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ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION, INTERNATIONAL

Entertainment-education (E-E) is a communication strategy to bring about behavioral and social change. E-E 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, to create favorable attitudes, to shift social norms, and to change overt behavior. Its general purpose is to contribute to the process of directed social change, which can occur at the level of an individual, a community, or a society. *Takalani Sesame* and *Cuando Estamos Juntos* are examples of E-E—from South Africa and Latin America, respectively—directed to children and adolescents.

TAKALANI SESAME

Kami is a mustard-colored, furry, bear-like muppet sporting a mop of brown hair and a beaded blue vest.

She loves nature, telling stories, and playing with children. Kami's parents died when she was young, and she is HIV-positive. In 2002, Kami, the muppet, joined the cast of *Takalani Sesame*, South Africa's version of *Sesame Street*, to help 3-to-7-year-olds (and their families) understand HIV and AIDS, including ways to cope with it. *Takalani* means "be happy" in the local Venda language, and Kami's name is derived from the Tswana word for acceptance. In a world where HIV-positive children are often isolated, demonized, and victimized, Kami symbolizes a message of hope, possibility, and understanding. *Takalani Sesame* is one of the most popular television programs among children in South Africa.

CUANDO ESTEMOS JUNTOS AND DÉTENTE

In 1986, a unique communication project targeted to young people was launched in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Johns Hopkins University's Center for Communication Programs and local in-country partners produced two rock music songs, a highly popular genre among teenagers, promoting teenage sexual responsibility, *Cuando Estemos Juntos* (When We Are Together) and *Détente* (Wait). *Cuando Estemos Juntos* was number one on popular music charts within 6 weeks of its release in Mexico, and soon it was a top-rated song in 11 other Spanish-speaking Latin American countries. In *Cuando Estemos Juntos*, the teenage singers told their audience not to have sex. Using the song to communicate this message was a much more effective strategy than having a preachy message emanate from parents or priests. The typical Mexican radio station played *Cuando Estemos Juntos* about 14 times *per day* for the 4 months of the song's greatest popularity. *Détente* was a more typical hit song and was played "only" 5 times per day for several months. Thus, listeners were repeatedly exposed to the educational content of these rock music songs.

HOW E-E CONTRIBUTES TO SOCIAL CHANGE

The entertainment-education strategy contributes to social change in two ways. First, it can influence audience awareness, attitudes, and behavior toward a socially desirable end. Here, the anticipated effects are located in the individual audience members. One example is the Tanzanian radio soap opera, *Twende na Wakati* (Let's Go With the Times), which convinced

several hundred thousand sexually active adults to adopt HIV prevention behaviors (such as using condoms and reducing their number of sexual partners). Second, the E-E strategy can influence the audience's external environment to help create the necessary conditions for social change at the system level. Here, the major effects are located in the interpersonal and sociopolitical spheres of the audience's external environment. The entertainment-education media can serve as social mobilizer, advocate, or agenda-setter, influencing public and policy initiatives in socially desirable directions. For instance, the popular South African television series *Soul City* mobilized community action and women's marches, and it speeded passage of domestic violence legislation in South Africa through media, public, and policy advocacy.

FORMATIVE, PROCESS, AND SUMMATIVE RESEARCH IN E-E

E-E projects benefit from formative, process, and summative research. Formative evaluation research is conducted with the intended audience in order to design the entertainment-education intervention.

Formative research is conducted while an activity, process, or system is being developed or is ongoing, in order to improve its effectiveness. Research-based information about the characteristics, needs, and preferences of a target audience sharpens the design of entertainment-education. For instance, in the South African E-E series *Soul Buddyz*, directed to children 8 to 12 years old and their families, messages about self-esteem were built around ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic lines. Formative research showed that children who were "different" in any way were teased and bullied by others. The self-esteem message was continuously conveyed through the composition of the *Soul Buddyz* friendship group, which included people from different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds with different abilities but who were friends and supportive and respectful of each other.

Entertainment-education interventions are further strengthened through such *process evaluation activities* as the 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 whether scripts are consistent with desired educational goals). Feedback can thus be provided in a timely manner to entertainment-education media producers for appropriate mid-course corrections.

Summative evaluation research measures the effects of the entertainment-education campaign on audience behavior. For example, an E-E radio soap opera *Tinka Tinka Sukh* (Happiness Lies in Small Pleasures), which promoted the education of girls in Hindi-speaking north India, was evaluated by a field experiment (using pre- and post-treatment and control audience surveys), content analysis of the episodes and of listeners' letters, and a case study of one village in which the program had strong effects.

E-E'S PROMISE AND DILEMMAS

By 2005, several hundred E-E interventions have been implemented, mainly for health-related educational issues, and many directed at children and young people, especially in the developing countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Research evaluations of the E-E strategy suggest that such programs have the potential to engage audience members, earn high audience ratings, and also serve their social development goals.

However, the use of the E-E strategy necessarily involves ethical dilemmas. For instance, is it right to use the mass media as a persuasive tool of social change? Also, who decides what represents a desirable prosocial behavior? It might be hard to argue against the educational value of E-E programs that promote HIV prevention; however, for certain other issues, such as promotion of condom use among youth, arguments can be made for different positions. Some may argue for the value of protecting teenagers from sexually transmitted diseases, yet others may argue that free availability of condoms promotes teenage promiscuity.

—Arvind Singhal

See also Advertising Campaigns, Prosocial; HIV/AIDS, Media Prevention Programs and; Media Effects, Models of; Public Health Campaigns; Public Service Announcements (PSAs); Television, Prosocial Content in

FURTHER READINGS

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