera, “Twende na Wakati”, in Tanzania that convinced several hundred thousand sexually-active adults to adopt HIV prevention behaviors (like using condoms and reducing their number of sexual partners) (Rogers et al., 1999).

2. It can influence the audiences’ external environment to help create the necessary conditions for social change at the group or system level. Here the major effects are located in the interpersonal and social-political sphere of the audiences’ external environment. The entertainment-education media can serve as a social mobilizer, an advocate or agenda-setter, influencing public and policy initiatives in a socially-desirable direction (Wallack, 1990). The case of Lutsaan, the Indian village that rejected dowry as a result of community-based listening of a radio soap opera, “Tinka Tinka Sukh”, illustrates the system-level social changes resulting from entertainment-education (Papa et al., 2001).

The present chapter analyzes the entertainment-education strategy in development communication, defined as the use of communication to bring about social change. The recent rise of the entertainment-education strategy is chronicled, and the key elements of an entertainment-education initiative are analyzed. The recent “Soul City” edutainment initiative in South Africa is investigated, and lessons are gleaned about how

entertainment-education initiatives can benefit through ground-based partnerships, social mobilization activities, and media advocacy.

The Rise of Entertainment-Education

The idea of combining entertainment with education is not new: It goes as far back in human history as the timeless art of storytelling. For thousands of years, music, drama, dance, and various folk media have been used, for instance, in African nations, for recreation, devotion, reformation, and instructional purposes. So while the concept of combining entertainment with education is not new, “entertainment-education” is a relatively new concept. Its use in radio, television, comic books, and popular music, at least when designed according to communication and social psychological theories, is a matter of the past three decades (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Valente et al.,1994).

In radio, the earliest well-known illustration of the entertainment-education strategy occurred in 1951, when the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) began broadcasting “The Archers”, a radio soap opera which carried educational messages about agricultural development (“The Archers” continues to be broadcast in 2001, addressing contemporary educational issues like HIV/AIDS prevention, environmental conservation, and the like). The entertainment-education strategy in television was discovered more-or-less by accident in Peru in 1969, when the television soap opera “Simplemente María” was broadcast (Singhal, Obregon, & Rogers, 1994). The main character, María, a migrant to the capital city, faced tragic setbacks, like becoming a single mother. María worked during the day, and enrolled in adult literacy classes in the evening. She then climbed the socio-economic ladder of success through her hard work, strong motivation, and through her skills with a Singer sewing machine. “Simplemente

María” attracted very high audience ratings, and the sale of Singer sewing machines boomed in Peru. So did the number of young girls enrolling in adult literacy and sewing classes. When “Simplemente María” was broadcast in other Latin American nations, similar effects happened. Audience identification with María was very strong, especially among poor, working-class women: She represented a role model for upward social and economic mobility.

Inspired by the audience success and the (unintended) educational effects of “Simplemente María”, Miguel Sabido, a television writer-producer-director in Mexico, developed a methodology for entertainment-education soap operas. Between 1975 and 1982, Sabido produced seven entertainment-education television soap operas (one each year), which helped motivate enrollment in adult literacy classes, encourage the adoption of family planning, promote gender equality, and so forth (Nariman, 1993). Sabido’s entertainment-education soap operas were also commercial hits for Televisa, the Mexican television network, demonstrating that educational messages do not limit the popularity of entertainment programs.

Through these events of the past several decades, the idea of combining education with entertainment in the mass media was born and has since spread to over 100 projects in 50 countries, spurred by the efforts of institutions like Population Communications International (PCI), a non-governmental organization headquartered in New York City, and Johns Hopkins University’s Population Communication Services. The entertainment-education strategy has been widely invented and recreated in television, radio, film, print, and theater, including the well-known, multi-media “Soul City” edutainment series in South Africa, (which we discuss later in this chapter).

Key Elements in Creating Entertainment-Education

While there exist many different approaches to creating entertainment-education programs, the key elements include the following:

Creating a Ethical Framework and Values Grid

Prior to launching an entertainment-education intervention, an ethical framework of the specific educational issues to be emphasized in an entertainment-education intervention, and a values grid for the educational messages, should be created (Singhal & Rogers, 2001). The ethical framework can be derived from a nation's constitution, its legal statutes, or from documents such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights, to which the country is a signatory. For instance, a constitutional right expressed as "All citizens will have an equal opportunity for personal and professional development" provides the ethical basis to produce media messages about gender equality. The values grid, in turn, is derived from the ethical framework and contains statements such as "All girl children have the right to go to school" and "It is a violation of a girl child's rights not to send her to school". The values grid specifies the behavior and social changes that are to be encouraged or discouraged in the entertainment-education project such as a soap opera, and constitutes a formal statement signed by government, religious, and media officials pledging their support of the educational values promoted in the intervention. For example, Sabido asked Catholic Church leaders in Mexico to help develop the values grid for his telenovela about family planning. These documents contribute to the consistency of the characters and storyline with the intended goals of the entertainment-education intervention. They also help to bring on board key influentials and stakeholders, providing credibility to the intervention.

Formative Evaluation Research

Once an ethical framework and values grid are available, formative evaluation research is conducted with the intended audience to design the entertainment-education intervention. Formative evaluation is a type of research that is conducted while an activity, process, or system is being developed or is ongoing, in order to improve its effectiveness (Rogers, 1986, p. 193). Research-based information about the characteristics, needs, and preferences of a target audience can sharpen the design of entertainment-education. For example, a formative evaluation survey in Tanzania in 1992 found that many adults, including those using the rhythm method of contraception, did not know the days in the women's menstrual cycle when fertility was most likely. Correct information was then provided in a radio soap opera, "Twende na Wakati" (Let's Go With the Times).

Theory-Based Message Design

The messages for the entertainment-education intervention are designed on the basis of various theories of behavior change. Human communication theories are seldom used in designing most media messages. At the heart of understanding the process of entertainment-education is Albert Bandura's social learning theory (1977; 1997), which states that learning can occur through observing media role-models, and that this vicarious learning can, under certain conditions, be even more effective and efficient than direct experiential learning. For instance, why should a couple produce more children than they can afford, suffer economic hardship throughout their lives, to realize eventually that not adopting a family planning method was a mistake? This lesson could be learned by them by observing media role models, who face realistic consequences of

adopting or not adopting family planning in a television soap opera. Media role models can also give individuals and communities a sense of self and collective efficacy, encouraging them to consider new patterns of behavior (Bandura, 1997).. For instance, Suraj, a youth leader in the Indian radio soap opera “Tinka Tinka Sukh”, inspired young audience members in Village Lutsaan to initiate various self-help activities, including planting of trees, repairing of village handpumps, and petitioning the local administration to open a high school in the village (so they would not have to travel to the neighboring town).

Multi-Media Broadcasts and Campaign Activities

Launching a multi-media broadcast and various supportive activities is crucial to realizing an effective entertainment-education campaign. The effects of entertainment-education are greater when various supplementary activities are part of an integrated communication campaign. For instance, when, in the late 1980s, Johns Hopkins University’s Population Communication Services utilized rock music songs to promote sexual responsibility among teenagers in the Philippines, the songs were accompanied by print and broadcast advertisements, personal appearances by the two singers, label buttons urging “Say No to Sex,” posters, and a telephone hotline (“Dial-A-Friend”). These messages constituted a coordinated communication campaign, rather than just a popular song featuring lyrics with an educational message (Piotrow et al., 1997). While the cost and effort invested in a total campaign is greater than for just the entertainment-education message, the synergy of the communication campaign elements leads to greater effects in changing human behavior.

Similarly, because many structural obstacles prevent individuals from making healthy choices, incorporating an advocacy component into social change campaigns – to bring about enabling public health policy – increases the likelihood of sustained social change.

Process and Summative Evaluation

Entertainment-education campaigns can be strengthened through such process evaluation activities as analysis of audience letters, monitoring of clinic data (to track family planning adoption, for example), and content analysis of the entertainment-education messages (to determine if the scripts are consistent with the ethical framework and the values grid). Feedback can thus be provided in a timely manner to entertainment-education producers for appropriate mid-course corrections. Summative evaluation research can measure the effects of the entertainment-education campaign on audience behaviors. Often multi-method triangulation is employed to ascertain effects. For example, an entertainment-education radio soap opera, “Tinka Tinka Sukh” (Happiness Lies in Small Pleasures), in Hindi-speaking India was evaluated by a field experiment (using pre-post, treatment-control audience surveys), content analysis of the episodes and viewers’ letters, and a case study of one village in which the program had strong effects (Papa et. al., 2001).

In the next section, we profile an entertainment-education initiative in South Africa, which exemplifies how to creatively harness the entertainment-education strategy in development communication.

Soul City in South Africa

South Africa faces enormous health and development challenges: An estimated 20 percent of South Africans (some 4.2 million people) are HIV positive. For children under five years of age, the biggest single cause of death is diarrhea. Largely a legacy of apartheid, this dismal health record existed despite a highly developed mass media system in South Africa: Some 98 percent of South Africans regularly listen to radio, 65 percent regularly watch television, and over 40 percent regularly read newspapers and magazines.

The Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication, a non-governmental organization headquartered in Johannesburg, was established in 1992 to harness the power of mass media for health and development in South Africa. In the realm of entertainment-education programming, Soul City has pioneered several new directions, including the strategy of having an “on-going” multimedia vehicle to address high priority national health issues. Each year a series of mass media interventions are implemented, including the flagship “Soul City”, a 13-part prime-time television drama series broadcast on South Africa's most popular television channel, a 60-episode prime-time radio drama series broadcast in nine South African languages, covering all regional stations, and some 2.5 million health education booklets, designed around the popularity of the TV series’ characters, which are serialized by 11 major newspapers and distributed nationally.

Each year, after the television and radio series are broadcast, several campaign activities are implemented to keep people talking about Soul City and the issues it covers. Such initiatives include the “Soul City Search for Stars” (to recruit talent for next year’s television and radio series), and the “Soul City Health Care Worker of the Year” (to

recognize outstanding grassroots community workers). The ability of the Soul City Project (including its various media components) to attract advertising revenue allows an unusual opportunity to recover the costs of media production.

The first “Soul City” series (in 1994) focused on maternal and child health and HIV prevention. The second “Soul City” series (in 1996) focused on HIV prevention, housing and land reform, and tuberculosis and tobacco control. The third “Soul City” series (in 1997) dealt with HIV prevention, alcohol abuse, energy conservation, and violence prevention. The fourth “Soul City” series (in 1999) focused primarily on violence against women, youth sexuality and AIDS, hypertension, personal finance, and small business development.

Here we describe and analyze our experience in designing and implementing the Soul City IV entertainment-education series, especially focusing on its programmatic, social mobilization, and advocacy components to reduce domestic violence. Partnerships with community-based organizations were forged to enrich the impact of the multimedia edutainment vehicle.

Ground-Based Partnerships

Soul City IV extended on the core edutainment vehicle to include a partnership with the National Network on Violence Against Women (NNVAW), a coalition of over 1,500 activists and community organizations in South Africa. The five main objectives of this partnership were:

1. To inform audiences about women’s rights, spur interpersonal discussions about the topic, and change audience attitudes, practices, and social norms about gender-based violence.

2. To connect audience members to a toll free domestic violence telephone helpline, which provides crisis counseling and referral to community-based support structures.
3. To spark individual and community action to combat domestic violence.
4. To advocate for enabling legislation, thereby creating a supportive policy environment to combat domestic violence.

The partnership between Soul City and the NNVAW aimed to impact some of the entrenched structural barriers to change, for instance, a gender insensitive and highly unresponsive police and judicial system. In 1998, a year prior to the launch of the Soul City-NNVAW partnership, the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) was passed in parliament, but its implementation was inordinately delayed. So a key purpose of the Soul City-NNVAW partnership was to ensure the speedy and effective implementation of the DVA. Advocacy activities included direct lobbying of the government, media advocacy (to generate maximum coverage in the news media), combined with social mobilization in the form of community mass meetings and public marches.

5. To develop training materials on gender-based violence for counselors, the police, the judiciary, and health workers in South Africa.

Formative Research and Message Design

As with all Soul City media materials, extensive formative research was conducted to design the fourth series, including an extensive literature review on domestic violence, as well as focus groups and in-depth interviews with audience members, activists, and various gatekeepers to assess prevailing knowledge, attitudes, practices, and social norms related to domestic violence. Formative research suggested

that there was widespread belief among both men and women that domestic violence was "normal" and at times "justified", that it was "a private affair", and that the abused women was expected to "endure" the violence in order to "make the relationship work". These insights helped shape the content of the Soul City IV multimedia materials, which were pre-tested before finalizing the production.

In the Soul City IV television series, Thabang, a respected teacher and the husband of the much-loved Matlakala becomes abusive, resulting in severe consequences for her and their children. Audiences see Matlakala's self-esteem plummet and her highly depressive state in the wake of mounting family pressure to "make her marriage work" and "endure" her predicament. With the support of friends, community, and a telephone helpline, she learns about her legal rights as a woman, and other forms of social support for abused women. Matlakala files and wins a judicial case against Thabang for domestic abuse, and begins an inspiring journey to reclaim her life, founding a crisis center for abused women in the last episode. In prison, Thabang goes through a journey of self-examination as his life crumbles around him. His moment of realisation occurs when his son Bheki, in trouble at school for violence, cites Thabang as his "mentor". The series also depicts the community's shift from "silent collusion" with the abuse to its active opposition. In one dramatic instance, when Thabang is beating Matlakala, several dozen community members gather around his home and banged their pots and pans in protest (Usdin et al., 2000). By banging pots, the community expressed solidarity with Matlakala, bringing a hitherto private affair squarely into the realm of community discourse and action.

Impact of Soul City IV

The impact of the Soul City IV multimedia series and the Soul City-NNVAW partnership was independently evaluated through a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods: A before-after national sample survey, a community-based study of two sentinel sites, ethnographic observations, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and in-depth interviews, local and national media monitoring, document review, and secondary analysis of existing data bases.² This triangulated approach to data-collection was designed to assess the impact of Soul City IV at the level of the individual, community, and society. The key results from the Soul City IV, with a focus on violence against women, are presented here.

Soul City IV reached an estimated 16.2 million people in South Africa through radio, television and print, achieving a 79 percent penetration among its target audience and a 62 percent penetration among rural audiences. The television series consistently achieved top audience ratings, winning six coveted Avanti Awards, including the prize for South Africa's Best Television Drama.

An analysis of the quantitative data showed that knowledge about the various aspects of the law on domestic violence increased significantly among the Soul City IV audience members. Those exposed to the media intervention were significantly more likely to say that domestic violence is not a "private affair", and that abused women should not "put up with it", compared to those not exposed to the Soul City series (but who had similar social and media access profiles). Audience members with higher levels of exposure to the Soul City IV were more likely to recognize ill-treatment as "abuse", more likely to disclose abusive experiences, and more likely to reflect on how to stop

abusive behaviors. Qualitative insights, such as the following statement from a married male member in a rural area, provided additional support for such a claim:

“Since I have started watching Soul City I have realized that I am an abuser....I have tried to change and it’s not that easy....Because I have that picture of abuse in my mind when ever I think of doing it, I stop. It's quite tough to make that conscious decision but you have to stick to it and as time goes by it will be easy just to talk about your problem without even resulting to violence.”

An analysis of the qualitative data suggested that Soul City IV’s audience members identified with role models in the TV series (such as Matlakala), and learned various plausible alternatives and coping strategies to combat domestic violence. The quantitative data showed that the Soul City IV series also stimulated public discussion and dialogue on domestic violence. Some 36 percent of the audience members talked to someone about domestic violence in the period during and shortly after exposure to the series. Overall, the research shows that Soul City can be credited with enhancing audience members’ self and collective efficacy, and for creating a supportive environment for individuals and communities to take action.

Those exposed to the Soul City IV series were significantly more likely to tell the abused person about the telephone helpline, and significantly more willing to call the police in the event of someone being abused. The quantitative data shows that the Soul City IV series influenced audience members to help other abused women, as well as to help themselves. Some 14 percent of the respondents said that they did something to stop domestic violence in their lives, or in the lives of someone close to them, in the period

shortly after the Soul City TV series went off air. For instance, an urban female viewer noted:

“Soul City has really helped people a lot. The first time when I started watching it, it was when there was abuse, and at that time I had a friend who was being abused by her husband....I told her that she should watch [Soul City] and see what happens if a man does not look after his family. She did not want to come but then I did not take “no” for an answer. She eventually came, and when she saw it, she was very grateful. And then after the show, she said, ‘you know, Soul City has shown me something. From now on I know that when he starts to beat me, I must go to the police station and report him’. I said to her even if he beats you inside your home, always remember that I will help you. I can even ask the support of other women, like what those women did in Soul City when they made a noise [by bangiong pots] outside that woman’s home when her husband was beating her.”

The Pot Banging and Telephone Helpline “Markers”

There were two unique “markers” (or identifiable characteristics) that were introduced by the Soul City-NNVAW partnership in the Soul City IV series, which helped in assessing its direct effects: (1) the pot-banging incident in which Matlakala’s neighbors voice their public protest against Thabang’s abuse, and (2) the telephone helpline.

Survey results showed that those exposed to the Soul City IV series were significantly more willing to stand outside the house of an abuser and bang pots.

Anecdotal reports of pot or bottle banging were noted in various communities. For example, patrons at a local pub in Thembisa collectively banged bottles upon witnessing a man abusing his girlfriend. Pot-banging occurred also in Khayelitsha township in Cape Town to stop domestic abuse. Some four percent of the respondents said they had made a noise in public to protest against domestic violence.

Further, the Soul City-NNVAW partnership was highly effective in raising the audience members' knowledge and awareness of organizations working to stop domestic violence, and in enhancing access to local support services through the telephone helpline. Some 39 percent of the survey respondents knew about the helpline. Among those who knew, 16 percent of the women and 13 percent of the men had saved the telephone number for future use. Four percent of those who knew about the helpline said that they had called the helpline at least once. Some 180,000 calls were answered by the telephone helpline in the five months after the Soul City TV series began broadcasting (the series itself was broadcast over a three month period). Funding constraints restricted the number of available telephone lines, resulting in a large number of calls not being answered. Telephone records show that, in one province, some 95 percent of the attempted calls could not be answered during peak times. When these results were fed back to policy-makers, additional funds were generated to expand the number of telephone helplines and to continue this service on a permanent basis.

Advocacy and Mobilization

The advocacy component of the Soul City IV series (in partnership with NNVAW) led to a speedy implementation of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) in South Africa on December 15, 1999, a few weeks after the Soul City IV television series had

completed its broadcasts. Direct lobbying, supported by public awareness raising by the Soul City IV multimedia intervention, and the Soul City-NNVAW partnership, played a key role in raising awareness of domestic violence as a national priority among government departments, expediting the implementation of DVA. The social mobilization at grassroots level through the NNVAW network and the media advocacy campaign elements contributed to the implementation of this desired legislative action. As a female viewer in KwaMhlanga stated: “Soul City influenced us to organize the citizen’s march, emotions were high”. A representative of the South African Police Service noted: “There were pressures [to implement the DVA]....from occasions where people held marches and stuff like that....”.

A preliminary analysis of print media coverage over the intervention period (during the second half of 1999) shows that some 4,300 articles and electronic bulletins on violence against women appeared in approximately 280 mainstream print publications that were monitored (including magazines and newspapers) and on commercial and public broadcast stations nationally. In the print media, nearly half of the coverage centered around domestic violence. Some one in five articles (19 percent) directly referred to Soul City or the NNVAW as being the interventionist (These preliminary results are underestimates, as they do not include mentions of the NNVAW membership organizations). Government departments involved in the implementation of DVA identified the extensive mass media coverage as being an important motivator in shaping their response, and directly credited Soul City and NNVAW in facilitating the speedy implementation of the DVA.

Further, Soul City IV mobilized communities to take action. For example, in Mamelodi, a township close to Pretoria, a group of women protestors marched to the court where a man was on trial for battering his wife to death, and shouted “Thabang, Thabang” – the name of the wife-beater in the Soul City IV storyline. A few weeks previously, these women actively participated in the victim’s funeral rites, an activity that is usually conducted by men.

Overall, the results of the Soul City IV evaluation suggest the great potential of entertainment-education programs, enhanced with social mobilization and advocacy activities, to significantly impact individual, community, and societal changes.

CONCLUSIONS

The entertainment-education approach is a promising development communication strategy, and has potential to impact on the African continent. This versatile strategy can be utilized in a variety of media and media genres, to address a variety of development problems (for instance, illiteracy, gender inequality, or racial intolerance), on a local, regional, or national level, and as one or more components in a multi-media campaign. If implemented correctly, as the Soul City experience demonstrates, the entertainment-education strategy can offer important advantages to development officials of national governments, broadcasting networks, educators, commercial sponsors, and to audiences.

In 2002, Soul City materials, through local in-country partnerships, are being produced and distributed in neighboring Botswana, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia.

Africa has a rich tradition of producing media-based entertainment-education programs. Even before Soul City was launched, since the mid-1980s, Zimbabwe-based film-maker John Riber has produced films such as "Consequences", "It's Not Easy", and "Yellow Card", dealing with teenage pregnancy, sexual responsibility, and HIV/AIDS prevention, respectively. These films have been highly popular with audiences in a dozen African countries (Singhal & Svenkerud, 1994). UNICEF's more recent "Sara" animation films have also been highly effective in various countries of eastern and southern Africa. "Sara", based on the story of a young girl role model, Sara, focused on gender equality in raising children, and on reducing the vulnerability of the girl child to health and sexuality problems. For instance, "Sara" attacked female genital cutting in certain parts of Africa, a practice which increases the risk of HIV infection. "Sara" is a multimedia entertainment-education project, which includes several episodes of the animated film (each dealing with a specific educational issue, for example, female literacy), radio drama series, comic books, school books, posters, short stories, music, and puppetry. Evaluations show that the materials are highly popular and educationally effective (Singhal & Rogers, 2003).

However, implementers of the entertainment-education strategy in Africa and elsewhere must be mindful of the ethical dilemmas embodied in the question: Who should determine what is right for whom (Brown & Singhal, 1990)? Entertainment-education can take several pro-active steps to mitigate this dilemma. For instance, establishing an ethical framework for the entertainment-education initiative can ensure that the values promoted are enshrined in the UN International Declaration of Human Rights. The use of local writers and creative teams, as is the case with the Soul City

project in South Africa, can help ensure that the edutainment program is culturally-sensitive and incorporates local language. The use of subject-matter specialists to review program scripts can ensure that the technical information provided in the program is accurate. The participation of members of the audience in the research process can ensure that the contents are appropriate. The systematic depiction of positive and negative role-models of behaviors, and realistic consequences of these behaviors, allows the audience to draw their own conclusions, rather than being preached to in a didactic manner. Further, the conduct of formative and summative evaluation research can help (1) in analyzing the audiences' needs and cultural aspirations, (2) in producing relevant and user-friendly media materials, and (3) in understanding the intended and unintended effects of the entertainment-education intervention.

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ENDNOTES

¹ The present chapter draws upon Singhal and Rogers (1999; 2001).

² Several studies were conducted to make an independent evaluation of the Soul City IV series. These include (1) “An Evaluation of Soul City 4” by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE), T. Samuels, J. Mollentz, R. Olusanya, M. Claassens, S. Braehmenr and Z. Kimmie, October 2000; (2) “Soul City Series 4 - Qualitative Impact Assessment”, data collection and data processing by Social Surveys, under supervision of K. Hall and K. Daniels, Audience Reception analysis by E. Scheepers, Violence Against Women analysis by E. Scheepers and K. Daniels, October 2000; (3) “Soul City Series 4 - Qualitative Impact Assessment”, data collection and data processing by Social Surveys, under supervision of K. Hall and K. Daniels, analysis by E. Scheepers, October 2000; (4) “Impact Evaluation of Soul City in partnership with the NNVAW”, researched for Soul City by Women’s Health Project, N. Christofides, January 2001; and (5) “Impact of the Soul City / NNVAW partnership on Policy Implementation at a Provincial Government level”. Researched for Soul City by Strategy and Tactics, M.J. Smith, January 2001.