

Summary of the Evaluation of the Voice For Humanity Project in Nigeria, Winter 2005/6

A team of evaluators from Emory University Division of Infectious Diseases (School of Medicine) and the Department of Biostatistics (School of Public Health), led by Dr. Igbo Ofotokun and Dr. Jose Binongo, conducted a comprehensive quantitative analysis of the Voice For Humanity (VFH) HIV/AIDS education project in Nigeria. In that project, VFH distributed 5 hours of audio content delivered on 4,500 digital audio devices in Kano State, reaching an estimated 35,000 residents over an eight week period of time.

The evaluation team at Emory reported extraordinarily high results of the project compared to others studies in which they have participated. In their evaluation work through the years, they have never seen such a dramatic shift in awareness and knowledge in such a short period of time. A 10% increase in knowledge is considered a statistically significant threshold for success. The VFH project resulted in a 24% increase in net communal HIV awareness. Among those who answered questions about HIV/AIDS incorrectly before the project, 93% answered the same questions correctly after listening to the VFH content. The Emory team concluded that "the VFH education approach is a low cost, feasible and superior method of raising HIV awareness among non-literate rural communities in Africa."

The evaluation studied the difference between the VFH approach to HIV/AIDS awareness education and the widely used HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns of seminars and pamphlets distribution (SHAC). Compared to the SHAC approach, the VFH approach resulted in:

- Net gain in communal HIV awareness from baseline following exposure was 29% for the VFH group compared to only 6% for the SHAC group.
- 93% answered questions correctly after listening to the VFH content compared to only 34% in the SHAC group.
- People who shifted from correct answers to incorrect answers following exposure were 3.4 times more likely in the SHAC group than the VFH group, indicating a high degree of information uncertainty among respondents in the SHAC group.
- A rapid reach of about 94% of the target population within 8 weeks of the program implementation, reaching more people, faster with superior results than with SHAC.

The Emory evaluation team concludes with the following recommendation:

"A rapid deployment of the VFH HIV education program in rural communities in Africa could have significant benefit of raising awareness in a manner that leads to HIV risk behavior reduction, and lowering of HIV prevalence rate among this resource poor vulnerable group."

Focus group interviews included statements like: "Since we now realize sex workers spread the disease, we tell our men and youth not to go to them, and the girls are now forbidden to come into the village."

When the evaluation team arrived at one of the intervention villages, children came out to greet them, singing one of the songs they had memorized from the program.

The Emir of Kano was so pleased with this new kind of training model that the entire VFH team was invited to his palace for a statewide televised ceremony in their honor.