

**RADIO EDUTAINMENT FOR THE RURAL
MALAWIAN YOUTH: CASE STUDIES OF
STORY WORKSHOP'S ZIMACHITIKA AND
ADRA'S TIKUFERANJI**

(MA Thesis)

by

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Declaration

I, ***Smith Likongwe***, hereby certify that this is my own original work and has not been submitted in part or in full for any examination and is being submitted for examination with my full knowledge and authorization.

Signature.....

Date.....

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

Main Supervisor:.....
Name Signature Date

Head of Department:.....
Name Signature Date

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Leria and my children Suzanne and Smith Jr. for persevering hardships during my years of study and understanding the divided attention shared among my work, studies and family.

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I wish to wholeheartedly acknowledge the assistance of all the people that helped to shape my work to the present standard.

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ABSTRACT

Radio is the only means of mass media that is able to reach the majority of people in most developing countries such as Malawi. Such being the case there are a lot of people that turn to radio for both education and entertainment. This thesis examines the extent to which radio edutainment has been used to communicate for development.

The research takes us through two of the most popular radio plays in Malawi namely *Zimachitika* and *Tikuferanji* and puts under a microscope the requisites to the success of the two radio plays. It explores the requirements of successful behaviour change methodologies applied and what leads to failure in behaviour change in spite of popularity gained by radio drama programmes. It takes us through sentiments of the intended beneficiaries of the radio drama. There are listeners who believe that characters in the radio drama are their pillars of strength in the absence of trusted real life relations. In addition there are listeners that have been able to display positive transformation in their livelihoods as a result of listening to the plays. The new dimension brought by this thesis is the process that should be used to make radio edutainment viable for Malawian rural youth. This is the meticulous application of a values grid without losing the entertainment aspect of the whole process.

The thesis posits that radio edutainment has a lot of potential to work as a substitute for live classrooms with teachers if the planning is both thorough and properly informed with relevant theories.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTERS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Problem Statement	6
1.3	What is edutainment?	9
1.4	Literature Review	10
1.5	Main objective	18
1.5.1	Specific objectives	18
1.6	Theoretical framework	19
1.7	Methodology	27
1.8	Significance to the field of development communications	31
1.9	Organisation of the thesis	35

2. CASE STUDY 1: ZIMACHITIKA

2.1	The Story Workshop	37
2.1.1	Zimachitika – the background	38
2.1.2	Treatment	44
2.2	What the listeners said	50
2.2.1	Learning through radio drama characters	51
2.2.2	Substitute for live teacher or advisor?	57
2.2.3	HIV and AIDS in the play	62
2.2.4	How representative is the community in the play?	64
2.2.5	Sample response from listeners' letters	65
2.2.6	A sip from the well of wisdom?	65

3. CASE STUDY 2: TIKUFERANJI	
3.1 Adventist Development and Relief Agency	68
3.1.1 Tikuferanji – the background	69
3.1.2 Any policy followed?	70
3.2 Characters	71
3.3 Sampling the storylines	73
3.4 What the listeners said	77
3.4.1 Targetting	80
3.4.2 Point Blank	81
3.4.3 Unintended influence	84
4. CONCLUSION	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
Primary Sources	95
Focus Group Discussions	100
Secondary Sources	101
APPENDICES	107

1.1

INTRODUCTION

Malawi is one of the developing countries that are experiencing transformation in so many different sectors of the economy and people's livelihood. Developing countries are the ones that have relatively low standards of living, an undeveloped industrial base, and a moderate to low Human Development Index (HDI) score and per capita income, but are however, in a phase of economic development¹. Ingham² states that all these countries especially those in Africa have significant external debt problems requiring external assistance. The Human Development Report 2007/2008 also recognises Malawi as one of the developing countries, with a goal, just like other developing countries, to move into a different and better category.

Considerable changes have taken place in the agriculture and health sectors among others. Although the HIV and AIDS crisis cannot be ignored, the agricultural sector comes as one of the top priorities in terms of influencing the development pace of the country because it is the backbone of the economy since Malawi depends on agriculture not only for food but also for its national income. Smallholder agriculture accounts for 80% of Malawi's food production and 65% of agricultural Gross Domestic Product. The total Gross Domestic Product from the agricultural sector combining smallholder agriculture with commercial farming is between 34.7 % and 36%. The sector is

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developing_country

² Ingham B, 1997

responsible for about 80% of all exports³. Programmes have been introduced to try and improve food security in Malawi. Some of such programmes are the distribution of free seeds and fertilizers to farmers, the handing out of ‘starter packs’ and later the provision of targeted subsidized fertilisers. Farming methods and new techniques have been introduced almost all the time to the Malawian populace. However, while people have been bombarded with various farming methods, experts and authorities in the field have rarely worked together to harmonise the messages and the appropriate modes of their delivery to various stakeholders. There are issues of encroachment into other people’s fields and job security at stake. Some experts believe that they would be compromising on their expertise if they let others make additions or amend their instructions to be in line with other schools of thought.

If farming is to prove profitable beyond hand to mouth, bringing about positive changes in the lives of people, there has to be a systematic way of reaching out to the stakeholders. Whereas the agricultural sector plays a major role in the development of Malawi as a country, it should be borne in mind that the health sector is just as crucial because agricultural productivity can only take place with the required vigour if the people are healthy. The health sector in Malawi has also grown. Various facilities and infrastructure have been and continues to be put in place. Major campaigns on the prevention of various potential ailments including HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis have been carried out. What is disheartening is that the majority of HIV infections occur amongst young people, particularly those between the ages of thirteen and twenty four ⁴.

³ <http://www.new-agri.co.uk/01-1/countryp.html>, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/7231.htm>

⁴ <http://www.avert.org/aids-malawi.htm>

These are the people that are supposed to be the turbine of development. Agricultural activities are much more prevalent in rural than in urban areas. But these people living in rural areas and providing the country with food and cash crops are more vulnerable to diseases due to low levels of knowledge. The Malawi Demographic and Health Surveys in 2000 and 2004 indicate that ‘knowledge of means to prevent HIV/AIDS is lowest in the young, sexually inexperienced, and rural population’⁵. According to recent findings released to the press in 2008 by the Department of HIV and AIDS and Nutrition in the Office of the President and Cabinet HIV prevalence levels are still spreading faster in rural than in urban areas.

Such being the case, what special efforts are there to target the rural poor so that development is not only sustained but also improves? For meaningful development to take place there is need for well coordinated interventions in the area of communication. Can anyone out there spell out what is being done? There seems to be a gap in this area.

There are different views of the meaning of development. The Modernization Theory suggests that development is the move from depending on local and traditional modes of living to dependency on mechanisation, including empowerment of the people deemed to be underprivileged would constitute stages to development⁶. Then there is the critical perspective thinking about development. This is a challenge to economic expansion and a proponent of political and economic restructuring to produce a more even distribution of rewards in society. This is informed by Marxist insights. Then there is the Liberation

⁵ Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2000 – NSO, 2001

⁶ Burkey S, 1993; Long N, 1980

Theory. This derives largely from the belief that people want to become free and self-reliant and have internal capacity to develop themselves on their own terms.⁷ What is applicable in this thesis is a combination of the Modernization Theory and Liberation Theory.

In simple terms where development means change for the better there has to be well-planned change agents. A lot of communication has to take place to initiate development. Although development communications is not a new field in Malawi, not much has been documented. Health communication radio programmes such as ‘Umoyo wa mtundu wathu’ (Health for the nation) and ‘Umoyo ndi chitukuko m’Malawi’ (Health and Development in Malawi) have been broadcast on Malawi Broadcasting Corporation radio 1, just as agricultural programmes such as ‘Bwalo la Alimi’ (Farmers’ Forum). These are just some of the very few radio programmes designed to complement extension and rural health communication. Apart from these there have been other efforts to introduce different improved farming practices to people. These development communications have most likely been taking place almost subconsciously and without competent planning. It is high time something was done officially so that practitioners should have proper grounding on development communications.

The Communication for Behaviour Change Strategy for the National AIDS Commission (NAC) conducted a survey on the effectiveness of different channels of communication and ranked the channels in order of the one reaching most people and also the ones considered to be most effective. Radio drama and comedy was ranked first followed by

⁷ Melkote S & Steeves H, 2001

stage drama, music and dance, highly visualized information, education and communication (IEC) materials and finally posted and published slogans⁸. The Story Workshop, a media non-governmental organization has also done several surveys that have all revealed that radio is the cheapest and fastest means of communication.

The youth are at an experimental stage of life and therefore take on more new challenges than adults that would need to see something tangible before delving into anything. When new farming methods are introduced through the radio most adults would wait to meet an expert in person and see how the new method works while young ones would go on experimenting on their own without waiting for the expert or indeed a demonstration. This suggests that limited effects theories work more on adults than children.

Drama being the mirror of life that it is believed to be, radio drama is viewed by many as a companion to many people in times of need. The other types of drama would usually require one to go to some place where the theatrical activities are taking place and in turn the theatre practitioners or development communicators have to be physically present at such places. Radio drama is therefore the most preferred mode of communication. This is because leisure and entertainment have become increasingly important due to changes in lifestyles and the global economic progress has enabled the previously hard to reach rural poor increasingly accessible through the mass media at a relatively low cost using radio.

Although there are indications that young people are influenced more through radio than adults in developing countries and through television in developed countries a formal

⁸ NAC, 2005

research has not yet been done to prove these assertions beyond reasonable doubt. There is also no proof that some of the actions they do are a direct result of listening to the radio.

This calls for a specific study to determine what makes people change their behavioural patterns apart from the physical and financial resources at their disposal. As stated earlier there must be communication for people to make decisions to change their lives. Knowing radio is the media that reaches more people than any other and that the acquisition and maintenance of basic radio sets is relatively cheaper than other means such as television sets and newspapers there is need to isolate the extent to which the rural youth in Malawi are influenced by radio programmes in carrying out development activities.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

When people want to relax in the villages, there are several ways in which they do it. One way is to listen to the radio and the radio has different types of programmes one of which is radio drama. There are indications that in Malawi radio drama is very popular.⁹ The radio play *Tikuferanji* was voted number 1 radio programme in Malawi during the 2005 Entertainers of the year programme. The radio play *Zimachitika* has been voted programme of the year for four successive years starting in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002.

⁹ Dzimidzi & Khembo, 2003

These voters' results were announced on New Year's Day of the mentioned year reflecting the results of the previous year.¹⁰

Initial informal research conducted by the researcher revealed that the producers of these plays know that the plays are popular but cannot explain exactly what has made the plays popular apart from the belief that they address pertinent issues to society. Would this mean that they achieve success by chance?

There is an increase in the number of plays that are now going on air on the increasing number of radio stations and there does not seem to be informed reasons why drama should be part of the radio programming apart from entertainment. Producers state that apart from entertainment the programmes do inform and educate but they do not produce evidence that education indeed takes place. Attempts have been made to use these radio plays for social change but at present there seems to be strategies used more by chance than by design and so it makes the situation difficult to become successful during follow up attempts. Sometimes the fun derived from the radio drama just ends in fun.

It would be worthwhile to study how radio drama producers and all concerned come up with radio plays and understand what they would need to do so as to achieve their goals of communicating for development. Could these radio plays be used for popular education?

¹⁰ *Zimachitika* Comic Book 1

In some cases formal schooling is not appreciated because there may not be immediate tangible returns. According to findings gathered by this researcher, basic reasons for learning are generally to know where buses are going to or to be able to read letters. Where schooling is seen by others as a burden especially in rural areas where people seem to have other ‘more important’ issues to attend to such as farming to be able to achieve food security, could radio drama be used to cover up what they may have missed by not attending or partially attending formal schooling? This research was set up partly to investigate whether radio drama can be used in Malawi purposefully to cover up what may not have been learnt in formal schooling because the intended beneficiaries did not reach the right levels of schooling or because the formality may have put them off.

Could the combination of fun and education be promoted through radio drama? What role would edutainment play in bringing about development? Trend¹¹ suggests that there should be replacements for formal schooling. Could this be a worthwhile option to take?

‘Conventional schooling begins the process of depersonalization and control by fragmenting knowledge into categories and units of measurement. Not only are the relationships among different ways of thinking removed, but learning is conceived as something that occurs only in school and at a specific point in one’s life.....Given the difficulty within the mechanisms of ‘formal’ education, it is fortunate that a broad range of options exists. These fall under the rubric of popular education’.¹²

¹¹ Trend D, 1992

¹² Ibid, pp. 123-124

There has not been research on the practicality of the method of edutainment in Malawi apart from project evaluations.

1.3 WHAT IS EDUTAINMENT?

Edutainment is inter-used with entertainment-education. Singhal and Rogers define it as ‘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 of individuals and communities’.¹³

Singhal is also quoted to have described it as ‘a performance which captures the interest or attention of an individual, giving them pleasure, amusement, or gratification while simultaneously helping the individual to develop a skill to achieve a particular end by boosting his/her mental, moral or physical powers’.¹⁴

Edutainment is not a very common word used in everyday language. The wikipedia encyclopedia describes edutainment as ‘a form of entertainment designed to educate as well as to amuse. Edutainment typically seeks to instruct or socialize its audience by embedding lessons in some familiar form of entertainment....most often, edutainment seeks either to tutor in one or more specific subjects, or to change behaviour by engendering specific sociocultural attitudes.’¹⁵

¹³ Singhal A & Rogers E, 2003, p.289

¹⁴ Barker K & Sabido M, 2005, p.20

¹⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entertainment-Education>

Functions of edutainment have been presented by some analysts as ‘...an instrument of social change by reaching both large and small audiences in ways that have relevance to people’s lives and which allow them to develop an understanding of issues. Entertainment can reflect culture and thus can resonate with its audience in a way in which other forms of communication find hard to rival’.¹⁶

Barker and Sabido¹⁷ describe the functions of entertainment-education or edutainment as to entertain and educate audiences in order to catalyze social change in a socially desirable manner. The term ‘edutainment’ was coined by Bob Heyman while producing documentaries for the National Geographic Society. According to other sources, Peter Catalano first coined this phrase in the late 1990s as ‘he travelled around the country **edutaining** schoolchildren about writing and illustrating.’¹⁸

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has been carried out by different people on the effectiveness of radio to different types of listeners. Wilson K. Makulumiza Nkhoma¹⁹ explored the effectiveness of radio broadcast programmes tailored for and directed at study centre learners in Mathematics. This study was almost straightforward because what was prepared for the radio broadcast was carefully planned by teachers and was meant to be a direct replacement of a live teacher with the only difference that there would be no opportunity for students to ask questions. The listeners were also conscious of the fact that they were

¹⁶ Japhet et al, p.3

¹⁷ Barker K & Sabido M, 2005

¹⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entertainment-Education>

¹⁹ Nkhoma W, 1990

going to sit for examinations and were bound to take the programme seriously. While what lacks is generally the need to have radio programmes that will develop and urge the youth into action, Makulumiza Nkhoma's study revealed that 'when instructional media are properly organized or properly used they can produce excellent results'. The assumption is usually that the youth grasp development communications messages from their school work in subjects like Agriculture and Health Education. But the reality on the ground is that oftentimes the teaching is done hurriedly by teachers and the pupils do not normally have both the resources and time to internalise the lessons. They simply memorise, aiming to pass examinations. Medina²⁰ suggests that unless children see the sense of empowerment in the lessons they take, they would not normally take studies seriously. Besides, it is not everybody who goes to school. As such there is special need for attention to be paid to youth programmes especially at village level and this is what calls for research to find appropriate communications strategies to make the youth more proactive in their own areas.

Not much has been written on Malawian development communications although it is an age old sector. This has largely been in radio agricultural extension programmes. Several radio programmes aimed at influencing the behaviour of the youth such as Population Service International's *Youth Alert*, whose emphasis has been fun have been produced. A baseline survey carried out by The Story Workshop in 2003 reveals that no evidence has been produced to show that productive development in the areas of agriculture or health, apart from sexual health, has occurred. Oftentimes information is aimed at adults with the

²⁰ Medina Y, 2006

hope that the adults shall communicate to the youth in their areas. The youth would either be their children or any other youth in the community. The anomaly here is that the youth are mostly the ones that may have the energy to practically carry out the operations that could transform the communities into achieving food self sufficiency and maintaining healthy lives. It is high time that research was carried out to isolate the youth and especially the rural youth in development communications to determine not only challenges they face, but also to actively participate in development.

The field of edutainment or entertainment-education has been explored by several practitioners in other countries and there is a considerable amount of literature discussing the successes of this type of development communications.

Singhal et al,²¹ writing on edutainment in a study entitled “Harnessing the Entertainment-Education Strategy in Africa: The Soul City Intervention in South Africa”, highlights the challenges of edutainment and the possible successes when properly used. He talks of how people have been moved to change their behaviour using the edutainment approach pointing out that the Soul City programme has combined almost all the approaches like TV, video and radio. He is critical of it in that it has not disaggregated its audience according to age groups. In addition to studying Soul City, Singhal et al²² also looked at a Tanzanian radio programme, *Twende na Wakati* (Let’s Go With the Times). He also besides it examines the effectiveness of *Tinka Tinka Sukh*

²¹ Singhal et al, 2002

²² Ibid

(*Happiness Lies in Small Things*), an Indian radio soap opera. Tafese Refera²³ reviewed the Ethiopian experience. The radio plays under scrutiny are *Yeken Kignit* (Looking Over One's Daily Life) and *Dhimbiba* (Getting the Best out of Life). In all cases it has been shown that edutainment is a viable means of communication in social development.

In the United Kingdom, research also reveals that *The Archers*, the first known radio soap opera which went on air for the first time on 1 January 1951 on BBC, piloted in 1950, was created by Godfrey Baseley. Initially written by Geoffrey Webb and Edward J. Mason, the programme was first produced in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture. Conceived as a means of disseminating information to farmers and smallholders to help increase productivity in the post-war years of rationing and food shortages, *The Archers* is said to have been hugely successful with an estimated 60% of regular adult listenership in Britain. As such, it was later used as a propaganda vehicle to reinforce notions of Englishness, besides rebuilding post-war Britain. Used as a vehicle to drive home several themes such as resentment of the working class, it now deals with a wide range of contemporary issues including illicit affairs, drug abuse, rape and gay marriage. By 7th February 2008 a total of 15,393 episodes had gone on air.²⁴ Though *The Archers* is credited to have changed lives of many people for decades, its focus on people's lives has changed, prompting its critics to question its relevance.

In South America the edutainment strategy was discovered more or less by accident. Miguel Sabido, working in Peru in 1969, introduced a television soap opera *Simplemente*

²³ Refera T, 2004

²⁴ http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Archers

Maria. In the programme, Maria, a migrant to the capital city, faced tragic setbacks, like becoming a single mother. Working during the day and enrolled in adult literacy classes in the evening, Maria climbed the social-economic ladder of success through her hard work. Strongly motivated and through Maria's sewing skills with a Singer machine, *Simplemente Maria* attracted very high audience ratings, and the sale of Singer sewing machines boomed in Peru. This also resulted in a growing number of young girls enrolling in adult literacy and sewing classes. Inspired by the audience success and the unintended educational effects of *Simplemente Maria*, Miguel Sabido, a television writer-producer-director in Mexico, developed a methodology for creating entertainment-education soap operas.²⁵

As indicated earlier, Tanzanian *Twende na Wakati (Let's Go With the Times)* is one shining example of successful edutainment radio programmes in the world along with *Tinka Tinka Sukh* from India. *Twende na Wakati* was first introduced in 1991²⁶ and by 1993, its evaluations showed that there was change in myths and misconceptions about HIV and AIDS to the effect that the president of Population Communications International (PCI) convinced Radio Tanzania (RTD) to produce a radio soap aimed at family planning and reproductive health behaviour, including HIV/AIDS prevention.²⁷ As a result, in a two-week workshop organized later, the first two hundred and four episodes were created alongside fifty seven educational themes. The programme finally went on air in July 1993 and it is aired twice every week during prime time for thirty minutes from 6.30 p.m. The programme is credited to have influenced several hundred

²⁵ Singhal A & Rogers E, 2003

²⁶ McKee et al., 2004

²⁷ Myers M, 2002

thousand sexually active adults to adopt HIV preventive behaviours such as the use of condoms and the reduction in the number of sexual partners.

The programme relies on Mkwaju, a promiscuous truck driver with seven children who contracts HIV. Tunu, Mkwaju's subservient wife, stays at home to care for the children while Mkwaju continues to squander his money on women and alcohol. Tunu decides to empower herself by starting a small business of selling vegetables in the market. The business goes on very well and gives her self-confidence. She passionately cares for Mkwaju until his death. Mkwaju's legacy lives on through his son, Kibuyu, who is beginning to follow his father's footsteps. Kibuyu smokes Indian hemp and is a pickpocket. Kibuyu would either completely follow his father's footsteps or learn from his mother how to succeed in life.²⁸

For the Indian *Tinka Tinka Sukh (Happiness Lies in Small Things)* a community based listening group of Lutsaan village rejected dowry after being challenged by its ills portrayed in the soap opera. Produced in Hindi language, it was planned from 1994 and production began in September 1995 with the first episode going on air in February 1996. It is set in a farming community, focusing on the family of Chaudhri, his wife Chaudrian and their son Suraj. This family promotes anti-dowry and other gender equality issues as well as the need to have in place a self-sufficient harmonious village. As a result of listening to the play one hundred and eighty four residents of a village known as Lutsaan in Uttar Pradesh wrote that 'listening to Tinka Tinka Sukh has benefited all listeners of

²⁸ Barker K & Sabido M, 2005

our village, especially the women...Listeners of our village now actively oppose the practice of dowry – they neither give nor receive dowry.’²⁹

Singhal and Rodgers³⁰ have given a sort of a blueprint for creation of radio soap operas. Among other pertinent issues in the business of edutainment they note with concern what happened in one production in South Africa as one of the blunders to be avoided by practitioners of edutainment. Overzealousness and lack of proper planning can lead into investing a lot of money as done in the production of a reworked version of the musical *Sarafina* to deal with HIV/AIDS prevention. ‘The resulting \$2.5 million musical production scored highly on its musical content, but contained several pieces of inaccurate (and even dangerous) public health information. Subject-matter specialists on HIV/AIDS had not been consulted, and the production elements were not pre-tested. This expensive intervention did little to encourage HIV prevention.’³¹

The Ethiopian serial radio play *Yeken Kignit (Looking over one’s daily life)* is recognized as having made a lasting impression on listeners. It is a play that ‘raised issues related to family planning, education, women’s right (gender inequality), environmental conservation, HIV/AIDS, the need to expand education, social infrastructure, and modernization in the rural Ethiopia so as to bring balanced development’.³² The play has been able to change people’s perceptions on issues of HIV/AIDS. Echoing the study conducted by Tafese Refera is a study by William Ryerson and Negussie Teffera as

²⁹ Myers M, 2002; Singhal A & Rogers E, 1999

³⁰ Singhal A & Rogers E, 2003

³¹ Singhal A & Rogers E, 2003, p. 295

³² Refera T, 2004, p.47

presented in a comprehensive plan for Entertainment-Education. There is mention of a woman listener who had five children and was failing to convince her husband on her own. 'In Yeken Kignit drama I heard how a couple ought to discuss such matters and also that there are medicines to control childbirth. I convinced my husband to listen to the programme and I repeatedly talked to him on the subject of family planning. After that, we agreed that henceforth we would have no more children and we would do our best to give proper care to those we have.'³³

On the other hand, the other Ethiopian play, *Dhimbiba (Getting the best out of life)* is credited to have made lasting impressions on listeners. The serial drama 'raised issues concerning illiteracy, the rampancy of harmful traditional practices, family planning, gender inequality, HIV/AIDS, environmental conservation and many other issues related to social development.'³⁴ The hitherto traditionally acceptable practice of abducting young girls for marriage was reported to have aroused considerable popular indignation. Unlike in the past, special punitive measures had been taken by communities against offenders involved in such crimes.³⁵ Ryerson and Teffera³⁶ report that the two plays were jointly responsible for several changes such as the falling of the fertility rate in Amharic speaking regions from 5.4 to 4.3 children per woman. The demand for contraceptives increased by 157% and the 2005 Demographic and Health Survey found that contraceptive prevalence since 2000 had increased by 133%. All this is ascribed to the contribution of the two radio dramas.

³³ Ryerson W & Teffera N, 2007

³⁴ Refera T, 2004, p.48

³⁵ Refera T, 2004; Ryerson W & Teffera N, 2007

³⁶ Ryerson W & Teffera N, 2007

It is therefore evident that elsewhere radio drama has shown that it can influence behaviour change in people. There has not been a similar study conducted in Malawi. Undergraduate studies conducted on edutainment have not examined behaviour change but rather themes such as women presentation and characterization. There is need to have local literature on the practical usefulness of radio edutainment. This study therefore examines use of radio edutainment in Malawi in its attempt to foster positive change amongst the youth in the country.

1.5 MAIN OBJECTIVE

The main objective was to explore to what extent the use of radio edutainment influences the rural youth to improve their lives through their participation in development activities.

1.5.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives were as follows;

1. To identify the communication strategies used in *Tikuferanji* and *Zimachitika*.
2. To analyse the effectiveness of The Story Workshop's *Zimachitika* and Adventist Development and Relief Agency's (ADRA) radio version of *Tikuferanji* in communicating with the masses to improve their livelihoods.
3. To evaluate the two programmes.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The edutainment strategy is informed by theories such as Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory³⁷ which hypothesises that individual human beings learn by observing, considering the consequences encountered by their role models, practicing the acquired behaviour and reaching the point of self efficacy where they are confident and in control of the outcomes of their actions. In this theory the modelling therapy reigns supreme. This is where people look at role models that are in similar dispositions to themselves and find it appropriate and justifiable to emulate the cathartic resolution as performed by their role models.

Another theory that is of paramount importance to the edutainment strategy is the Diffusion of Innovations Theory³⁸ that champions the acquisition of knowledge on how to perform behaviours being marketed, approval of the said behaviours, informed intent to act, the actual practicing of the acquired behaviour and finally advocating for the said behaviour.

Radio drama for social change is also influenced by the Persuasion Theory and Theory of Reasoned Action. The field of edutainment combines communication and education theory with communicative arts to primarily deliver social development messages. Although this form has existed since time immemorial through fables and fireside stories popularly called '*nthano*' in Chichewa language, Miguel Sabido is perhaps the most influential modern day practitioner and theorist who started producing telenovellas (soap

³⁷ Bandura A, 1977

³⁸ Rogers E, 1995

operas or serial dramas) that combined communication theory with pro health/education messages to educate audiences throughout Latin America.³⁹

According to Waisbord,⁴⁰ edutainment is a strategy in the field of development communications that heavily leans towards modernization and diffusion theories under the dominant paradigm of development. This edutainment is largely informed by four major communication theories being the Persuasion Theory, Theory of Reasoned Action, Social Learning Theory and Diffusion Theory.

The Diffusion Theory⁴¹ tries to seek explanations to the ways a new behaviour spreads through a social system over a period of time. This is where mass media introduces information perceived to contain desirable behaviour and since decisions based on the reception of the innovation are individual, each person follows a five step process. The first step is the acquisition of knowledge where a person becomes aware of an innovation and has some idea of how it functions. Then there is the step of persuasion where a person forms a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the innovation and this ultimately leads to the third step of decision where a person engages in activities that lead to a choice to adopt or reject the innovation. The decision is based on the factors of persuasion. If the persuasion is in the direction of positive implementation then the person undergoes the fifth stage where the innovation is put to use. Finally there is the

³⁹ <http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Entertainment-Education>

⁴⁰ Waisbord S, 2001

⁴¹ Rogers E, 1995

stage of confirmation where the person evaluates the results of the innovation decision already made.

In this theory the social networks help people judge a new behaviour using the following criteria. The first one is whether the new behaviour introduced is compatible with current beliefs, behaviours and values. Then the complexity of the behaviour is examined in terms of how difficult it is to perform. Then there is triability. Can it be tried without too much risk before making a decision? Observability is the next in line. In this case the issue is whether there are any opportunities especially within the same community to see what happens to others who adopt the behaviour. They then have to see the comparative advantage of the newly acquired behaviour over the current ones.⁴²

In edutainment the Diffusion Theory is manifested essentially in serial drama other than stand-alone plots. In serial drama it can come through characters who demonstrate how the new behaviour fits with or grows out of current beliefs and practices, through dialogue describing the new behaviour in simple terms and in appropriate language for the audience and through role models that motivate listeners to try some aspects of the new behaviour and advocate its acceptance by others. One other advantage of serial drama is that it is able to execute multiple plots and through that rewards to those characters that adopt the new behaviour and absence of the same to those that do not. Happy endings would usually demonstrate the benefits of the new behaviour. Interpersonal interactions that spread information throughout the society in the drama can

⁴² Fossard E, 1996

promote the principles of the diffusion theory. Thus when listeners are in some way encouraged to discuss the new behaviour with others or approach local authorities or other relevant experts to find out more about the innovations.

The Social Learning Theory⁴³ explains how people acquire new behaviours from experiencing the actions of others. The two basic modes of learning are learning from others as they get rewarded for some actions or punished for other actions. Direct learning through trial and error is costly when the trial results in fatal or other seriously harmful effects. The choice is usually to learn from others through observation and radio drama can provide the models that may be observed.

The Social Learning Theory incorporates a three-way relationship between learners, their environment, and their self-regulating process of efficacy.⁴⁴ Three important concepts related to the social learning theory are modeling, efficacy and parasocial interaction.

Self-efficacy is an impression that one is capable of performing in a certain manner or attaining certain goals. It is a belief that one has the capabilities to execute the courses of actions required to manage prospective situations. The belief that one has acquired the skills necessary to produce some effect comes about after modelling or vicarious experience. The one who observes the model is engaged in a process of comparison between the model and themselves. The process is more effectual where the person

⁴³ Bandura A, 1986

⁴⁴ <http://comminit.com/changetheories/ctheories/changetheories-51.html>

observing sees themselves as similar to their model. In this respect if a peer who is perceived as having similar attributes succeeds, the observer's self efficacy increases.⁴⁵

Drama constantly employs vicarious efficacy and through deliberate creation of role models that can influence the audience. The writer may sometimes create negative models to demonstrate the unfortunate results of undesirable behaviour. Another way is to present a character that starts off as negative character and then learn from their mistakes and transform into positive role models. This leads to parasocial interaction.

Parasocial interaction⁴⁶ takes place when people begin to think of fictional characters as if they were real people. As defined by Perse and Rubin⁴⁷ parasocial interaction is the involvement of audience members in an affective manner with a sense of empathy and friendship with media personalities. Sood and Rogers⁴⁸ say that parasocial interaction could either be an effect of entertainment-education or a process leading to more ultimate effects such as attitude and overt behaviour change on the part of audience members. ‘.. a good script writer takes advantage of parasocial interaction by creating believable characters who inspire listeners with a feeling of personal relationship. As a result, listeners are likely to imagine themselves as part of the drama and to experience vicariously how a behaviour feels, how others might react, and how they might respond. .. social learning theory can help the drama writer identify the types of characters that

⁴⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-efficacy>; Fossard E, 1996

⁴⁶ Horton D & Wohl W, 1956

⁴⁷ Perse E & Rubin R, 1989

⁴⁸ Sood S & Rogers E, 2000

most attract the audience, the consequences of behaviour that people are concerned about, and the types of stories that give people increased confidence in their ability to perform a behavior'.⁴⁹

According to the Social Learning Theory, people do not learn only from formal settings such as classrooms, they also learn from models. This is where characters in the mass media play a crucial role. It is in fact believed that the largest portion of learning to adapt to society takes place through such observational learning.⁵⁰

In analysing the *Zimachitika* and *Tikuferanji* programmes, modeling has been applied. Modelling has been largely analysed in the way it is believed to have worked as an agent of change. This is under the umbrella of the Social Cognitive Theory that has branches such as the inhibitory effects where poetic justice is done to characters for the various roles they play in society. For this to take place there is selective retention of the information acquired followed by imitation which is direct replication of the behaviour observed or identification where the acquirer of the information does not exactly copy what they may have heard or seen but modify the actions they do as they deem appropriate.⁵¹ This is applicable because a radio soap opera has been analysed to measure how certain characters may have influenced the behaviour of some respondents.

⁴⁹ Fossard E, 1996, p. xvi

⁵⁰ Barker K & Sabido M, 2005

⁵¹ Bandura A, 1986

As mentioned earlier, the theory of reasoned action also forms part of the edutainment theories and strategies. This theory posits that individual behaviour is driven by behavioural intentions where behavioural intentions are a function of an individual's attitude toward the behaviour and subjective norms surrounding the performance of the behaviour.

Attitude toward the behaviour is defined as the individual's positive or negative feelings about performing a behaviour. It is determined through an assessment of one's beliefs regarding the consequences arising from a behavior and an evaluation of the desirability of these consequences.⁵²

A person's voluntary behaviour is predicted by their attitude toward that behaviour and how they think other people would view them if they performed the behaviour. Basically, the edutainment strategy suggests that 'learning occurs when an individual observes someone else performing a behavior and experiencing the consequences of that behavior. This observational learning influences the learner to perform a behavior by creating positive expectancy; the expectation that a certain action will result in a positive outcome.'⁵³ A person's attitude, combined with subjective norms, forms their behavioral intention.

⁵² [http://www.istheory.yorku.ca/theory of reasoned action.htm](http://www.istheory.yorku.ca/theory%20of%20reasoned%20action.htm)

⁵³ Kennedy et al., 2004, p. 289

An appreciation of the Theory of Reasoned Action can make writers and all theatre practitioners more sensitive to the tensions that individual audience members face when making difficult decisions. The theory emphasises that people sometimes make decisions only after considering the alternatives, not simply because someone tells them what to do. Soap operas have the capacity of providing role model characters that demonstrate the alternatives to the audience and tip the balance in favour of accepting new behaviour. The drama can also show characters undertaking personal choices that could be similar to those facing the members of the listening audience.⁵⁴

It is also possible using this theory for the creators of the radio drama to correct inaccurate perceptions of social norms that may deter listeners from trying a new behaviour.

The Persuasion Theory dates back to the days of Aristotle who said that ‘Rhetoric is the art of discovering, in a particular case, the available means of persuasion’.⁵⁵ The Persuasion Theory is a process of guiding people towards the adoption of an idea, attitude, or action by rational and symbolic means. It is a strategy of problem solving relying on ‘appeals’ rather than force.

In the Modern Persuasion Theory⁵⁶ there are characteristics that affect a person’s perception of messages including beliefs and concerns about the behaviour and its

⁵⁴ Fossard E, 1996

⁵⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persuasion>

⁵⁶ McGuire W, 1989

consequences. There are message factors and source factors.⁵⁷ Message factors are the characteristics of a message that make it appropriate and effective for a particular audience while source factors are the characteristics of a message's source that make it interesting, relevant and persuasive for a particular audience member. In drama, the source is the character that delivers the message. It could for instance be Manganya in *Tikuferanji* or Ndaona in *Zimachitika*.

Among the most influential source factors are credibility, attractiveness, similarity and authority as well as expertise. Knowledge of the persuasion theory can help writers and producers of radio drama make close to accurate determinations about the needs of the audience. Just like the other theories this can utilize characters that go through the different stages in the process of behavior change and can follow them as they grasp and ultimately accept the new behaviour.

The theories discussed here are the ones inform the edutainment strategy⁵⁸ and therefore in analysing the two programmes under discussion these theories had to be applied.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

There were several methodological approaches to this research. Descriptive research using biographical studies and case studies were applied where the lives of selected respondents were traced back to follow their change of attitude or practices as a result of listening to either of the two radio plays. This was basically descriptive type of research

⁵⁷ Petty R & Cacioppo J, 1981; Fossard E, 1996

⁵⁸ http://www.k12academics.com/edutainment_communication.htm

using grounded theory and case studies. Being qualitative type of research the primary concern was the process used in order to derive the meanings of the purported behavior changes.⁵⁹

Script content review and analysis of one hundred and four script summaries from *Zimachitika* and thirteen episodes of *Tikuferanji* together with the finished products were subjected to the nine Ps of effective Enter-Educate programmes as used by the John Hopkins School of Communication.⁶⁰ These shall be discussed at an appropriate stage.

The analysis is based on two main aspects namely characters and plot. This is because characters are the ones that drive the stories and listeners remember characters that interest them if stories are well delivered. The preparatory processes have been analysed and put under the test of the P-Process which shall be defined and discussed at the appropriate stage under ‘Treatment’ in Scene Presentations section and also in the Learning Through Drama Characters section in Chapter 2 and under Sampling the Storylines section in Chapter 3.

Personal semi-structured in-depth interviews with the selected respondents were carried out and recorded on an audio recorder with one hundred and forty six respondents from Zomba, Machinga, Mangochi, Dedza and Nkhota kota districts. A recorder was used to avoid missing out on some statements which would have been lost in scribbled summaries done at the time of interviews. This enabled the researcher to play back the

⁵⁹ Creswell J, 1994

⁶⁰ Fossard E, 1996

recordings later on to analyse them. This figure is for those that were recorded. There were two sex workers that accepted to grant in-depth interviews but refused to be recorded and their request was respected. A total of one hundred and fifty was targeted but due to saturation of responses where respondents were not coming up with anything different from what had already been collected it was decided that two respondents short would not make a difference.

The choice of the respondents was by purposeful stratified sampling because the study was mainly for rural youth and it was to appreciate the processes of creation and production and how the listeners respond to the programmes. It is for this purpose that only those that claimed to have listened to either of the plays were interviewed. A total of one hundred and forty six respondents were interviewed. In four of the cases snowball sampling was used. Snowball sampling relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects.⁶¹

Stratified random sampling was used because these radio programmes have a large listenership. ‘The idea of qualitative research is to purposefully select informants (or documents or visual material) that will best answer the research question’.⁶² The follow-ups were not difficult to come by because in two of the cases in Mangochi and in Zomba, the Story Workshop used to have listener clubs of people who were used as one way of monitoring what messages went out to the people. These listener clubs are important

⁶¹ <http://www.statpac.com/surveys/sampling.htm>

⁶² Creswell J, 1994, p.148

because according to Mohammed,⁶³ ‘although individuals may gain knowledge of an innovation via mass communication channels, peer communication leads the individual to adopt or reject an innovation.’ It is vital to understand the role the Diffusion of Innovations Theory is operationalised in such a context.

Another major source of information was the key informant interviews carried out with responsible officials of The Story Workshop and ADRA. From the Story Workshop two people were interviewed. These are Marvin Hanke, the producer for *Zimachitika* as well as Executive Director and Charles Simbi, the scriptwriter for *Zimachitika*. From ADRA two officials were also interviewed. These are Chikondi Madikiza, Communications and Advocacy Officer and Tamanda Matebule, Training Officer. To these officials questionnaires were administered concurrently with in-depth face to face interviews to probe and follow up on some of the responses.

A review of listener responses in the form of letters to Story Workshop’s *Zimachitika* assisted in understanding the national picture of people’s perception of the programme. Two hundred listener letters from 19 districts other than those applicable to personal interviews were analysed. This was an attempt to get representative data that could to a certain extent be generalised.

Some data for the research was obtained by the use of focus group discussions where at least two youth groups and two adult groups were be compared and contrasted. Here peer

⁶³ Mohammed, 2003, p.141

pressure was valuable in challenging and illuminating conflicting opinions and consensus was sought.

Largely qualitative research formed the core of the research because it is the most appropriate way in this regard. Qualitatively, the responses from the listeners and the script content analyses have been used to gauge the influence the radio drama may have on the listeners.

Quantitatively, the sample population of the people in the villages where respondents were taken from was used to determine the percentages of listeners and their various views.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS

Malawi as a country has its development objectives not significantly different from other countries in southern Africa. The development agenda of countries should be understood and appreciated by the people if any positive and meaningful change has to occur. 'For it is only through people communicating (efficiently and effectively) that any development can occur'.⁶⁴ And 'it follows that, as long as the development of organized

⁶⁴ Beltran L, 1967, p.36

communication is kept out of overall planning for change, the very success of national development is at stake'.⁶⁵

There are set development objectives stipulated in the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. This study contributes towards goals 1, 3 and 6. Goal one is to 'eradicate extreme poverty and hunger'. This is the case because the two radio programmes under study are both dealing with HIV/AIDS and *Zimachitika* addresses issues of food security in addition to many other issues that come under it.

'The loss of productive capacity among families affected by HIV/AIDS had a major impact on food production and nutritional well-being. To make matters worse, HIV/AIDS transmission rates and the progression of the disease tend to be higher in undernourished populations, trapping them into a vicious cycle of hunger and disease'.⁶⁶

Goal three of the Millennium Development is to promote gender equality and empower women. The study of both radio plays shows significant attempts at empowering women.

Goal six is to combat HIV/AIDS because 'adding to an already heavy disease burden in poor countries, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is deepening and spreading poverty, reversing human development and eroding the capacity of governments to provide essential services. By reducing labour productivity, the spread of HIV/AIDS is also hampering pro-poor growth in many countries'.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ The Millennium Development Goals in Africa: promises and progress, 2002, p.7

⁶⁷ Ibid

As mentioned earlier in this paper there is need to use communication for development purposes and further to this there should be conscious and well informed planning and execution by planners of development communications. This is why the study of the two radio programmes is central to the contribution towards bringing development in general. One definition for development communications and their objectives is to raise ‘the quality of life in the rural areas including increased incomes from sources within rural areas in agriculture, commerce and industry, improved levels of social, physical and mental well-being such as better health, nutrition and sanitation practices’.⁶⁸

The Millenium Development Goals play an important role in bringing to the people information that would be of benefit to them and lead to the people’s betterment of their livelihoods.

‘The MDGs envisage a systematic application of communication for development methodologies at the country level to build constituencies around a national development agenda in which all citizens, including those who are marginalized, can identify their priorities, improving national ownership and accountability’.⁶⁹

Locally there is the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2006 – 2011 which ‘...is designed to generate sustained economic growth to bring about prosperity and reduce poverty in order to make life better for everyone’.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Melkote S, 1991, p. 229

⁶⁹ Pagliani P, 2007, p.10

⁷⁰ Foreword to MGDS by Hon. Goodall Gondwe, MP, Minister of Finance and Hon. David Fauti, MP, Minister of Economic Planning and Development, 2006

The Malawi Growth and Development strategy has six key focus areas and this study is contributing to three of them namely; prevention and management of HIV and AIDS, agriculture and food security, and social development.

The aim of *Tikuferanji* as is aired in the prelude to the programme is to teach Malawians to prevent catching AIDS and to start following family planning methods. The objectives of *Zimachitika* have varied for the past ten years but have always been in the area of behaviour change. As a soap opera there are always different types of issues addressed although there are usually two to three areas being addressed at the same time. The issues have always revolved around HIV/AIDS, food security, gender equality and others.

Knowing there are several radio programmes whose aims and objectives are to teach people in order to improve their lives it is crucial to find out the most appropriate approaches so as to achieve the goals not by chance but through proper conscious planning. Although the role of radio in education is not quite evident,⁷¹ it is proper to find out why this is the case and through case studies explore ways and means of making it evident.

This study analyses and scrutinises the requirements for successful radio programming in as far as edutainment is concerned. Educationists shall have some grounds on whether or not to use radio edutainment in the school curriculum and if at all they decide to use it how best they can handle it to have the best results. Managers in various fields such as

⁷¹ Moemeka A, 1994

agriculture shall benefit from this research as the possible effects of agricultural extension or health extension using radio edutainment shall be highlighted. In addition to this, there shall be lessons learnt in effective communication in the relevant fields. 'Radio's effectiveness depends, however, not only on its intrinsic qualities but more importantly on how it is used and for what purpose'.⁷²

One very important aspect to this contribution is that official development communications in Malawi have not been adequate in the area of strategizing on radio edutainment for the rural youth that are in majority and that are essentially the engine room of development projects in Malawi.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter has provided an introduction to the research, definition of the term 'edutainment', the problem statement, literature review, theoretical framework, main and specific objectives, methodology and the significance of this research to the field of development communications. Chapter 2 provides a case study of *Zimachitika*, one of the two radio plays under scrutiny. It reviews the background to the creation of the soap opera before taking us through the treatment, the script content analysis and the data presentation and analysis mainly from primary sources. This is put through theoretical underpinnings. Chapter 3 provides a case study of *Tikuferanji*, the other radio play under study. It reviews the background to the creation of the play and takes us through the production process and characterisation as

⁷² Moemeka A, 1994, p.433

well as sampling some of the storylines. It also provides data collected from primary sources and scrutinises the edutainment aspect provided by the play. Chapter 4 is devoted to a discussion of the findings and provides a synthesis of the material introduced in the previous chapters as well as implications of the findings. It ends with making recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

CASE STUDY 1: ZIMACHITIKA

2.1 THE STORY WORKSHOP

The radio soap opera *Zimachitika* is produced by the Story Workshop which was founded in 1996 by Pamela Brooke, an American radio dramatist and educator. The mission for the Story Workshop is to creatively use mass media to share development messages for positive social change in the areas of food security, environment, health, HIV/AIDS, gender, human rights and democracy. The vision is to have a well informed, food secure rural Malawian population practicing democratic values.⁷³

The Story Workshop uses different formats in disseminating various messages including radio drama, village interactive drama, jingles, community outreach using dances, theatre and songs and also through the use of print materials such as comic books. It undertakes various projects and has run radio communication projects such as ‘Mwana Alirenji’ (What should a child cry for when there is abundant food), ‘Tingathe’ (We can manage), ‘Tilitonse’ (We are together), ‘Tisazunze Ana’ (We should not abuse children), ‘Ndife Amodzi’ (We are one), ‘Kamanga Zula’ (Uproot what has negatively set its roots firmly), ‘Sankha Wekha’ (Choose for yourself), ‘Timasukirane’ (Let us be open to each other) and ‘Zimachitika’ (It happens) with supporting community activities for monitoring and evaluation.

⁷³ Our History - Story Workshop archives

With close to forty permanent employees on its payroll the Story Workshop has grown into an established and trusted source of information by Malawians over the years. The radio aspect of Story Workshop's interventions is dominant over the other forms of message dissemination.

At the time of its foundation there were no notable communications Non Governmental Organisations working in the country. The only known organizations were the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, the Agriculture Communications Branch under the Ministry of Agriculture and the Health Education Unit under the Ministry of Health.

2.1.1 ZIMACHITIKA - THE BACKGROUND

Pamela Brooke, an American writer and radio theatre practitioner wrote a book on radio social drama entitled Communicating through Story Characters which was published in 1995. Working in Malawi, she established The Story Workshop which was to come up with artistically aligned development projects from time to time. The first assignment was a project funded by United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF) on mother and child health and nutrition. Through Brooke's expertise in radio drama she proposed to create a radio drama to effectively communicate with the intended beneficiaries. Although the project was planned just for an initial period of six months, the programme went beyond the intended period.

The formative research involved several people that were either students or lecturers at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. In 1997 Linje Patrick Manyozo, Olex

Mwati Kamowa, David Kamkanda, Fletcher Ziwoya, Steve Sharra and Cecelia Hasha set off to conduct the research that was to form the backbone of story development and character profiles. The group which was later trimmed to four leaving out Steve Sharra and Cecelia Hasha visited Zomba, Liwonde, Ntcheu and also used personal knowledge of places and characters from Thyolo, Kasungu, Mangochi, Lilongwe, Blantyre and later on Chiradzulu and Chitipa. The research was in the forms of observations of real life characters in their normal settings. The researchers also participated in traditional ceremonies like weddings, funerals, dances, village court hearings, village merry making and beer drinking sprees apart from interviewing villagers, health workers and traditional leaders. They also created geographical aspects of the imaginary village in the intended radio soap opera.⁷⁴

When the researchers came back ‘the first task was to create social, cultural, economic and geographical settings in which characters were to live, when created. A suitable village full with location of houses, where each character lived, neighboring villages and a trading centre and town that economically supported the village was created. The village also had to have land for cultivation, where the children went to school, a health centre where the people went for treatment in case of illness, a graveyard where the village buried its dead and a water source for people and land where livestock grazed. Not only were these described, but each member also drew a map of his village. The task of fusing all these villages into one was through focus group discussions facilitated by Brooke herself.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Kamowa O, 2003, p.2

⁷⁵ Ibid

After this there was now need to create the characters. Every team member was asked to create heroes and villains. The characters had different occupations. There were farmers, successful businessmen, traditional doctors, tailors and tricksters.

In the creation of characters, Pamela Brooke led the team to give each character age, historical background, the way they looked, talked, dressed and who their relatives and friends were.⁷⁶

It is evident that the planning was done meticulously. The only problem was that of universality of the characters and storylines bearing in mind the country's varied geographical regions. It was difficult to come up with universal traits of characters to accommodate the whole country. Another mind boggling issue in this case was the extent to which the created villages represented an indigenous society, with people speaking different types of languages. This was left to go on like that to give chance to as many listeners as possible to have some characters to identify with.

When this initial stage had taken place there was the testing of storylines and the creation of scenarios. This was done in November 1997. The research team went to Maselema and Chitenjere villages around Malosa area in Zomba to test the storylines. They involved the local villagers in rehearsing and the performance of the stories. This group was later reinforced by three men namely Simon Sikwese, Jonathan Mbuna and a veteran radio theatre producer with the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, Marvin Hanke.

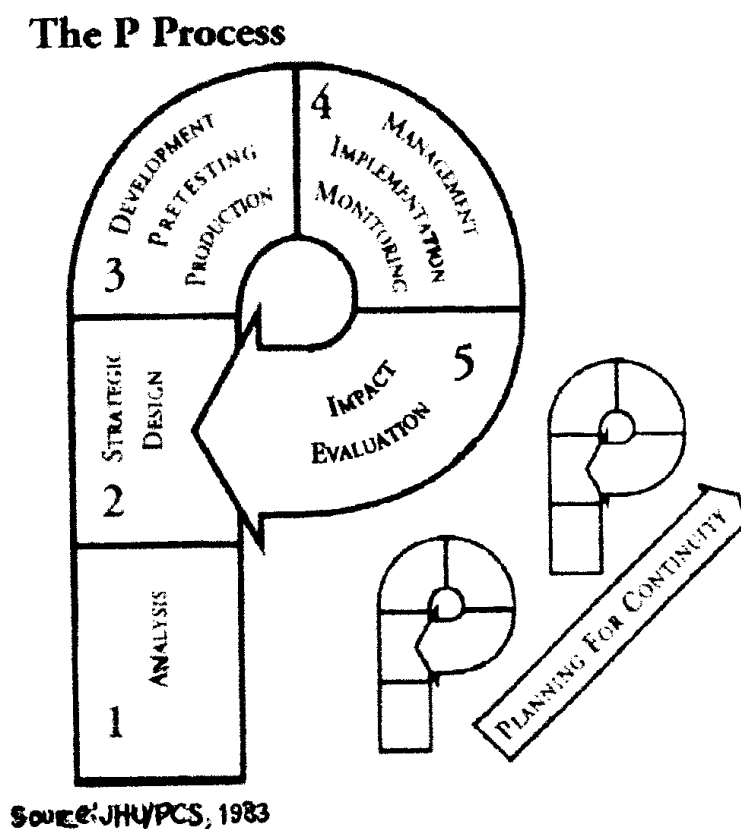
Marvin Hanke, who at that time was producer of the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation's award winning radio drama programme, *Theatre of the Air* said:

⁷⁶ Kamowa O, 2003, p.2

I came to join the group at the request of Pamela Brooke. My experience in radio drama was to add some weight to the creation of this new programme. So, I led the team in the development of scenarios.⁷⁷

This far it is appropriate to scrutinize the preparations. The P-Process scale shall be used.

This is what they used to come up with the programme.



The P-Process was developed by the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's Centre for Communication Programs (CCP) in 1982 as a tool for planning strategic, evidence-based communication programmes. The P-Process is so christened because it emphasizes on **p**lanning for continuity and also because it takes a 'p' shape when the first

⁷⁷ Hanke M: Interview, 18-06-07

step is analysis, followed by strategic design and then the arrow starts to bend a little towards the right on the third stage which is development, pretesting and production. The fourth stage which is management, implementation and monitoring finally juts back into strategic design at the last stage of impact evaluation.

Weighing the approach against the P-Process it can be seen here that this far the programme developers had tried to go through all the steps in strategic communication being those of analysis, strategic design and development and testing. The quality of the work would be seen through the supposed returns from the programme. Because of the nature of storylines they named the programme *Zimachitika* meaning ‘it happens’. The beginning note on the document outlining the character profiles of the various characters featuring in the radio soap opera reads:

‘*Zimachitika* is a radio soap opera about social change. The story depicts happenings in an imaginary village known as Mbonekera. Mbonekera is a caption of a real village setting with characters developed after a thorough research done on real people so that the dramatisation and events of the play displays the reality of life on the ground.

The village of Mbonekera comprises of positive and negative characters, gossipers, villains, religious and pagan people, drunkards and non drunkards, traditional healers and other personalities that you can come across in any or most of the village settings in Malawi.

The village has such features as a river, a hill (Manthu Hill), an estate, a health centre, a trading centre a day secondary school, a market, a church a dambo land for grazing animals and some neighbouring villages.’⁷⁸ Having looked at the preparatory work, what was the actual programme content?

For an edutainment project there is need to balance the entertainment and education aspects so that one does not overshadow the other. One way of achieving this is the production of a values grid. ‘The values grid, often derived from formative research, is a chart of the educational issues to be tackled, and the positive and negative values to be encouraged and discouraged.’⁷⁹ The values grid may be written down or generally understood by all staff working on the project especially the scriptwriters. Depending on the issues being addressed the team needs to have various relevant documents or experts from the relevant fields. This is why when the Story Workshop started UNICEF provided the relevant documents on safe motherhood apart from the organisation’s consultation with local experts in health centres where the formative research took place.

After the health programmes, agriculture and food security related programmes were next in focus. To this effect the Story Workshop used the Guide to Agricultural Production and Natural Resources Management produced by The Ministry of Agriculture. A guiding document from the government of Malawi about all farming activities and the farming calendar, it was put in place by subject matter specialists and scientists, revised as and when need arose. Storylines moved to address different areas depending on the themes

⁷⁸ *Zimachitika* Character Profiles, p. 1 – Story Workshop Archives

⁷⁹ Singhal A & Rogers E, 2003, p.294

from funding agencies. In the ten years, programmes in health, agriculture and food security, HIV/AIDS, democracy and governance, and child protection have been produced.

The scripts for *Zimachitika* were developed through story workshopping. At each workshop, different people contributed to story ideas. The formative research resulted in a plan for thirteen episodes and then the scriptwriter went on to develop scenarios in English, approved by Brooke before writing the actual script in Chichewa. To show the rigorous work involved here is an example of one scenario developed in readiness for writing the actual script. There are objectives followed by detailed actions that were scripted.

2.1.2 TREATMENT

The scenarios are presented in bullet form with each dialogue spelt out. Here the scenes have been summarised. The treatment was as follows;

ZIMACHITIKA SCENARIO 311

CHARACTERS

Joe's Uncle, Joe, Gadabwali, Takondwa, Ndaona, Gawanani, Elias, Gubudu, Namkasa, Manesi, Zunzo, Gogo, Nachanza, Kanjoma, Nambewe

OBJECTIVES

The objectives were to remind people that to timely start preparing their fields, make ridge markers and realign ridges, and make manure for the next growing season. On the benefits it was to show how Ndaona, Zunzo, and Manesi benefited from the vegetable garden they had established.

SCENE PRESENTATIONS

The first scene takes place at Joe's place. Joe's uncle is concerned that his nephew impregnated one of the girls in the village. To look caring and not to create enmity between his family and that of Patuma, the pregnant girl, he gives money to Joe to buy necessities for Patuma. Unfortunately Joe misuses the money by buying snacks which he eats with his friend Gadabwali. The uncle is furious and gives Joe some more money and decrees that there should be acknowledging letters from Patuma's parents whenever they receive anything from Joe.

The story continues in scene two where Gadabwali goes to buy the items as advised by his uncle. He is with Joe and they admire a girl, Takondwa. Gadabwali wants Takondwa to replace Patuma, the girl he impregnated and he presents her with a gift of a packet of biscuits. Then Ndaona comes as she is on her way to the garden. She warns Takondwa against accepting gifts from boys whose aims were questionable.

Then Gawanani comes and asks Gadabwali to help him chase out Elias from the house Elias was renting from Gawanani. The crime Elias has committed was his erection of a

maize mill in the village. Gawanani already owned a maize mill and he thought this was arrogance and unnecessary competition. He also says Elias has been spreading rumours that Gawanani is a wizard who uses magic for his maize mill to work.

In the next scene Ndaona is working in her garden and several people come to buy vegetables from her. Nankasa gives advice to Ndaona on how to uproot the vegetables when it is time to clear the garden and replant other vegetables.

Gogo Nasibeko tells a story whose theme is encouraging people to be creative and come up with initiatives so that they become self reliant.

Then at Gogo's garden Kanjoma, chief's counsellor and expert farmer, gives advice on how to construct marker ridges using the A Frame to prevent soil loss through erosion. He also gives details of how to make pit manure. Then Gubudu comes and bribes Kanjoma and Gogo Nasibeko who is also a chief's counsellor. There is a hearing at the chief's place in a case involved Gubudu's scandals. Gogo Nasibeko and Kanjoma receive the money and say that they are going to present it to the chief at the hearing to prove that Gubudu offered them a bribe. The play ends there.⁸⁰

Looking at the detailed scenario presented here it is evident that there is very careful planning before an episode is written to produce one radio programme. When a final script in Chichewa is written, all members of the cast are called to take the scripts home and read and understand the storyline in preparation for a recording session either the following day or in two days' time. Scripts are given out to members of the cast on

⁸⁰ *Zimachitika* scenario 311 - Story Workshop archives

Thursday or Friday and the recordings take place at the Story Workshop's studios on Saturday and Sunday.

The beginning of the script sustains the attention of listeners as it is about the apparent mischief by Joe who misuses money given to him by his uncle meant to buy items for his pregnant girlfriend, Patuma. Gadabwali brings about dramatic irony by failing to come up with one story. The episode avoids advice in fear of taking away the interest of beneficiaries. As summed up by a 16 year old school dropout from Dedza:

The good thing about *Zimachitika* is that it carries interesting stories and the pieces of advice are pasted in between the interesting stories. So, even if you did not want to listen to farming advice, you get trapped and without realizing it you also benefit like I now own a small vegetable garden in my parents' garden due to Ndaona's success.⁸¹

It is evident from the young listener that he, and most likely others, had no initial interest in the advice given in the radio drama. The advice is given with careful planning following the values grid wrapped in entertainment. This is at the heart of edutainment. The end of the scenario presented here is in agreement with what Fossard says that 'A well-constructed serial episode attracts and holds the audience's attention by opening with action or a hook, involving the audience emotionally, presenting an entertaining plot, and concluding with a cliffhanger'.⁸² The story ends in an expectation of what would transpire at the hearing. An examination of *Zimachitika* script summaries showed that up to 80% of the scripts followed this pattern.

⁸¹ Yusuf S: Interview, 14-03-07

⁸² Fossard E, 1996, p.181

Apart from the P process there are also nine Ps mentioned in the methodology section of the introduction. We can see that the first P, persuasion, is achieved through the script. This implies that this edutainment programme appeals to, and influences a wide spectrum of the community. From field responses interviewees from different backgrounds and age groups attested to this assertion. The same is the case with the second P, popularity, to which Fossard says ‘attracting and holding listener’s attention so that they not only enjoy listening and want to tune in regularly themselves, but also encourage others to listen and to consider adopting the new behaviors’.⁸³ The popularity aspect can best be explained by the four successive years of getting the first position in listeners’ polls for popular radio programmes in the ‘Entertainers of the Year’ programmes in Malawi in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002.⁸⁴

The episode presented which mixes education and entertainment here leads to episode 311 and the next episode takes over the issues in a similar manner and the following are the objectives of three of the episodes that follow. This is for purposes of discussion and therefore unlike in the first example, the scenarios have been removed and presented here are the objectives only with the list of characters.

ZIMACHITIKA SCENARIO 312

OBJECTIVE

The objectives were to continue teaching rural families how to process Soya beans and make nutritious Likuni Phala at home.

⁸³ Fossard E, 1996, p. 152

⁸⁴ *Zimachitika* Comic Book 1

ZIMACHITIKA SCENARIO 313

OBJECTIVES

The objectives were to continue reminding people to start preparing their gardens and how they could make compost manure and to encourage pregnant women to go for VCT.

ZIMACHITIKA SCENARIO 314

OBJECTIVES

The objectives were to teach farmers how to control worms in cabbage by using locally made pesticides from Delia which are not only more effective but also harmless to the soil and the human beings.⁸⁵

Generally the treatment as presented here shows that a lot of meticulous and rigorous planning goes on before the actual production. This would ensure that objectives are followed through to the end. In the event of change of scriptwriters, the transition would be smooth and it would only take very critical listeners to notice any change.

Zimachitika is a thirty minutes radio soap coming during prime time on Saturday from 7.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. on the main radio station, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation radio one. It is heard throughout the country and in neighbouring countries. In a letter a listener from Zambia said:

I am glued to the radio every week to listen to Zimachitika. There are so many of us that listen to your programme from Zambia since we are Nyanjas (a dialect of Chichewa) and that is why I am suggesting that you include cross border issues like you did with your other

⁸⁵ *Zimachitika* scenarios 312, 313 and 314

programme, Tisazunze Ana (We should not abuse children). Singleton Banda, Lundazi, Zambia.⁸⁶

Another listener from Mozambique said:

I benefit a lot from your programmes since we do not have agricultural advisors here in Villa Ulongwe, Mozambique. Is it possible that you can repeat the programme where Kanjoma was telling fellow farmers some methods of doing budding and grafting? Please, do not disregard us as we are part of your regular audience. Augustino Chipande, Villa Ulongwe, Mozambique.⁸⁷

2.2 WHAT THE LISTENERS SAID

A total of 146 direct respondents in face to face interviews, 18 participants in focus group discussions, video documentaries of 5 farmers, 200 letters sampled from radio listeners in response to radio questions and visits to 8 of the gardens of some of the selected youth formed part of the research.

The first group of respondents was the targeted audiences of the two radio plays. Both *Zimachitika* and *Tikuferanji* have no age limitations in terms of target audiences but for purposes of this study the youth in rural areas were targeted. In addition to the listeners, interviews were carried out with key informants and documents were studied and analysed as mentioned in the methodology section.

Most respondents showed considerable knowledge in about *Zimachitika*. Over 70% of those interviewed displayed that they deliberately tune in to the radio at the appropriate time to listen to the programme. The remaining 30% listen just because the radio is on

⁸⁶ Listener Response Files, 2005

⁸⁷ Ibid

and they have nothing better to do apart from listening to the radio but eventually they find themselves to be regular listeners.

2.2.1 LEARNING THROUGH RADIO DRAMA CHARACTERS

The memory of characters and their escapades or their advice registered very high in *Zimachitika*. A number of respondents showed that they had been positively influenced by some of the characters in *Zimachitika*. Amongst the youth the character of Ndaona influenced a good number of listeners. In the ten years' span of the programme Ndaona had transformed into a young adult and was married by the time the play entered its tenth year. Her behaviour stayed on according to the original character profile as presented here.

'Ndaona is a younger sister to Milika. She is in her late teens. Naughty in her early teens, she is now becoming matured. She is a hard worker even though she likes to work at her own pace. She doesn't want to be pushed around by anyone. She is doing her form 2 at a day secondary school within Mbonekera. At home she demonstrates what she learns in her agricultural class at school. She has for example been on the forefront of making compost manure at home which has contributed to high yields. Her interest in agriculture has caught Kanjoma's eye who has become her favourite and often invites her to see what new things he has done. She has planted most of the fruit trees in their garden with instructions from Kanjoma who is one of the prosperous farmers. With this background

Ndaona has been elected secretary to the village's tree planting committee which manages the village's tree nursery'.⁸⁸

Following what has gone on in the episodes, a 26 year old listener, Charles Masamba of Mphatama village in the area of Traditional Authority Kuntumanje in Zomba district said:

At first I was just listening to the radio play for fun when I was a pupil. Then I got trapped in the process because the stories were interesting and I needed to have fun and at the same time farming advice was usually included. The character of Ndaona is very inspiring to me. Although I could have grown tomatoes without listening to her, I could not have known some traditional ways of treating some of the diseases; *Mbeu zikagwidwa ziwau timasinja gresedia nkuthila* (When crops are attacked by leaf spot disease, the remedy is to ground gresedia leaves and apply as a local pesticide) I tried it and it worked. Others have tried it after observing me. Through the radio play therefore we learn some traditional ways from other areas in Malawi.⁸⁹

The young man has been influenced by Ndaona's character. He is able to apply traditional pesticides due to the demonstration of the benefits of the practice by his soap opera role model. The adoption of technologies does not usually spread quickly according to the diffusion of innovations theory. The listener in this case was motivated to try the new practice only after he was convinced that it was going to work for him. It took some time for him to trust this Ndaona character to the extent of trying out what the character had done. The innovation diffuses slowly and the listener influences others who may not have followed the radio soap. He states that others within his village adopted the new behaviour after observing him. This is also in line with four of the nine Ps of

⁸⁸ Character Profiles, p.5 - Story Workshop archives

⁸⁹ Manda C: Interview, 14-05-07

effective enter-educate programmes. These four are **personal** which means ‘appealing to individual listeners who can identify with one of the varied characters who represent many different aspects of the listening audience’, **persuasive** which means ‘presenting believable role-model characters who can demonstrate how listeners can move towards the new behaviour, comfortably, naturally and gradually’, **proven effective** which means people ‘acquire new knowledge, change their attitudes, and act differently as a result of messages conveyed in entertainment and the fourth is **practical** where believable characters are used ‘to present actions that audience members can understand and adopt comfortably themselves’.⁹⁰

Another Ndaona convert is 27 year old Gladys Kasiano of Makumba Village in the area of Traditional Authority Chowe in Mangochi District. Gladys’ process of identification with the character of Ndaona is deep rooted. In spite of the recognition that this is a fictitious character, the strong emotional involvement and empathy have taken the better of this particular listener. She said:

I started listening to *Zimachitika* way back in 1997 when I was a young girl. Ndaona has been an inspiration to me. I feel like I am also Ndaona although there are several differences between us. She is now married just like I am. I have been feeling sorry for myself because perhaps I was caught up in my village life and culture and so I entered into matrimony before I could achieve anything meaningful. But in my married life I have learnt to fend for myself as I am in a polygamous marriage. Ndaona is faithful to her husband and I follow her example. Farming has become my hobby and when I listen to Ndaona in the play I say to myself; ‘If this girl can do it why can’t I do it?’ So, I have embarked on irrigation farming and I grow vegetables and tomatoes. You can come with me to see my garden. Here in Mangochi when women talk of doing business it is the selling of *usipa* (fish) but I have a big garden and I use irrigation. Through the listening of *Zimachitika* we have teamed up with several people and have formed a club where we have worked together

⁹⁰ Fossard E, 1996, p.152

to have irrigation canals coming from the stream that goes into the lake. In addition to farming we come across issues such as AIDS and general social activities and human behaviour. Even a friend may not tell you some of the advice as is the case in the radio play *Zimachitika*. If most of the girls were like Ndaona, the world would have been a different.⁹¹

After interviewing her and other people we embarked on a short journey to the garden she had prepared. The garden was indeed full of green healthy looking vegetables. This young woman went through the stages of the social learning theory as articulated by Bandura, where the case of modelling, in this case through this radio drama character, Ndaona, was evident. She feels she has something in common with her. She has an emotional reaction to her role model as she feels guilty that she has not fully matched with the traits of her model since she married a bit earlier than she would really have wanted.

There are also other listeners that have gone through self efficacy as a result of the modelling through the radio drama. I found this in 22 year old Dora Magoya of Malindima village, TA Sitola in Machinga District who said:

I started listening to *Zimachitika* when I was in Standard 7 at school about seven years ago. Dad was usually not at home up to about midnight and so our mother would let us listen to this programme with her. By 7.30 p.m. we would have eaten already. Our grandmother would also come because she liked Gogo Nasibeko in the play. She felt a special relationship existed between her and Gogo Nasibeko who was like a fellow old person. After the play our grandmother would usually tell us to follow the good behaviour of some of the characters such as Ndaona but not to emulate bad people like Chithope, the butcher. Mum used to say this was just like another '*chinamwali*' (initiation ceremony) where there was good advice. I was not necessarily listening because of the so-called good advice but because of the entertainment provided by the scandalous characters such as Nabanda, Gubudu and Chithope. I am now married and my husband also comes at home late and I ensure the

⁹¹ Kasiano G: Interview, 18-05-07

availability of batteries so that as I kill the temporary loneliness, I listen to *Zimachitika* on Saturdays. I have now started listening to the play with serious intent because it gives a lot of good advice. Of course I still enjoy the scandals by some of the characters but I now approach the issues differently. Because of Ndaona I started irrigation farming and I use water from wells dug in our garden. Although Ndaona went further with her school I still think in this farming part I can match her.⁹²

The modelling aspect has also worked out here. In addition to this there is the Persuasion Theory at work. She had to be exposed to the knowledge in the first place. The catch in the exposition was the entertainment aspect although her mother and grandmother thought she was listening because of the advice. The message factor came in almost subconsciously as she started identifying with the character of Ndaona having found it credible and appealing. Their similarities were that they were both village girls living in an environment where poverty reigned but with adequate resources to atone for that. In Ndaona, Dora saw somebody with local expertise and internally granted her the authority to be a spokesperson for this type of behaviour that is being championed.

From the archives of The Story Workshop, there are several case studies of listeners that are believed to have been influenced by the *Zimachitika* radio soap opera. One such is Fanny Mkalapa who was interviewed by Doreen Nyirenda. At the time of the interview in May 2005 Fanny was a 19 years old Form Four student from Machilika Village under Sub Traditional Authority Nkagula in Zomba District and part of the report says:

I am a follower of *Zimachitika* programme. I am a good fan of Ndaona. I have been following her for a long period now. I try as much as possible to follow what she does. What I have liked most is her work in the recent plays where she is promoting small-scale irrigation. On top of that I guess she was teaching us the young girls to be self-reliant. I followed suit. But instead of growing tomatoes, I decided to grow vegetables because they are cheap and I am alone. I tried to consult some friends so

⁹² Magoya D: Interview, 25-01-07

that we could work together like Zunzo and Ndaona in the play, but it failed because all of my friends refused the idea. For me as an individual, the easiest was vegetable growing because I also needed time to study and to help my parents with the household chores. I am now selling my vegetables locally and so far I have made sales amounting to K450.00. My sales are good because I have managed to pay part of my school fees. My vision is to become Ndaona. I want to grow more vegetables and tomatoes on a large scale like her after finishing my secondary school education, in two months' time.⁹³

I made a follow up of Fanny and was fortunate to locate her and indeed true to her wish she was a successful farmer. My meeting with her on 16th May 2007, two years after the first interview, was very fruitful. It was easy to locate her. On the first day on the 15th May she had gone to town to deliver an application letter to some prospective employer and so I had to come back. She was told there was somebody who wanted to interview her on her farming success. Her bright face turned into a small frown when I introduced myself because I was only researching like some other people before but here she was in need of some loan to make her garden bigger than it was. She had looked for employment but was not successful for about one year after passing the school leaving certificate examinations in her second attempt albeit with poor grades. She was looking for a loan so that she could buy fertilizers and pesticides and be able to pay casual labourers. With no job in sight she had talked to someone at a learning institution, The Malawi Institute of Education with an eye to becoming a supplier of vegetables to the institution but was told her capacity was too low to be considered.

She confirmed that she had learnt a lot from *Zimachitika* and that what she was doing in farming was a direct result of listening to the radio soap opera:

⁹³ *Zimachitika* success stories -Story Workshop Archives

The play is no longer on air but I shall continue with the farming. I do not think Ndaona Piringu is dead. She is alive and I am also alive. Look! That is my vegetable garden. If I don't get employed, I shall keep on surviving on it.⁹⁴

Here is an ardent follower of a radio soap opera who aligns herself to a character she adores. Notwithstanding her other aspirations it is evident that her radio character role model has had a lasting influence on her activities. She has found compatibility with the behaviour of her model and having tried out she has seen the advantage of adopting this behaviour. On her part she has taken positive steps to achieve her goals with assistance from community members after listening to the radio soap opera because 'to learn is to express oneself and to teach oneself, especially when the true goal is for community to assume responsibility for its own development'.⁹⁵

2.2.2 SUBSTITUTE FOR LIVE TEACHER OR ADVISOR?

The listeners of the radio soap opera also suggest that this is perhaps a possible substitute to agricultural advisors or teachers. One of the listeners that shared such sentiments is a 22 year old farmer, Charles Masamba from Mphatama village in Zomba:

I started listening to *Zimachitika* in 1999 as a young pupil. I have continued to listen to it because there is a lot of agricultural content and advice. Until a few days ago there was no agricultural advisor in this area for so many years. We use the radio as a substitute to agricultural advisors. But sometimes, the advice given or shown in the radio play provokes us to hunt for agricultural advisors to seek more clarification. For instance there was an advisor in the play who taught Mbonekera villagers about budding and grafting. This is one issue I would have liked to pursue but I think I need person to person communication so that I can ask questions and see demonstrations. Now that the advisor is here, we shall be able to ask him some of the things we did not

⁹⁴ Nkalapa F: Interview, 16-05-07

⁹⁵ Ilboudo J, 2003, p. 216

understand. I have however been able to grow mushrooms successfully just by listening to an advisor teaching villagers in the play.⁹⁶

Such sentiments created a starting point for an interview with the Chief Agricultural Extension Officer for Machinga Agricultural Development Division (ADD) to find out the situation of agricultural extension workers and whether radio programmes could effectively play some roles of advisors. Mr Paul Whiteson Kabuluzi who had worked for 26 years seemed to have facts for almost all the issues in his position as Chief Agricultural Extension Officer. On the situation on the numbers of agricultural extension officer he said:

Ideally we are supposed to have 1 agricultural extension officer (popularly known as agricultural advisor) for every 800 farming families but the situation on the ground now is that we have 1 extension officer for every 3000 farming families. This is due to several reasons such as deaths (especially due to HIV/AIDS related illnesses), lack of adequate qualified personnel even if there was money to recruit them, among other reasons.⁹⁷

On the role played by radio programmes, Mr Kabuluzi said:

Radio programmes like *Zimachitika* play a very crucial role to farmers. To a large extent such radio programmes act as a substitute to a live extension officer. Yes, we are aware that there are agricultural messages in such radio programmes and that the farmers benefit a lot from them. We keep on hearing these facts from farmers. So, the farmers you met were telling the truth.⁹⁸

Mr Joseph Jiya, Agricultural Communication Officer for Machinga ADD corroborated with his boss. He said they believed in the power of radio hence they had a unit in Lilongwe that produced radio programmes for farmers.

⁹⁶ Masamba C: Interview, 14 -05-07

⁹⁷ Kabuluzi P: Interview, 17-05-07

⁹⁸ Ibid

Although the assertion that the Ministry of Agriculture produces radio programmes is correct, one contentious issue is that of targeting. It seems the target is people that are in full time farming, judging by the time of the day the programmes are aired. Times after lunch may not be conducive to people that may be involved in other activities. The second problem is that the approach is too didactic. People of the school going age group may find that to be too much in terms of sitting down to listen to advice or lessons because they develop negative attitude towards instruction as they associate it with oppression.⁹⁹

The difference with the radio drama is that to a greater extent it addresses all the seven Cs of communication. These are Commanding attention, Catering to the heart and the head, Clarifying the message, Communicating a benefit, Creating trust, Calling for action and Consistency. Drama stands out in that ‘it can direct attention to a social message by making it stand out from all other information a listener receives in the course of a day, by demonstrating how the message is relevant and useful to listeners’.¹⁰⁰ Drama scores highly in emotional involvement.

Emotional involvement is every bit as important as information when it comes to attracting an audience and motivating listeners to change. An emotional response will increase the time and energy a listener spends thinking about the message. Furthermore, decisions that are reached logically are strengthened if the decision is also emotionally rewarding. Drama has the ability to involve listeners in a range of emotional experiences as well as provide them with information to help them improve their lives.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Petty, R, & Cacioppo, J, 1981

¹⁰⁰ Fossard E, 1996, p.4

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 4-5

To cement on the role radio drama plays in substituting or creating a demand for an advisor, 30 year old Umali George Bula Gama of Makumba Village, Traditional Authority Chowe in Mangochi District and had listened to *Zimachitika* since its inception in 1997 said:

There are times we want advice and sometimes we get it from *Zimachitika*. The advisor may not be available and I would write down some of the advice I could get. I planted tomatoes because of Ndaona in *Zimachitika*. He who goes to see the lake was also able to see hippos. Just as you listen to the play and have fun you listen to advice. I once heard in *Zimachitika* of the making of compost manure from Chinese cabbage and went on to ask the advisor here, Mr Duwa, who confirmed to me that the practice is there and gave more examples of making compost manure. In most cases Mr Duwa our advisor cannot be reached because we understand he has a large area to attend to and he does not have all the time for us.¹⁰²

The issue of radio substituting real advisors has been echoed everywhere I went. Among other respondents 23 year old Shida Genda from Ngoma Village in Traditional Authority Malengachanzi in Nkhota kota said:

Radio forms a very good companion. *Zimachitika* has characters that I trust more than I do with some of my real friends. I started listening to the radio play about seven years ago. I stay with my mother and my 3 year old daughter. The father of the daughter made me lose trust in people. But when I listen to people like Ndaona, Aunt Ziona, Gogo Nasibeko and others, I have solace in them. I trust what Gogo Nasibeko advises. It is better than having somebody who is not truthful. So, characters in this radio drama have become my pillars of strength as opposed to real people. Because I trust Ndaona, I have a good irrigated garden over there. Gogo Nasibeko provides with all sorts of advice be it farming or social behaviour.¹⁰³

This interview with Shida and others goes in line with one of the seven Cs namely creation of trust. This is because ‘as listeners become personally and emotionally

¹⁰² Bula U: Interview, 18-05-07

¹⁰³ Genda S: Interview, 09-02-07

involved with role-model characters in the drama, they come to see the characters as real people whom they can trust and rely upon. If the drama features experienced, knowledgeable characters who can relate to listeners' lives, then listeners will trust the message that they are delivering'.¹⁰⁴ In line with Fossard, Latibu Banda also of Ngoma Village totally concurs with Shida. Latibu is 19 years old and he is a farmer. He said:

I dropped out of school because I could not pay school fees in secondary school. Most people are fishermen in my village but I have decided to keep goats as my main occupation. I first tried rabbit keeping following those two boys in *Zimachitika*, Rafiq and his friend whose name I have forgotten. The problem was that fellow Muslims were not happy with me because we are not supposed to eat rabbits. So, I kept on listening to *Zimachitika* for inspiration and I settled for goats. Mr Matabwa in the play keeps goats just like Nachanza and Lumbani. Through these people I have seen the benefits of goat keeping and indeed many 'kanyenya' (braai) fryers buy their meat from me.¹⁰⁵

Again this is in line with there being no physical advisor but using the radio as one's source of inspiration. Fossard says that listeners will most likely take on a new behaviour if they believe it has real advantages. With a good range of positive characters, drama can demonstrate to listeners the benefits to be gained from a change in their lifestyles just like is the case with Latibu here.

The apparent impact on the listeners for boys has come not only from Ndaona but also from characters like Rafiq and Jerry. Many boys thought they would identify more with their fellow boys although they also admire the girl characters in the play.

¹⁰⁴ Fossard E, 1996, p.5

¹⁰⁵ Banda L: Interview, 09-02-07

Showing this researcher about eight healthy rabbits on 15th March 2007 at his home in Chiphwanya Village, in Dedza, 19 year old Paulo Chipphinga, a school dropout said he was happy that in addition to having fun by listening to *Zimachitika*, he has also learnt something to earn a living.

At first I was listening to the radio for my parents then I saw that they were also listening to the radio when I wanted to and sometimes they would tune in to MBC radio 2 for *Nkhani za m'maboma* for the first few minutes before tuning in to MBC radio 1 for *Zimachitika*. I did not like it but had no control over the radio. After doing piece work I bought this pocket radio. Through selling of my cabbages I have been able to build my own hut as a man. To prove to people that I am somebody to reckon with in this village I have now acquired these rabbits you see courtesy of information from *Zimachitika*'s Rafiq and Jerry.¹⁰⁶

In this section there is evidence that radio edutainment is capable of performing major tasks of a teacher. Many listeners have benefited just by listening to radio edutainment as displayed here. Notwithstanding the absence of active interaction between teacher and learner therefore, radio edutainment has proven to be a very effective mode of message transmission.

2.2.3 HIV AND AIDS IN THE PLAY

Listeners have been exposed to information about HIV and AIDS in the play since its inception in various forms. The ongoing way is from Mbonekera people's interaction with Aunt Waitha, a nurse working at the health centre. At the onset of the play there are always HIV related issues that affect people and referred to the nurse. Portrayals of the effects of HIV and AIDS have been through both exemplary and errant characters. There are near perfect characters such as Aunt Zione who lives positively with HIV and

¹⁰⁶ Chipphinga P: Interview, 15-03-07

reassures fellow villagers of optimism in the face of AIDS. Then there are despicable characters such the promiscuous Enock who dies of AIDS, Mr Thawani, an irresponsible teacher and many other characters.

One character that has been able to influence the lives of many listeners is Zione. Through her, listeners have been exposed to information on how to live positively. The character of Zione ably deals with the misconception that all people that are HIV positive are sinners. Rosina Mtonga, a small scale business lady from Matumbi Village under Senior Chief Kanyenda in Nkhota kota says following the way Zione has lived she has been able to counsel her sister who is HIV positive.

My sister was contemplating suicide because of her status and because the man she believes is responsible for her condition deserted her after knowing her status. Fortunately for me during those weeks, *Zimachitika* was featuring Zione's story as the main issue. In addition to asking relatives to talk to my sister, I also listened to the play with her and discussed Zione's situation. My sister is now on ARVs and no longer thinks of suicide.¹⁰⁷

Apart from Zione and Aunt Waitha a lot of listeners say they have learnt a lot from the escapades of Mr Thawani, a wayward teacher. He has many girlfriends including his own students. When Suzgo, one of his student girlfriends is diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection, Thawani secretly goes for HIV testing and is diagnosed HIV positive but he does not tell anyone. Poetic justice is meted out as Mr Thawani is suspended from work due to his behaviour and Suzgo is expelled when she is pregnant. Poetic justice is also in play when Enock goes through a long spell of tribulations as his health gradually deteriorates when he suffers from a myriad of diseases at the same time.

¹⁰⁷ Mtonga R: Interview, 04-06-07

He laments his promiscuity and wishes he could turn back in time. He eventually dies of AIDS complications. The effects of HIV and AIDS are shown throughout the play as a number of people are affected directly with the caring of sick relations.

2.2.4 HOW REPRESENTATIVE IS THE COMMUNITY IN THE PLAY?

If the characters seem to influence people in the various ways, does this suggest that the setting of the play is like most of the local listeners' settings? Umali George Bula Gama of Mangochi said:

The Mbonekera Village in Zimachitika is typical of our villages and because of that we identify with it as we have fun and advice. The only problem is that sometimes the people of Mbonekera in the play talk about keeping pigs. That is where we dislike it because it is haram (unholy in Islam) here.¹⁰⁸

18 year old Muhammad Rafiq of Malindima Village in Traditional Authority Sitola's area in Machinga had this to say:

The Mbonekera Village is just like Malindima Village. There are troublemakers there just like here. There are confusionists like Nabanda in this village. At the same time there are people who can give you good pieces of advice like Gogo Nasibeko. Therefore when I see Mbonekera Village in *Zimachitika*, I see Malindima Village.¹⁰⁹

From these and other responses the conclusion is that a lot of people view the play as a mirror of their own lives and communities. The slight differences are the communities that do not subscribe to farming perhaps due to geographical circumstances beyond their control. Even then there would still be something that they would get from the play such as the entrepreneurship of small scale businesses that can thrive anywhere.

¹⁰⁸ Bula U: Interview, 18-05-07

¹⁰⁹ Rafik M: Interview, 25-01-07

2.2.5 SAMPLE RESPONSE FROM LISTENERS' LETTERS

Evidence of achieved self efficacy is displayed when a listener sits down and writes a letter detailing the change they have undergone as a result of radio listening. This response from one listener from Senga Bay in Salima dated 23 November, 2003, as translated below is one of over a hundred letters reviewed:

I am a 17 old girl in Form 3 and would like to respond to this week's question. What Ndaona is doing is very admirable. We know that some girls get money through relationships with men and this is leading to the death of many youth due to HIV/AIDS. What I have done is to ask my parents to give me K500.00 to start a small scale business and I bought a 20 kilogramme bag of salt. This was my capital of selling salt which I still do up to now. I have since opened an account with the bank and I have K2000.00. I sell the salt during market days on Fridays when I knock off from school and I have no reason to solicit money from men. I am Mildret Chimenya.¹¹⁰

It is not easy to decide to write and proclaim what one has gained from a radio play. There should be a lot of others that have attained a similar feat but may not come out in the open.

2.2.6 A SIP FROM THE WELL OF WISDOM?

In this community of Mbonekera Village in the play just like in most villages there is an old person who seems to be the know-it-all. This character is Gogo Nasibeko. The original aim of the inclusion of this character was to provide wisdom to the listeners. The character profile of Gogo Nasibeko as originally created reads:

Gogo Nasibeko is mother to Nachanza and Chithope and a sister to Kanjoma. She is a wise old woman who is able to relate the past and present by appreciating the ever changing environment and the need for society to change positively according to time. Her wisdom rests on her continuous use of proverbs and folk tales. Because of her wits she

¹¹⁰ *Zimachitika* Listener Letters - Story Workshop archives

sometimes helps the chief as a councillor in settling disputes and cases. She is still strong in her old age and participates in various house chores like farming. She is the best village potter -a career that earns her and the home some income. She is the oldest in the village. The proverb “*elders are like a dambo land where bush fires automatically get distinguished,*” is true to Gogo Nasibeko. When family and social problems are finding no solution in the village they are referred to Gogo who amicably addresses them.¹¹¹

The respondents that talked about Gogo Nasibeko mainly talked about her delivering juicy folktales. They did not seem to rate her highly regarding educational issues although in the village of Mbonekera she is regarded as such.

Agnes Kachere a 19 year old school drop out from Thambolagwa Village under Traditional Authority Kachere in Dedza district said:

I do not like Gogo Nasibeko. She is full of advice and I do not listen to the play because of advice. I want to have fun as we do not have a lot of activities to keep us busy here. When she starts giving her advice I get reminded of my mother who thinks I am always in the wrong and should be advised all the time.¹¹²

Similar sentiments were also expressed by almost one third of the respondents. These youths do not like Gogo Nasibeko because she reminds them of their own parents who always give advice or condemn the actions of the youth. When the youth see their parents they oftentimes view them as opposition to their personal enjoyment of life which they believe they are entitled to. The introduction of multiparty system of government in Malawi and the conscientisation of people’s freedoms has increased the youths’ dislike of their parents and characters like Gogo Nasibeko.

¹¹¹ *Zimachitika* Character Profiles, p.2 - Story Workshop archives

¹¹² Kachere A: Interview, 27-04-07

Contrary to this there are some people who believe the character of Nasibeko is what holds the play together. 42 year old Bwanali Jali from Sani Nkawa Village of Traditional Authority Mponda in Mangochi said:

Gogo Nasibeko is the pillar of the play. I get a lot of wisdom from her. Without her there would be no *Zimachitika*. She saves me and my wife from talking to our children all the time. We just ask the children to listen to the play and pay attention to what the Gogo says.¹¹³

The argument presented by Bwanali Jali is the same with most of the adult respondents. The age difference plays a role in one's attitude towards any character.

From this chapter we see that there is evidence that radio edutainment is able to change behaviour in people more especially when they identify with the characters that entertain and inspire them most. We have seen how some listeners have become attached to their role models from the radio soap opera. This is a display of the potential of radio edutainment in either substituting or supplementing classroom work.

¹¹³ Jali B: Interview, 1-03-07

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY 2: TIKUFERANJI

3.1 ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF AGENCY (ADRA)

Tikuferanji is produced by ADRA, Malawi. ADRA Malawi is a branch of ADRA worldwide. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency was established in November 1956 by the Seventh Day Adventist Church to provide humanitarian relief and welfare. Originally called Seventh Day Adventist World Service or SAWS, the name was changed to Adventist Development and Relief Agency in 1973. By this time, ADRA's work grew rapidly with major programmes in several countries putting emphasis on long-term development, food distribution, institutional development and ongoing disaster relief. Currently ADRA operates in 125 countries worldwide.

ADRA's mission statement in part is to work with people in poverty and distress to create positive change. ADRA is said to be 'reaching across boundaries empowering and speaking out for the people at-risk and forgotten to achieve measurable, documented and durable changes in lives and society'.¹¹⁴

ADRA operates in five core portfolio activities namely food security, economic development, primary health, emergency management and basic education. The programme *Tikuferanji* falls under primary health. This is in line with one of the three

¹¹⁴ <http://www.adra.org>

priorities for African countries currently numbering 38 in total. The first priority is fighting the AIDS crisis.¹¹⁵ According to the website, an estimated three million people die each year from AIDS and most people in poor countries are never tested and many who die of AIDS-related infections are officially listed as succumbing to tuberculosis, malaria, or other illnesses in order to keep their families from being stigmatised.

3.1.1 TIKUFERANJI- THE BACKGROUND

The planning for *Tikuferanji* started in 1993. At that time there were not so many plays on air talking about HIV/AIDS. Actually there was a culture of silence amongst people since the discovery of the first reported case of HIV in 1985. There was even fear to talk about the issue. At that time and perhaps to some extent up to now there are people that believe this is a curse from God to sinners here on earth.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency decided that they should do something about the situation. Mr Michael Usi was already known as a radio dramatist with his role of Manganya in the weekly radio drama of *Kapalepale* now *Sewero la Sabata Ino* (*This Week's Play*) aired on MBC radio 1.

Michael Usi was given the responsibility of coming up with an idea of a radio play and hence he created *Tikuferanji* in consultation with others at ADRA. The duration of the play was to be ten minutes and it was going to be aired every Thursday just after the 6.00 a.m. news bulletin on Malawi Broadcasting Corporation. At that time this was the only radio station broadcasting local programmes locally in Malawi.

¹¹⁵ <http://www.adra.org>

The first objective was to provide basic information about HIV/AIDS. This was because there was lack of proper information on HIV/AIDS at that time and there was need to change the mindset of people. The other objective was to remove stigmatisation and try to sensitise people on the need to have accommodating policies in work and other places. At this time there was no creative pressure as listeners would just be exposed to naked facts about HIV/AIDS. The production format of the programme is in between a vignette and a play.

Vignettes are short, impressionistic scenes that focus on one moment or give one impression about a character, an idea or a setting...unlike a traditional scene in a play, the vignette is not strictly linked in with a sequential plot development but establishes meaning through loose symbolic or linguistic connection to other vignettes or scenes. Vignettes are literary an equivalent of a snapshot, often incomplete or fragmentary.¹¹⁶

In addition to this definition from the encyclopaedia, there are complimenting definitions. Pamela Brooke says 'A vignette is an enlarged 'slice-of-life' dramatization. A spot highlights a symbolic encounter that suggests a story, but does not actually develop it'.¹¹⁷ This is what *Tikuferanji* is like. In terms of time Brooke says a vignette goes for up to 5 minutes and a play goes on for a minimum of 15 minutes. For purposes of this study *Tikuferanji* shall be categorized as a play. ADRA's *Tikuferanji* went on air in the first quarter of 1994.

3.1.2 ANY POLICY FOLLOWED?

Even in the absence of a written National HIV and AIDS Policy at the time of its inception the play has tried to address issues in a manner that was to be in the policy

¹¹⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org>

¹¹⁷ Brooke P, 1995, p.44

during the pre and post policy times. The 2003 National HIV and AIDS Policy in part stipulates the rationale for information, education and communication as:

To tackle the HIV/AIDS epidemic, people must have the ability to adopt risk-reducing behaviour and to make full use of existing opportunities to cope with HIV infection and AIDS. Targeted information delivered within a culturally sensitive context can help increase awareness and knowledge and to overcome stigma, discrimination, myths, beliefs and prejudices associated with HIV/AIDS and sexuality.¹¹⁸

From the beginning the play tried to address the issues as outlined in the 2003 policy. There has been thorough attention paid to the issues in the policy at all times.

3.2 CHARACTERS

Although this play is theme based rather than character based, there are notable characters that run the show and worthy mentioning.

The character of Manganya was transferred from *Sewero La Sabata Ino* (*This Week's Play*). It was still transferable between the radio plays *Tikuferanji* and *Sewero La Sabata Ino* at the time of the research. Manganya first appeared in *Kapalepale* now known as *Sewero La Sabata Ino*.¹¹⁹ The character keeps oscillating from being a naughty boy to a married adult and husband to Sikono's mother. In most cases Manganya is a villain or a misfit in society. The origins of the name of Manganya come from Michael Usi's home village of Goldeni in the area of Traditional Authority Mabuka in Mulanje where *Manganyera* is a troublesome and carefree person and the name Manganya is short form of *Manganyera*. Michael Usi is the person who plays the role of Manganya. The

¹¹⁸ National HIV and AIDS Policy – A CALL TO RENEWED ACTION, Office of the President and Cabinet and National AIDS Commission, October 2003, p.10

¹¹⁹ Matebule T: Interview, 5-09-07

caricature that Manganya wears is that not only of a playboy but also that of a comedian who has nothing to offer to society apart from providing laughter.

Another character is Make Sikono. Make Sikono means Sikono's mother. She as a character is usually humble and forgiving. She endures a lot of embarrassing moments provided by her husband, Manganya. Her husband's infidelity does not seem to move her so much because she has always come back to him. Their family is an epitome of deception and infidelity.

Ngingde, another character is a friend to Manganya and has a wife known as Make Junior. Sometimes the two families of Manganya and Ngingde exchange notes on how to handle certain situations but in most cases it is Make Junior who tries to resolve issues brought by Sikono's mother. Just like the case of Manganya and his wife the characters of this couple change.

Che Jali, another important character is an elderly and respected uncle to anybody depending on circumstances in the play and usually plays an advisory role to miscreants. He is at his best when he plays the role of significant others where he is nobody in the village but people listen to what he says and respect him. Sometimes he is the one in the wrong and plays the role of a confusionist.

Then there is Zakaliya who is another character that oscillates from *Sewero La Sabata Ino* to *Tikuferanji*. His characteristic is his accent that is heavily aligned to the Yao

language. It becomes funny when he forces himself to have conversations in the Chichewa language. He plays witchdoctor who is deceptive and crooked but sometimes he is an exemplary witchdoctor who directs people to the hospital.

3.3 SAMPLING THE STORYLINES

A sample of at least three of the storylines for *Tikuferanji* would suffice for the subsequent discussions although the discussions shall not only touch on the sampled stories but of many others as well. One play going on air on Thursday 3 May 2007 went like this:

Sikono's mother bids farewell to Manganya her husband that she is going to a women's group to discuss loan facilities coming from some organisations that assist women with small-scale business loans. Manganya seems very happy that the wife is going out and encourages her to go and discuss with fellow women. Not surprisingly soon after the wife goes Manganya calls on the housemaid. Naphiri, the housemaid, responds to the call immediately and comes to hear what the boss has to say. Manganya puts it to the housemaid that she is somebody who is quick to respond and accept. In Chichewa '*Umavomera mwansanga eti?*' and the housemaid innocently says 'yes' because she has a different understanding of the situation. Manganya is wittily referring to quick response and acceptance of his desires. He admires her hips and makes it known to her. He then makes the first step and asks the housemaid to manicure his nails for him. She grudgingly obliges after some resistance knowing the respect and social distance that is supposed to be there between the two. As she does the nail cutting he caresses her and she protests

that she is not comfortable with this. By the turn of events Manganya's wife suddenly comes back and finds the two in this type of suspicious state. She chases the housemaid to go to the kitchen immediately and she takes her husband to task over this. She even threatens to leave to let the housemaid take over. As they are arguing, Manganya says the housemaid is a human being just like everyone else and should not be discriminated against in any way. That is why he was according the girl this opportunity of manicuring his fingernails. The girl comes back looking for Manganya's wife to ask for something as if nothing had happened and Manganya's wife is chasing her with the aim of beating her up as Manganya is following behind to protect the girl. The play ends there.

Weighed against the nine P's of effective enter-educate programmes we see that this particular episode scores on being popular. It is able to attract the listener's attention although it falls short in the other aspect of encouraging others 'to listen and consider adopting the new behaviors'.¹²⁰ In this case it is displaying behaviour not to emulate which is another way of changing people's behaviour. The poetic justice is also lacking because there is no indication either explicit or implicit that the wrong doer gets punished. This is a stereo-type of traditional Malawian beliefs that suggest that a woman should be blamed for any wayward sexual exploits with the popular saying that sexual immorality depends on the woman. What the audience is left with is potential punishment for the maid.

The following week there was this story:

¹²⁰ Fossard E, 1996, p. 152

The community sings songs welcoming their political party president. The political party is known as Nginana Chwee. Manganya as master of ceremonies welcomes all the party officials and hands over to the regional governor of the Nginana Chwee party, Honourable Nginde who in turn introduces the party president Honourable Che Jali. Che Jali underlines the party's manifesto to be implemented when they take over government. The party's manifesto dwells much on the penalties they are going to introduce to people engaged in promiscuous activities. Among other measures the party is going to impose a twenty year prison sentence on 'anyone found with a woman at night', close all rest houses that keep girls whose occupation is prostitution and those found transmitting HIV to be charged with murder. The story ends in ululations and dancing in praise of the party president.

When a complete story ends in such a way the chances of impacting any change are very minimal because there is just the preaching of the anti HIV message. There is no consistent association with or display of positive individuals and messages to emulate from. Besides, the suggestions on the proposed punishment to be meted out to those spreading HIV are a bit too distant to reality. The listener would not imagine how soon any government would introduce a twenty year prison sentence to 'anyone found with a woman at night'. This episode fails to be persuasive. It ends at producing mirth in the listener. No doubt some listeners like this radio drama but cannot say what they get from it. H. Siliya speaking to this researcher said:

I cannot say exactly what makes me like *Tikuferanji*. I just find it funny and I keep on listening to it.¹²¹

¹²¹ Siliya H: Interview, 2-03-07

Again this episode scores highly on being popular. H. Siliya and many other listeners state that they like it although they cannot say why they like it. It was voted the most popular radio programme in the Entertainers of the Year programme in 2005. Therefore, this programme is popular.

Another story from another week went on like this:

Ngingde buys some clothes which he intends to give to a secret lover and because he is not meeting the lover on this particular day he decides to ask Manganya to keep these clothes for him. Apparently Ngingde fears that his wife may notice the clothes and may become very furious. Manganya accepts to keep the clothes until the following day. He believes that he would be able to conceal the clothes from his wife. Unfortunately, Make Sikono, Manganya's wife discovers the clothes hidden in Manganya's bag as she is suspicious of the way he is entering the house. After taking him to task he says he bought the clothes for her but then when she sees the sizes of the brassiere and pair of pants, she questions him how he thought these would fit her. It is at this point that Manganya reveals that he was only keeping them for Ngingde who was going to present them to a secret lover the following day. Manganya is dragged by his wife to go to Ngingde's house immediately where Manganya is forced to spill the beans before Ngingde's wife. Ngingde tries to deny any knowledge of the clothes but Manganya insists Ngingde is the owner. Ngingde's wife decides to divorce the husband forthwith and Manganya supports her. He goes on to preach against such reckless men as Ngingde who are busy spreading HIV.

This episode is passionate and the suspense is sustained as to what would happen next. It is hypocritical though for Manganya to suddenly become an advisor to his friend when he is an accomplice to the act at the beginning of the story. To some extent this is still a good twist to the story because knowing Manganya as a character, one should not have trusted him in the first place.

From the storylines it is evident that there was very little if any effort to consciously follow the principles of edutainment. The edutainment aspects seem to have happened by proxy. There is no proper direction or plan following the persuasion theory, the theory of reasoned action, the social learning theory or the diffusion theory which are the pillars of the edutainment strategy. What clearly comes out is the desire to amuse the listener and thus it becomes crucial to hear what the listeners said.

3.4 WHAT THE LISTENERS SAID

Having sampled some of the plays it is time to find out what listeners say about the play. *Tikuferanji* targets people of child bearing age and others nearing that age but the Communications and Advocacy Officer for the producers of the programme, Chikondi Madikiza said:

Everyone is encouraged to listen because regardless of age because HIV issues can affect anybody not only the child bearing age group.¹²²

Out of the sample population of 146 interviewed, 12% of the respondents answering questions on *Tikuferanji* showed obvious confusion with the television version of the

¹²² Madikiza C: Interview, 5-09-07

same programme. Such responses were not many as the respondents were told in advance that what was under discussion was the radio version of the play. In any case the situation was not serious because the study was on youth in rural areas and reception of Television Malawi in most of such areas is either very poor or non-existent. The possession of television screens is also very minimal. The listeners had varied reactions to the radio programme as presented here.

The radio play *Tikuferanji* also enjoys large listenership. Just like *Zimachitika* it has regular listeners that do not want to miss it every time it goes on air. This radio play has one major attribute. It calls a spade a spade. Charles Manda, 26, of Mphatama Village TA Kuntumanje in Zomba said:

I like *Tikuferanji* because it is point blank. The people announce what has killed the deceased such as AIDS. Here in the villages, we hide the disease if anybody dies of AIDS. And this cannot help in eradicating the disease.¹²³

This is indeed an attribute that the play should be credited with. There have been a number of plays where people have had differences with the announcement that the deceased has died of HIV/AIDS related illnesses. As people quarrel in the play the reality of life sinks in the listeners.

Alice Majidu an 18 year old student of Malindi AIDS Youth Net and Vocational Skills who comes from Chiwaya Village in the area of Traditional Authority Chowe in Mangochi District had this to say:

¹²³ Manda C: Interview, 14-05-07

What *Tikuferanji* does is what we would like to hear but which would be painful if told to you directly by a person you know. Malawians like to speak in riddles but the characters like Manganya and Che Jali in the play just speak without wrapping their words in any figurative sayings. That is why I like the play.¹²⁴

On the cultural front there are times when the whole play is just some traditional music spiced with pieces of advice as is the case in some areas where there they conduct initiation ceremonies. On this some people talked about enjoyment while others talked of misunderstanding of the strategy used in such instances.

Khadija Kadango a 17 year old school dropout from Mkajenda Village in the area of Traditional Authority Tambala in Dedza District at her home village on 17 March 2007 said that this is the best way of doing it since it encompasses music which makes one awake and lively.

I try to listen to the play every Thursday when it comes on air so that I listen to some of the scandals of Manganya. Everybody at home accepts that I should be given the radio to listen to every Thursday morning. My mother says it is one way in which I can grow up into a woman who understands about AIDS.¹²⁵

She is not the only person that enjoys the escapades of Manganya. A lot of other interviewees expressed similar sentiments.

Beatrice Zaoneka, a 16 year old primary school pupil who comes from Chande Village in Malengachanzi area in Nkhota kota said:

I started listening to *Tikuferanji* when I was very young about five years ago. The motive was just to have fun since I heard that there is

¹²⁴ Majidu A: Interview, 18-05-07

¹²⁵ Kadango K: Interview, 17-03-07

Manganya who is very funny. I have indeed been able to listen to several plays since then and I laugh a lot when I listen to the play.¹²⁶

From the interviews conducted it is evident that there are a lot of people that are educated by *Tikuferanji*. About 18% of the sample population interviewed owed their knowledge of pertinent HIV/AIDs issues to *Tikuferanji*. They first heard about how HIV is spread from the programme and went on to find out more from other sources such as friends and other radio programmes.

3.4.1 TARGETTING

Other listeners are targeted and categorised as the high risk and one such group is that of bargirls and sex workers most of whom are youth. There are some episodes of *Tikuferanji* that apply targeting.

Targeting is the process of customizing the design and delivery of a communication program on the basis of the characteristics of an intended audience segment. The targeting strategy has been widely utilized since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in 1981 to reach high-risk populations.¹²⁷

Talking to two female sex workers in their early twenties who did not want to be named and refused to talk on recorder in Mangochi on 1 March 2007, it transpired that they like *Tikuferanji* so much and that they learn a lot from it.

I know that programme is meant for us. On Wednesday there is usually no *business* and so it is possible to wake up early in the morning sober and switch on our small radio on Thursday morning to listen to *Tikuferanji*. It teaches us how to protect ourselves from you men.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Zaoneka B: Interview, 10-02-07

¹²⁷ Singhal A, & Rogers, E, 2003, p. 201

¹²⁸ Interview with sex worker, 1-03-07

Another sex worker concurred with her friend and said:

With *Tikuferanji* I like the way they do not go round issues. That is why I find time to listen to it. They go point blank. It makes us more aware that the world has changed and we should take care of our lives. The pouch of your life cannot be kept for you by another person.¹²⁹

On the issue of targeting *Tikuferanji* has done considerably well. The major setback to the targetting is the failure for most of the beneficiaries missing it because of the time it goes on air. The two sex workers are a drop in the ocean of those that could have benefited from the contents of the radio play. An attempt at interviewing more of members of such a profession yielded negative results as most of them do not listen to the radio at all. It was therefore futile to continue interviewing them on the radio programme. The few others that listen to the radio claim not to have heard about the programme. As such, although ADRA has tried to reach out to the so called high risk members of the society, negligible outcomes would result from the effort. Perhaps other communication strategies would work better for people in the sex trade. The radio aspect of the communication could still be vital to supplement the other strategies especially those on face to face basis.

3.4.2 POINT BLANK

Most of the plays reviewed show that there is use of point blank statements. The messages are not wrapped in any veil of subtle communication. This attracted varying reactions from the listeners with most of them preferring the point blank presentation

¹²⁹ Interview with sex worker, 1-03-07

style. They say this is exactly what they want to be told. An example of a storyline using the point blank approach goes as follows:

There is a funeral in the village. The deceased is niece to Che Jali who coincidentally happens to be the chief in the village. He goes against the set tradition where ordinarily he would have asked somebody to give a funeral eulogy on his behalf. He rises to speak. In his speech, Che Jali says he does not want to beat about the bush. He is going to tell the truth because it hurts him. He says the deceased died of AIDS and immediately people start to murmur. He goes on to silence the people that are murmuring because he does not want them to die like his niece whose body was in the coffin ready to be buried when she should have been alive. He accuses the deceased of not heeding his advice and going on with her promiscuous life. He advises all the mourners not to do what the deceased used to do. When the murmurs continue he threatens to reveal the names in the long list of men in the village that had had sexual intercourse with the deceased. This forces most of the men to become silent. 'I know you all! My niece's wish was to have this list announced so that we should know who else shall be following her to the grave. What pains me is that most of you on this list are married men and you must have infected your innocent wives! ...from now onwards I do not want people to say so and so has died after a short or long illness. There is no such disease as short or long illness. If it is AIDS, just say it! AIDS is spread through unprotected sex!'¹³⁰

¹³⁰ *Tikuferanji* – MBC Radio 1, 9-12-06

The play summarised here was aired on several other days in addition to the one quoted. Plays in similar fashion were also aired several times. 20 year old school dropout Zione Damiano from Mapemba Village in Dedza said:

I enjoy *Tikuferanji* so much because Manganya and his friends do not mince words. They are just like our initiation counsellors at the time of initiation at the *simba* (initiation camp). Che Jali once said it clearly that men's sticks are the ones that shall take them to the grave. And for us women, if we undress for everybody that comes our way, we shall die fast. That is why I like *Tikuferanji*.¹³¹

Apparently the word 'stick' was used by the interviewee on the understanding that the interviewer would know what it meant. She could not remember when the episode in question was aired but the issue is she had learnt a lot from the point blank messages. However, some listeners think that *Tikuferanji* goes overboard. They overdo the point blank messages to the point of being very explicit. One listener expressed her disappointment in this way:

Amene aja amatukwana (those people are vulgar). How can they talk of issues that should only be said in the confines of the bedroom? Should I hear such messages about using condoms with children? My six year old daughter once asked me how protective condoms are and what they protect us from. She listened to this same programme (*Tikuferanji*) one morning and she asked me these questions just as the programme was coming to an end.¹³²

It is clear that the point blank presentation style is received differently by different listeners. What is important is that even those that hold the view that some messages should be classified according to age groups and not presented as raw as they are on radio, say so after they have heard the messages. Perhaps it would then be incumbent upon them to figure out how they can wrap the messages as they present them to others.

¹³¹ Damiano Z: Interview, 26-04-07

¹³² Butao K: Interview, 27-04-07

However, the point blank strategy is not in line with the Social Learning Theory because vicarious learning where the listener learns from the successes or failures of others would not easily take place because their model character in the play does not actually undergo the experiences together with the listener.¹³³ The listener just hears the background or history of what the model might have done to deserve either the reward or the punishment. Although the points in a values grid may have been driven home, the listener may not have accepted the message because it sounded like either a class lesson or a church sermon. The edutainment aspect therefore becomes compromised.

3.4.3 UNINTENDED INFLUENCE

Usually when producers plan to influence change in the lives of their listeners they plan for positive change. This is no exception with *Tikuferanji*. At the beginning of the creation of the play there was a clear vision. Chikondi Madikiza of ADRA said:

We wanted to bring about positive change in the listeners. We wanted to make people see what they could do to avoid spreading the dangerous HIV scourge.¹³⁴

Some listeners have indeed been influenced positively by following the radio drama. There are others that have missed the objectives of the play and view it as championing male dominance in society. To these people it is also an encouragement to men to follow and practice some of the adventures of Manganya, the main character in the play. Among such listeners is a 26 year old fishmonger from Mangochi who said:

Ife ndife Afana Manganya amwene. Tinamara komanso mabebi timasosola heavy (I am also like Manganya. I am married. I am also

¹³³ Horton D & Wohl R, 1985

¹³⁴ Madikiza C: Interview, 5-09-07

involved with other women). Manganya is my hero, when his wife catches him involved in extra-marital affairs, he puts her in the right place. She knows a man is in charge and should not be questioned in his actions.¹³⁵

Another listener with similar sentiments towards the play believes the play is there to shut women up and listen to their husbands.

I like the play so much because it shows us who is on top between a man and a woman. You will never see a woman triumph in the play. Manganya always defeats his wife in arguments and the wife does not run away because she knows she cannot survive on her own as a woman.¹³⁶

The responses by some of the listeners are obviously going in the opposite direction of what the producers had intended. The cause of this is that the producers have sort of let loose the Manganya character to do anything without proper planning. In the first place the absence of a written down moral framework to clearly stipulate the positive values to be promoted by the play and the consequent absence of a values grid have unintentionally promoted negative traits in the character of Manganya. Secondly, the absence of written scripts and the resultant spontaneity during production have failed to filter messages that come through to the listeners. And on the listening end, people consider what is aired on radio to be the correct way of doing things unless it is appropriately condemned. These factors have resulted in unintended outcomes from some of the listeners.

There are clear indications that *Tikuferanji* enjoys very large listenership and that explains why it was voted as the best radio programme in Malawi in 2005. It is equally

¹³⁵ Stone B: Interview, 2-0-07

¹³⁶ Mgula G: Interview, 11-02-07

clear that in spite of the listeners enjoying the play, there is very little in terms of education that they get.

In this chapter the effects of the radio programme on the listener have been reviewed. A lot of youth in the rural areas enjoy the programme very much and some of them have shown that they make positive decisions on their sexual lives as a direct result of listening to the *Tikuferanji* programme. However it is equally evident that some negative decisions have also been made as a result of listening to the same programme. This goes against ADRA's mission statement of fostering positive change through its programmes. This is a clear manifestation that as a radio edutainment programme *Tikuferanji* has a long way to go to comfortably be compared with other radio edutainment programmes.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The study set out to explore the extent to which radio edutainment affects decisions of the rural youth and how The Story Workshop and ADRA have fared in their quest to promote positive change through their radio programming. Through the same study the follow up objective was to derive lessons on the potential of radio edutainment in Malawi and whether the same can be used as a means of alternative education.

Regular listeners of the two programmes were highly cognizant of the educational content and wanted the content to tilt in favour of education rather than entertainment. 85% of the rural youth interviewed said that they had become regular listeners of the programmes by chance rather than by design. They were hooked to the programme of *Zimachitika* through their love for negative characters such as Nabanda and Chithope. Nabanda is a good for nothing woman in the village of Mbonekera who spends most of her time gossiping about other people and boasting about her affluence or knowledge which she does not possess at all whereas Chithope is a rowdy butcher man who has spend some time in jail and who is always number one suspect whenever any mischief occurs in the village. It shows here that the entertainment aspect is of paramount importance in as far as getting people to listen to the play is concerned.

The entertainment aspects make people follow the proceedings of radio drama with keen interest and therefore as the social learning theory¹³⁷ suggests they identify with characters and are able to follow transitional characters up to the time they become positive role models.

This study did not prove that young people are more influenced by radio than adults. The few adults interviewed also showed that they are equally influenced by radio. The difference was that adults indulge more in vicarious efficacy as a result of listening to radio drama. They do not easily venture into experiments following information from radio drama at the rate done by the youth.

The youth that are in listeners clubs like the ones interviewed in Zomba and in Mangochi have shown more direct reactions towards the information coming from the play *Zimachitika* than those not in any listener clubs or youth groups. Information on its own without an enabling environment is like seed sown in sand. At the same time information without entertainment is like pouring contents of a drink in the mouth of a person. They may like its taste but may not like the manner it is given to them.

Hornik asserts that ‘to argue that information provision alone can resolve development problems is to assume that available resources are being inefficiently used.’¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Bandura A, 1977

¹³⁸ Hornick R, 1988, p. 351

The focus group discussions held in Mangochi and Nkhota kota revealed that the youth have a higher retention potential than adults. The youth were generally able to mention more characters from the two plays and were also able to cite more stories from *Tikuferanji* than the adults. The issue of putting into practice what they had learnt put the adults on a higher footing than the youth. The causes of this are that in most cases it is the adults who own the gardens and they have a bigger say on what should happen. However, the youth have also been able to influence their parents on what they should do. The higher retention on the part of the youth suggests that they should be more capable to put to practice what they have learnt given the necessary resources. In a few cases where the youth are in full control of what to do on the farm they had the upper hand in implementing lessons learnt from radio drama. The case of *Tikuferanji* however did not depend on the parent-child relationship. This was in between adults only or youth only. In a group it was not possible for youths to say much about their sexual relationships with adults or fellow youth.

The common denominator for the two radio programmes under study is that they are both edutainment programmes aiming at changing people's lives for the better. They are both popular radio plays and try to be a mirror of life. The preparations and delivery are what distinguishes them.

Among other factors the research set out to appreciate how the two most popular radio plays in Malawi according to voters are produced and whether planning in a different way would have changed the status quo. The listeners that vote for radio programmes

may not necessarily be influenced by the types of preparations that go on in the background. The popularity for *Tikuferanji* has not matched with message retention and direct application of what is contained in the messages. *Zimachitika* however has something from the listeners to show as was the case with the various field visits to some of the participants of the research. It is known that there may be other factors that may have influenced the implementation of the messages apart from the information but the fact that the participants remember more from *Zimachitika* than from *Tikuferanji* shows that the latter has lesser influence in terms of behaviour change.

Whereas *Zimachitika* uses social learning theory and the diffusion theory *Tikuferanji* does not consciously use any change theories. This is one of the factors that make the play not have demonstrable effects in spite of the entertainment aspects in it. The Communications and Advocacy Officer for ADRA speaking on behalf of the producer said that they do not have anything to show for the behaviour changes that may have been influenced by their programme. This is a case of success by chance.

This study has shown that there are no significant changes in people's behaviour as a direct result of listening to *Tikuferanji*. Several reasons can be attributed to the lack of intended delivery. There is lack of consistency in the stories and characterisation of the popular radio play. There are times when the play is aired and the negative character stands out and carries the day up to the end without being countered by a positive character that ought to offer what is believed to be the right way of approaching situations. Cases where HIV positive characters are mocked and ridiculed by negative

characters without any equally powerful suppressing actors to take the plot to the desired end are so many in the play. There are unintended outcomes as some listeners admire the confusion and fun brought about by Manganya the main character.

Where there are messages not done through believable characters there is no significant change achieved in listeners. The affective parasocial interaction for the majority of the respondents with the radio drama characters encouraged them to effect changes in their lives to bring about positive change in their lives. Messages that were just presented in a direct way without characteristic traits of the one giving the message were not able to influence people to take action in spite of being overly enjoyed. The absence of written scripts in *Tikuferanji* may have contributed to lack of consistency.

For *Zimachitika* ‘the unique meticulous creation of life-like setting has enabled different writers to come and go at The Story Workshop but come up with dramas that look like they have been authored by the same person throughout the years’.¹³⁹

There are four main elements to successful radio edutainment namely; the use of formative evaluation to facilitate the design of radio messages, the use of the values grid to structure the educational content of the episodes, and a focus on the entertainment elements to draw a large audience and the explicit use of role models for behavioural change and its consequences. A long running and linked format has more potential to influence behaviour change.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Kamowa, O, 2003, p.3

¹⁴⁰ Rogers et al., 1999

The radio soap opera had more time to grow the characters than a self contained play. This does not however, suggest that it is not possible to have round characters in a self contained play. Consistency in behavioural traits is what is important. A better part of this study was done in 2007 and the play *Tikuferanji* had been done as individual episodes for all the years until March 2008 when ADRA announced that *Tikuferanji* was going to take a new direction. It was reported that ‘under the new set-up, the sequel – a complete departure from the old one – would wear a face of a soap opera whose storyline would be ongoing and would roll for about 15 episodes before concluding.’¹⁴¹ Michael Usi, Executive Producer and the brains behind the production is quoted as saying,

‘We realised radio soaps were fast becoming the order of the day so we realised we couldn’t continue living in the past and deprive our audience the right to their wishes.’¹⁴²

The newspaper article does not seem to suggest that the producer had actually seen any demerits in the format used earlier but that they were just moving with the winds due to the apparent popularity of some of the radio soaps being aired on different radio stations. This is in agreement with the earlier assertion in this paper that some of the successes in radio edutainment could be attained by chance and this is not the best way of doing it as others taking over may not realise how things are done.

In all these arguments there are strong indications that used with proper planning and careful story development, soap operas have a distinct advantage of influencing change

¹⁴¹ *The Daily Times*, March 13, 2008

¹⁴² *ibid*

over other types of radio drama presentations. As shown in this research some members of the audience developed parasocial interactions with some of their favourite characters perceiving them as friends and role models. This is only possible where there is time to develop the radio characters fully into believable characters not merely using them as megaphones for prepared messages.

‘....a soap opera provides several opportunities to repeat an educational message, day-after-day, without being pedantic. You can do this through different characters, both positive and negative, who find themselves in different situations. And then accordingly, you develop your casuistic hypotheses’.¹⁴³

The study has shown that with careful and competent planning radio edutainment has a lot of potential to be used as alternative popular education to those that may not have gone through formal schooling or did not properly accomplish their learning objectives.

The programming of *Zimachitika* has been largely successful in areas of agricultural production not only because of the inclusion of agricultural instructions through the characters of agricultural advisors and influential members of the imaginary society but also through the inclusion of other daily issues that interest people to help prevent boredom and predictability. In episodes where the messages were flooded there was the lack of interest to listen to the follow up episodes as gathered from the listeners that were interviewed.

¹⁴³ Miguel Sabido in an interview with Arvind Singhal and Rafael Obrigon on 3 December 1997 in Mexico City published in Journal of Development Communication, 1999, Volume 10(1): p. 68

The lack of clear theoretical models followed in both programmes has negatively affected the levels of their intended influence over listeners.

Radio continues to play an important role in communication than any other form of media due to easy accessibility regarding reception and cost of acquisition and maintenance. Radio requires a relatively low degree of literacy – whenever such is required. Most youth in the rural areas are going towards owning their own pocket radios.

Further research needs to be done to replicate the study on a larger scale so that appropriate recommendations can be made. Another area that needs to be tackled is whether it is feasible to introduce parallel lessons to the syllabus done through radio soap operas during the evening time so that the youth can continue learning at home as they have fun in the stories.

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Appendices

QUESTIONNAIRE

ZIMACHITIKA

BIODATA

Name

Age

Sex

Village/place of residence

District of residence

Occupation

1. Who owns the radio you listen to?
2. When did you start listening to Zimachitika?
3. What made you start listening regularly?
4. Do you still listen to it regularly and intentionally?
5. Do you know the characters in the story? Can you mention as many as possible.
6. Who is (are) the character(s) you like best and why?
7. Do you think the issues portrayed by the characters in the story are relevant to your own or people you know?
8. Does the programme stimulate debate and discussion in your families or within your peers? If so, what are the issues you have discussed/debated on? Is there anything you can remember that might have resulted from your interaction (if any) with your peers after discussing issues in the play?
9. Are there lessons you may have learnt from the programme and remember well?
10. Is there anything you have done as a direct result of listening to the programme? Explain.

11. Is there anything you may have learnt and wanted to implement but have not been able to? If yes, what is it and what made it impossible for you to implement?
12. What character(s)-if any- have influenced your behaviour more? Why?
13. What do you think dominates between entertainment and education in the programme? Should it be like that? Why?
14. What do you not like about the programme? If you had the chance to, what would you have changed?

TIKUFERANJI?

BIODATA

Name

Age

Sex

Village/place of residence

District of residence

Occupation

1. Who owns the radio you listen to?
2. When did you start listening to *Tikuferanji*?
3. What made you start listening regularly?
4. Do you still listen to it regularly and intentionally?
5. The programme is about prevention of HIV/AIDS and family planning issues. Is this an area you would like to learn more about?
6. Did you hear about HIV/AIDS for the first time from *Tikuferanji*?
7. Do you remember any specific issues that have been dealt with in the programme that may have influenced your change of behaviour?
8. Is there anything that you may have listened to and have implemented as a result of the programme?

9. Does the programme stimulate debate and discussion in your families or within your peers? If so, what are the issues you have discussed/debated on? Is there anything you can remember that might have resulted from your interaction (if any) with your peers after discussing issues in the play?
10. What do you think dominates between entertainment and education in the programme? Should it be like that? Why?
11. What do you not like about the programme? If you had the chance to, what would you have changed?
12. Is there anything you may have learnt and wanted to implement but have not been able to? If yes, what is it and what made it impossible for you to implement?

KEY INFORMANT QUESTIONNAIRE

TIKUFERANJI

BIODATA

Name:

Position in relation to program:

No. of years on program:

1. The radio version of 'Tikuferanji' started over ten years ago. Do you remember exactly when it started?
2. There have always been other radio plays addressing issues like family planning and HIV/AIDS. Were there gaps you identified for ADRA to start this program? What were they?

3. The radio play was one of the recipients of top prizes for during the last program for ENTERTAINERS OF THE YEAR. Do you remember the position?
4. Do you think the radio program was voted for in its own right or was it confusion with the TV version?
5. What do you see as the strong points for the radio version of 'Tikuferanji'?
6. Do you do internal reviews of the program? If yes, are the reviews regular?
7. If there are reviews, what changes have been made as a result of the reviews?
8. Have there been evaluations whether internal or external? If yes, what have been the highlights of the evaluations?
9. Some people have talked about what they believe to be 'inappropriate time' for airing this program since most people are preparing to go to school or any type of work. Do you agree with this school of thought?
10. Did you choose the time for airing this program? If yes, why did you choose the day and time?
11. Are there any cases to your knowledge where people have changed their behaviour as a direct consequence of listening to the program?
12. Are there any theories you consciously follow in producing the program?
13. Overall what would you like to improve in the program?
14. How long does it take to create and record one play?