

**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

**EDUTAINMENT AND HEALTH EDUCATION – USING EDUTAINMENT  
FEATURE STORIES FOR HIV EDUCATION.**

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**MAPR 14024**

**DECEMBER 2015**

**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

**EDUTAINMENT AND HEALTH EDUCATION-USING EDUTAINMENT FEATURE  
STORIES FOR HIV EDUCATION**

**BY**

**MENSAH MARY SAKYIWAA**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND  
RESEARCH, GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS IN  
COMMUNICATION STUDIES (PUBLIC RELATIONS OPTION)**

**DECEMBER 2015**

## DECLARATION

I, Mary Sakyiwaa Mensah wish to state that this research work is as a result of my own efforts, and that all sources of information for it have been duly acknowledged. Also worthy of notice is that this project work has never been submitted by me to any other school for any certificate whatsoever.

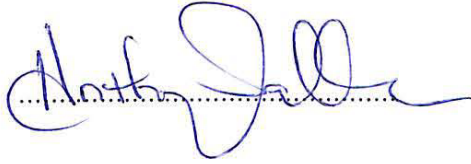


Mary Sakyiwaa Mensah

December 2015

## CERTIFICATION

I certify that I supervised and duly guided the efforts of Mary Sakyiwaa Mensah in this research work for a Master of Arts in Communication Studies (Public Relations Option).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anthony Sallar", written over a horizontal dotted line.

Prof. Anthony Sallar

December 2015

## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to all persons living with HIV and all those involved in HIV advocacies. Together, we hope, and can end the HIV epidemic.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am thankful to The Lord Jesus Christ for my life, my hopes and aspirations. I wish to acknowledge the support provided to me in my career development and advancement by the Director General of the Ghana AIDS Commission, Dr. Angela El-Adas. Particular appreciation to my supervisor for this project, Prof. Anthony Sallar and my family, friends and colleagues as well as the various individuals who have helped me in various ways. Nana K. Duah, you have been awesome!

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to find out the possible relevance of using entertaining feature stories as a tool for HIV education in Ghana. Entertainment is a very broad industry that employs films, music, television and a host of avenues to keep people entertained and relatively happy. It was thought that presenting health issues which people usually shy away from, such as issues relating to HIV and AIDS in feature stories primarily meant to provide its audience with entertainment could go a long way to educate these audiences with the underlining relevant information on HIV. A feature story was produced to that effect and grounded theory was developed as a result of the qualitative methodology used and the inductions that were made from the responses provided by the five respondents used, two of which are persons living with HIV.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **OVERVIEW**

The HIV epidemic is one of the biggest medical challenges that have affected people of all races and demographics globally. It has witnessed governments and charities spend huge sums of resources on researches to find a possible cure, advocacies to prevent people from getting infected and to encourage people already infected to have positive and healthy lives. The HIV and AIDS epidemic has had funding from various sources. The President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) by the United States of America is the biggest initiative of HIV and AIDS relief programs for low and middle income countries. PEPFAR allocated \$48Billion for programs between 2009-2013 ([www.avert.org](http://www.avert.org)).

In the area of education relating to HIV and AIDS, various strategies have been employed to create various levels of HIV awareness among the populace. In some countries, a mix of entertainment and educational information has been presented as soap operas and television series to create awareness of particular health conditions. Ghana has witnessed different HIV education campaigns using various channels of communication. Information and educational materials meant to educate people about specific issues relating to the epidemic have been used over the years. The television series, "Things We

Do For Love” was created to help with the education of people on issues relating to HIV and AIDS. It was one of the most popular television series to be aired on Ghanaian television in the early 1990s. Another popular educational advocacy was a presentation of HIV related information by seventeen Ghanaian musicians who sang about HIV and AIDS in seven local languages and in different music genres. The song, “Stop AIDS love Life” became one of the strongest HIV educational tools in the early 2000s (Communication Impact, February 2003).

The use of the above mentioned song showed that growing numbers of people were following entertainment programs. Relevant education set in entertaining programs saw people consciously or unconsciously latch on and follow the programs attentively. The researcher believes it will thus be impactful to combine educational messages with entertainment programs in a different way to make an impact.

The research will focus on the use of entertaining feature stories where fictional characters will be presented with relevant information on aspects of HIV education such as prevention, condom use and the prevention of mother to child transmission.

This project will focus on presenting a targeted audience with information on HIV set in entertaining feature stories to measure the effectiveness of using such means as a main HIV educational tool in Ghana. The stories can be used in educating people on HIV and AIDS through communication tools such as flyers, brochures, newsletters, newspaper and online media publications.

## **1.1 Statement of problem**

Education on HIV in Ghana has been done through a number of means such as publication of flyers, brochures and via online media. As the epidemic has been around for over three decades, information on it is sometimes received by people with a sense of already knowing what is being presented. The researcher believes this has made it difficult for new information such as prevention of mother to child transmission and discordance among couples to be difficult to be disseminated. This project will therefore present an experimental education on HIV using feature stories that will seek to present some of this new knowledge on the epidemic to the populace.

Over the years, and with some personal experience, the researcher has realized that presenting issues on HIV and AIDS as they are are not fully accepted by cross sections of the public, and especially those seeking higher education and those already educated. They seem to think that they know all there is to know. This attitude however is not helpful as there are currently some new information such as HIV being considered as a chronic manageable ailment, rather than a deadly one. Because of the general attitude towards HIV and AIDS related stories, and their perception, the researcher hopes to experiment and ascertain whether indeed, such educational and entertaining feature stories can be beneficial for HIV and AIDS education in Ghana and particularly to those formally educated.

## **1.2 Research questions**

- The purpose of this research is to explore the effectiveness of presenting relevant education on HIV through such literary devices as feature stories and articles.
- An informed feature story with issues meant for HIV education set in an entertaining article or story will help support HIV education.

## **1.3 Assumptions**

- News editors and readers might be more comfortable with HIV related issues set in entertaining feature stories
- Such stories will be timeless, and as such might be relevant advocacy materials over long periods of time.
- HIV and AIDS related issues presented in such feature stories in a subtle yet emphatic way might keep readers attention for long.

## **1.4 Objectives**

The researcher aims to establish that a mix of entertainment and education will be more relevant and impactful in the support of HIV and AIDS related advocacies. Having worked in HIV advocacy at some levels, the researcher has realized, though not properly tested, that persons who are attaining higher education, specifically those in tertiary schools and those immediately out of school seem to think they know all there is to know about HIV and AIDS. This has made the presentation of new information on the epidemic difficult to some extent. This new information include the Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission (PMTCT), discordant couples, possibility of getting re- infected

with a different type of the virus and the relatively lesser medicinal dosages for the management of HIV, as compared to the earlier days of the epidemic.

The stories will not present HIV and AIDS straightaway as is mostly done in newspapers. It will give scenarios and situations and fictional characters whose attitudes and risk of contracting HIV will be shared. It is hoped that such stories will provide the readers with a good enough reading pleasure on these fictional characters, yet the issues of HIV will be interspersed in the stories and they will be emphatic enough to make the readers aware of the situation, yet not so much in their faces to push them off. The other objective, thus, is to present relevant HIV related information in a subtle, entertaining way.

### **1.5 Justification of objectives**

The researcher's views concerning this project is that information on HIV and AIDS have often been received with mixed feelings with people being afraid of the epidemic. This stems from the fact that when the epidemic started, and as there was no known method to contain it, the methods of awareness used to sensitize people employed images of sick and almost dead people. Researchers were embattled but now, thanks to various advancements in the research and treatment, HIV has now been managed and is now considered as a chronic ailment like diabetes and hypertension. It cannot be cured yet but it can be managed.

A lot of people who witnessed this awareness in the earlier days may still have these old images in their minds. However, those below age twenty five may

not have vivid memories of such, but may have rather relied on what has been said about the epidemic by others older than them. The researcher thus believe that presenting HIV and AIDS information is clouded by the fear people have, which was built by the earlier advocacy campaigns. Hence, presenting the virus and disease with all the new information and possibilities in ways that readers will buy into the new information gently yet knowingly can help towards the re-education of people on HIV.

### **1.6 Importance of study**

The research will ascertain whether such feature stories will be acceptable to the targeted audience and subsequently provide an alternative and a more impactful way of presenting the epidemic. Indeed discrimination and stigma towards persons living with HIV is one of the main barriers of the advocacies. People who tend to discriminate and stigmatize persons living with HIV(PLHIV), or those they perceive to have the virus do so because they do not understand that the management of the virus has evolved dramatically.

It is believed by the researcher that issues of stigma and discrimination for instance, and general HIV knowledge will help towards proper relations and handling of issues concerning HIV. This method can help in the overall advocacy in HIV, and other researchers who may want to build on HIV and edutainment in Ghana can use this as a reference point.

## **1.7 Delimitations**

The information for the research will be provided by the researcher through the provision of the feature stories and questionnaires, with the target audience being five key persons related to HIV in one way or the other. These five persons are two persons living with HIV, a news editor of a media portal and two audience of such a media portal. These five persons will be randomly selected.

## **1.8 Abbreviations used**

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome

AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

PLHIV – Person Living With HIV

PMTCT – Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission

GAC – Ghana AIDS Commission

EE – Entertainment Education

## **1.9 Research method**

The researcher will use qualitative research methods of enquiry as that will allow for in-depth interviews with four key persons. Their responses will be descriptive and interpreted to provide an in-depth of their appreciation or otherwise towards the use of such feature stories in HIV advocacies.

### **1.10 Sources of information**

Information will be gathered from the research target audience through an interactive interviewing process which will be guided by a questionnaire.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Communication directed to the public and for behavioural changes have several theories attached to them. Theories develop frameworks for the practice of aspects of these communication theories. This project is based on the theoretical frameworks of mixing education and entertainment for effective communication and on the theory of persuasion and social influence, diffusion theory, social learning theory and the psychoanalytic of dealing with the unconscious elements in thinking and behaviour and the use of literary devices to entertain, educate and advocate to the target audience.

One of the acknowledged founding fathers of Public Relations, Edward Bernays used psychology to make impacts. Bernays believed that the human brain could be manipulated and thus Public Relations could be about engineering public consent. In so doing, Communication and Public Relations practitioners generally seek to get their audiences to think or and react in a certain way with regards to certain issues. Persuasion can be subtle such that the audience may not even realize they are being persuaded. It involves being aware of something, creating some sort of attitude towards it, getting people to buy or belief what is being presented and causing them to change their

behaviours towards it. An example is the creation of a character which the society deems as unfit as part of a television series. The other characters are then made to relate to this socially unfit character in the series in a bid to persuade and to change people's attitudes and behaviours towards such persons. People can be manipulated to react in a certain way through power, patronage and persuasion (Newsom et al, 2007).

Diffusion theory asserts that people process and accept information after going through some stages. These stages are awareness of an issue or product or problem, the interest on the part of the individual being targeted, the perceived usefulness of solving that problem or using that product to the individual, actually trying to solve the problem or trying to use a product and adoption or acceptance of it.

Entertainment Education uses subtle messaging in a bid to influence and ultimately persuade targeted audiences to be aware of, and to accept certain information. For this research project, the researcher will use subtle information sharing with regards to discordance within couples where HIV is concerned, and the prevention of mother to child transmission as well as the benefits of healthy living in the continued management of HIV.

The combination of education with entertainment has been with societies and countries with strong oral traditions and storytelling abilities (Singhal and Rogers 1999, cited in Sallar and Somda 2011). In Ghana, storytelling has been used to entertain and educate people, especially children. The "Anansi" stories for instance have been used to entertain and educate children on the

consequences of exhibiting good and bad morals such as honesty, greed, patience and pride. “Anansi” is the local Akan word for spider ([www.anansistories.com](http://www.anansistories.com)). The stories are woven around “Anansi” and his dealings with others. The consequences of his actions are always shared with the audience as a summary to the story.

## **2.1 Overview of HIV and AIDS**

In June 1981, five young gay men in the US were found to have a rare lung infection and other unusual infections as well which showed that their immune systems were not working well enough ([www.AIDS.gov](http://www.AIDS.gov)). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published their Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report featuring these instances. Some newspapers published the stories and soon, some other medical centers started reporting of similar incidents. By the end of that year, 270 gay men were reported to have these strange symptoms with 121 of them already dead. The term Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) was used for the first time as a descriptive for the condition by the CDC in September 1982. The term was coined because the people’s immune systems had collapsed and the doctors and researchers did not know what was causing the collapse of their immune systems. Since then, the virus and deaths as a result of AIDS has increased to affect and infect a lot more people.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 24.7 million people are living with HIV which accounts for over seventy percent of the global population of Persons Living with HIV (PLHIV). South Africa and Nigeria have the highest number

of PLHIV than any other countries in the region. Between 2005 and 2013, the number of AIDS-related deaths in the region has fallen by 39% with the number of people with access to antiretroviral therapy accounting for this success. Of the people who know their status in the region, 86% of them are on anti retroviral therapy. Out of this, 76% have gained viral suppression (UNAIDS GAP Report).

According to the revised National HIV and AIDS, STI Policy, as published by the Ghana AIDS Commission in 2013, Ghana has a population of 24.6 million people, as of 2012. HIV prevalence in Ghana is determined by an estimation and projection package (EPP) modelling. In 2008, the EPP estimated HIV prevalence in Ghana to be 1.9% among adults aged 15 – 49. In 2013, the national HIV prevalence for adults aged 15 – 49 in Ghana had dropped to 1.3% ([www.ghanaims.gov](http://www.ghanaims.gov)).

## **2.2 Health communication**

According to I. A Richards, “communication takes place when one’s mind so acts upon its environment that another mind is influenced, and in that other mind an experience occurs which is like the experience in the first mind, and is caused in part by that experience” (Encyclopaedia Britannica). It is the exchange of information, between individuals, for example, by means of speaking, writing, or using a common system of signs and behaviours. It is also a spoken or written message, an act of communicating, rapport where a sense of mutual understanding and sympathy is displayed and a means of access or communication. (Encarta Dictionary, cited in Schiavo 2007).

Health communication can therefore be seen as any form of communication meant to influence and make people aware of certain issues concerning their health or the health of others. It could also be any means of communication meant to create awareness of certain health conditions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines health communication as "the study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual decisions that enhance health" ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)). This therefore refers to various interventions that are made to ensure specific information is delivered to a target audience.

According to Schiavo, 2007, "health communication is a multifaceted and multidisciplinary approach to reach different audiences and share health-related information with the goal of influencing, engaging, and supporting individuals, communities, health professionals, special groups, policymakers and the public to champion, introduce, adopt, or sustain a behaviour, practice, or policy that will ultimately improve health outcomes"

### **2.3 Health communication and edutainment**

According to the World Health Organization, campaigns that are meant to raise awareness on negative behaviours or practices and to encourage dialogue about certain harmful social and cultural norms in order to reinforce social and behavioural changes at community levels are referred to as social norms marketing, behaviour change communication (BCC), awareness raising strategies or edutainment which is derived from entertainment and education (EE). Global Health Communication describes behaviour change

communication as “the strategic use of communication to promote positive health outcomes, based on proven theories and models of behaviour change.

Entertainment Education employs a systematic process beginning with formative research and behaviour analysis, followed by communication planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Audiences are carefully segmented, messages and materials are pre-tested, and both mass media and interpersonal channels are used to achieve defined behavioural objectives. The Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication, the largest social change communication project in Africa describes entertainment education (EE) as “the art of making social issues part of popular and high quality entertainment formats using the best research available” ([soulcity.org.za](http://soulcity.org.za)).

Various organizations have used EE leaflets, brochures, documentaries, music and film to help create awareness regarding certain ailments. There have been successful EE usage such as “Soul City” in South Africa, “Somos Diferentes, Somos Iguales” in Nicaragua and “Bell Bajao” in India which have helped to increase awareness of violence against women as a problem.

#### **2.4 Edutainment HIV advocacies in Ghana.**

In February of year 2000, the first intervention towards HIV and AIDS in Ghana, the “Stop AIDS Love Life” Campaign was launched. This was collaboration between Ministries of Information and Health, the Ghana AIDS Commission, the Ghana Social Marketing Foundation, and the Johns Hopkins

Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for Communication Programs. The campaign had a first phase with focus on the dissemination of HIV-related information through the mass and community level interventions through the use of information vans to promote HIV protective and preventive behaviours. The core messages were abstinence, faithfulness and condom use. Subsequent phases were on compassion towards PLHIV. The campaign used tribal chiefs and religious leaders to endear the public to be accepting and accommodating of persons living with HIV. A radio show called "Speakeasy" was developed. It discussed aspects of HIV and included an interactive discussion every week. This radio show led to the birth of popular television series, "Things We Do For Love" which explored such themes as teenage choices and love, unprotected sex, condom use, other sexually transmitted infections and HIV. A song was eventually produced by various Ghanaian musicians, aptly titled "Stop AIDS Love Life." This song caught on with a lot of people with its catchy chorus, "you can maintain one love, if it is not on, it is not in. You can wait until marriage. Stop ADIS, love life". The chorus further advanced and emphasized the key messages of the campaign (Communication Impact, 2003).

The Ghana AIDS Commission (GAC) has carried out other programs geared towards the reduction of sexual transmission of HIV among the general population and has used EE interventions on abstinence, mutual fidelity, avoidance of concurrent multiple sexual partnerships and the correct and consistent use of condoms in high risk sexual activities. Community outreach programs such as community capacity enhancement, encouraging people to

know their status and the Heart to Heart (H2H) Campaign have played important roles in sensitizing and creating demand for HIV services such as HIV Testing and Counselling (HTC) services (Country AIDS Response Progress Report).

The GAC launched the Heart to Heart Campaign in 2012 with the aim to provide a human face to HIV by presenting the public with real people living with HIV. This was to help remind and educate the public that persons living with HIV can look, and have healthy lives if they should stick to their treatment and to push for awareness on the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV. The main objective of this campaign is to strengthen knowledge of the general population on issues relating to HIV, in order to stimulate acceptable behaviours and to decrease stigma and discrimination towards PLHIV.

The campaign started with four ambassadors. In December 2014, one of them, Joyce Dzidzor Mensah publicly declared that she had never tested for HIV before and that she claimed to be positive to satisfy her selfish interest after she had toured several Ghanaian schools to talk about stigma, discrimination, PMTCT, HIV management and healthy living ([www.dailyguideghana.com](http://www.dailyguideghana.com)). In the aftermath of this confession, the GAC indicated that an investigation would be initiated into Ms Mensah's new claim of being HIV negative. The Commission however maintained that there was evidence to support her claim of being HIV positive. The Commission could however not share that with the public as it was against the policy governing health work in Ghana

([www.graphic.com.gh](http://www.graphic.com.gh)). There was mixed reaction from the public concerning Ms Mensah's new claim and the authenticity of the status of the other ambassadors. However, as of August 2015, not much had been heard about this case.

The Global Protect the Goal Campaign was launched in Johannesburg, South Africa on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2013 at the opening of the Africa Cup of Nations for that year. It was launched by SA President, Jacob Zuma and UNAIDS Executive Director, Michel Sidibe with the "aim to harness the power of football to raise awareness of HIV" (UNAIDS.org).

In Ghana, the campaign was replicated through a collaborated effort between the GAC, the UNAIDS and the Ghana Football Association (GFA) to use the idea of footballers preventing their opponents from scoring them during a football match to sensitize the youth to do all they can to prevent an HIV infection by using condoms, reducing sexual partners and knowing their status. Series of activities were used to create awareness for this campaign including a weekly pledge signing program which witnessed President John Dramani of Ghana, footballers, musicians, journalists, entrepreneurs and other young journalists sign the pledge to "protect the goal" (Ghanaids.org, myjoyonline.com, citifmonline.com).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The in-depth method of research under the qualitative method was used for this research work. This method allowed for deeper explanations of the various respondents where the EE material and its possible use are concerned.

The respondents were presented with the EE material which is a feature story drafted with underlining messages of HIV infection, HIV prevention, discordant couples and prevention of mother-to-child transmission. They were presented with the material three days before meeting with the researcher for the interviews.

As each person had different meanings and thoughts about a particular issue, the interview process allowed each respondent to be expressive enough about what exactly they meant and to share their understanding of it.

Boyle and Neale (2006) describe in-depth interview as an aspect of qualitative research method which uses intensive interviews with smaller targeted audiences in order to derive useful information and a deeper analysis of a situation. Such interview process allows respondents to share their individual thoughts about an issue or a phenomenon and is conducted on a one-on-one basis.

This method was selected because it allowed the respondents to delve deeper and provide their thoughts on some of the issues presented. Also, as it was one on one, it allowed for exact sentiments for each person to be shared.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with a semi structured question guide (please refer to Appendix 2). However, the interview processes were semi formal and allowed for follow-up questions where some of the respondents were concerned.

The question guide was used during the interviews. Though there were straight forward questions, some of the responses from the respondents changed the line of questioning. However, all the questioning and interview process were recorded to aid in the final report. The main research tools were the researcher, the questionnaires and the interviewees.

Five people were targeted as the audience for the purpose of this research. As stated in Chapter One, the questions raised for the research are to explore the effectiveness of presenting relevant education on HIV through such literary devices as feature stories and articles and to determine whether an informed feature story with issues meant for HIV education set in an entertaining article or story will help support HIV education.

The data collected for this research was to enable the researcher find out whether HIV/AIDS education can be done with feature stories which will be published in newspapers and news websites. For the purpose of this research, websites were narrowed on as the possible tool of propagation. The

understanding of HIV/AIDS awareness of the respondents was tested, alongside whether they have witnessed any HIV education before. This was done to ascertain whether they will note a difference between what they had witnessed and what was presented to them in the feature story and to have variables to compare.

### **3.1 Summary of feature story**

The feature story titled “The New Front” (please refer to Appendix 1) was produced by the researcher. It basically talks about Akushika, the main character who was in a relationship with Nii Armah. Nii was however not paying much attention to her. At a point she felt emotionally drained and detached from him. Eventually she broke up with him and got together with Francis whom she met through social networking site, Facebook. Francis was able to satisfy the emotional emptiness she felt. However he had secrets he hardly shared. He was a father of four children with two women and his finances were in shatters. His responsibilities towards the children were almost nonexistent. Meanwhile he kept going after different women. Akushika found out all this after seven months of being with him. She wanted to leave but she was deeply and emotionally involved with him that she knew walking away immediately could break her down. Initially, Akushika was having protected sex with Francis but eventually the protection was stopped as Francis did not want to use the condoms. After constant arguments over one woman or the other, Akushika finally left Francis.

Kojo had recently joined the law firm Akushika worked for. They eventually became a couple. Kojo was a devoted condom user and always insisted on condom use. He suggested to her that they should have some medical tests done to ascertain and be sure of each other's medical standing. They opted for tests for syphilis, gonorrhoea, HIV and Hepatitis B. While Kojo was negative for all the tests, Akushika tested positive for HIV. Kojo left her.

Akushika found faith in her counsellor who had provided her with pre and post test counselling. She read and educated herself more about HIV and living positively with it. She took it upon herself to educate others about testing and knowing their HIV status, adhering to treatment if positive, and the possibility of prevention of mother-to-child transmission. She met and got married to Jonas, an HIV negative man who knew much about HIV, and about discordant couples.

### **3.2 Population and sample**

The researcher used a population size of five for this research. The five was settled on as a result of the interpretative nature of qualitative research analysis. Correspondents provided different answers and had different realities to same or similar issues. As the nature of realities and applications are different, their responses had to be detailed enough to capture the exact sentiments expressed. With these taken into consideration, using a large sample size would have made the interpretations difficult, hence the population of five. The five were able to provide in-depth understanding of how they

relate to the use of such entertaining and educative feature stories in education relating to HIV and AIDS.

The story produced for this research can be used on an online media platform which targets tertiary school students, graduates, young and old professionals who can speak, read and understand English either as a first or second language. The platforms that the researcher would want to propagate such education on are [citifmonline.com](http://citifmonline.com), [myjoyonline.com](http://myjoyonline.com), [graphiconline.com](http://graphiconline.com) and [ghanaweb.com](http://ghanaweb.com). For this research, the editor of one of the online platforms in Ghana was settled on as one of the respondents. Two persons who are living with HIV were part of the population. The last two were persons who fall into the category of the readers of the chosen online platform.

### **3.3 Target analysis**

The researcher used purposive sampling and settled on five respondents. Purposive sampling allows for a research audience to be selected as per the judgement of the researcher. The five were selected based on some characteristics. One of them is the online news editor for a news portal in Accra, Ghana. Their target audience are educated people, or those seeking higher education above senior high school, and between age eighteen and fifty five years.

The feature story for this research was produced with people who have a good understanding of English and can read, write and understand the language in mind.

The next two respondents are persons living with HIV (PLHIV). One of them has known of her HIV positive status for over ten years while the other has known her status for seven years now. As stigma and discrimination are major issues concerning HIV positive persons, it is difficult and burdensome for people to openly declare their status even with their families and friends. This formed part of the reasons why the researcher settled on these two as, despite the stigma and discrimination, they have both declared their status in a somewhat public way. Public because they both belong to one of the associations formed for and by persons living with HIV in Ghana. They also do some forms of public education on living with HIV and encouraging people to test and get to know their status, especially as treatment is now available.

The last two respondents fall into the category of persons targeted by the online news portal used for this research. They were both asked if they are regular users or visitors of the website as the story, should it be published will be done on such a news portal.

### **3.4 Pre-interviews**

Three persons were interviewed for the pre interview process which covered a two week period. One of them was a person living with HIV, while the others were target audiences of the online news portal chosen. They were gathered through purposive sampling, which allows for the researcher's judgement to be used in the sampling process. The three were met at different times and places, presented with the feature story and interviewed with the questionnaire as a guide.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

The data for the research was transcribed according to the response from each individual. The analysis of their responses followed the transcribed data. In parts of the transcribing, few of the responses were quoted verbatim while most of it was paraphrased in relation to the question asked. This detailed transcribing was because some of the respondents were asked different follow-up questions, different from the interview guide. In grounded theory, researches are made, and the results are used to develop a theory. This approach was used as inductive theory was made as a result of the answers provided for specific questions by the various respondents.

### **3.6 Data transcription**

The five respondents were all informed about the research, and it being for a strictly academic purpose. They were then given the feature story three clear days before the appointed time for the interviews. As mentioned, the five were selected using purposive sampling because the researcher's judgement was applied to the selection.

One of them is the online editor for an online news portal. Two are persons living with HIV and the other two are people who fall into the category of audiences for the online platform. The online editor was interviewed at her office in Accra, while the others were interviewed at convenient locations of their choice within the capital.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS**

All the interviews were conducted with an interview guide and recorded. The respondents were given the feature story three clear days before the interview time. The first interview was with a person who has been HIV positive for over a decade. Araba (not her real name) was asked if she had been affected by HIV, be it directly or indirectly. She responded that “I have been directly affected by HIV as I have known my HIV positive status for the past twelve years”. From the time she got to know about her status, it took her four years before she admitted to herself that she was HIV positive. This was because she did not believe that she would probably be HIV positive. According to her, her knowledge about HIV back then was that persons who contracted the virus were sex workers, people who had multiple sex partners or those who had travelled to other countries. Since she was not a sex worker, did not have multiple sex partners and had not travelled out of the country, she did not believe that she could be HIV positive. She held on to this for a long while until her health started deteriorating. She resorted to going to health facilities and prayer camps for treatment, while still not accepting that she was HIV positive. Eventually after all the prayers and prophecies had still not been able to change her situation, and while her health was rapidly deteriorating, she

decided to accept and seek treatment for HIV. She also realized that HIV was not a reserve for sex workers, persons with multiple sex partners and those who had travelled outside Ghana.

Araba has been on the treatment for eight years now. She said the treatment has been helpful because it had increased her strength and boosted her immune system. She feels strong and does not fall sick as often as she used to before the start of her treatment. She indicated that before the start of the treatment, her hyper cells was around 136 but they have now increased to over 1800. Her viral load is currently undetectable. Araba was asked if she had faced any situation with stigma and discrimination. She answered that she once lost a job when her Boss got to know she is HIV positive. A random test was done for all staff though they were not told that HIV was part of what was to be tested for. Her results came out positive and she was fired from that job.

Araba said she had witnessed countless numbers of education relating to sensitizing the public on various aspects of HIV, including workshops and durbars in communities. Some of these focused on anti-stigma towards persons living with HIV (PLHIV), correct and consistent use of condoms, living well with HIV and prevention of mother-to-child transmission. Araba was asked to explain the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. She stated that when pregnant women in Ghana go for their antenatal care, the HIV test is one of the various tests that is carried out on them. Once it is realized that she is positive, she is taken through counselling and put on the anti-retroviral treatment if the pregnancy is fourteen weeks and over. If the pregnancy is younger than

fourteen weeks, the treatment is delayed until after fourteen weeks. For women who already know their status, they are advised to continue to adhere to the treatment. After birth, the child is given prophylaxis from the first day to six weeks after delivery. An early infant diagnosis test is performed on the child after the six weeks. Transmission of the virus from a mother to a child occurs during childbirth or breastfeeding. After eighteen weeks, the child would have developed its own antibodies. The test is then done again to ascertain that the treatment for the child worked. Once mothers stick to their treatment schedules and follow it, their children will be negative of the virus.

Araba believes that there have been a lot of challenges with the various advocacies she has come into contact with. She intimated that “there have been a lot of challenges, example with the anti-stigma campaigns because society wants to see someone who is sick, tiny, bony and skinny. That is the only person they will believe has HIV. They do not want to believe that someone who is big like me can be positive and that is a big challenge. People need to know that HIV is no respecter of persons and appearances can be deceptive. Living with HIV does not mean one has to be tiny or lean”.

Araba was asked if she had come into contact with any form of entertainment activity, be it a television or radio drama or an actual theatrical performance. She answered that she had witnessed one such drama on television which had an anti-stigma theme. She has also watched several dramas at durbars and workshops which focussed on prevention of mother-to-child transmission as well.

In relation to the feature story which was produced for this research, she indicated that she had read it and was able to identify with the various characters as she knows a lot of people in real life with similar character traits as the ones in the story. Asked if information on HIV was presented well enough in the story, she affirmed that it indeed was, and was able to mention such issues as condom use. The researcher asked whether she thinks such stories with health messages set in entertainment articles as what she had read could help with HIV education, to which she answered that it can indeed cause people to rethink of their actions as it can prick their conscience. It will also show that having unprotected sex can put one at risk of contracting HIV. She believes such stories can add up to HIV education in Ghana and said that it can help to sensitize people, as it draws up traits of actions of people. It can make people easily identify with the characters. She also stated that because of the anti-retroviral therapy, people seem to think that HIV is no more, and that such stories can make people be aware that HIV is still present and can be easily transmitted.

Araba was reminded that every campaign has its target audience. There are some campaigns that are straight forward with simple and short messages while this story brings up the issues in a subtle way. Between this feature story and the straightforward campaigns, she said she would opt for such feature stories because she will be interested in knowing what will happen to the other characters. Meanwhile, the straightforward sometimes do not give clear messages. For instance a message like “use condoms” is just that, however the

story will be able to show the consequences of not using condoms always with people whose sexual history are unknown.

The second respondent, Yao Dogbe (not real name) fits into the target audience of the online platform. The respondent is not HIV positive but had an aunt who was positive. She had lived with it for about five years with treatment. She however had some other health issues and passed away three years ago. He was asked if he had witnessed any education on HIV in Ghana to which he answered that between 2009-2010, he volunteered with The Ark Foundation who had a partnership with an organization called UNIFEM. Various trainings were held for persons living with HIV in relation to their rights. He gained some knowledge on the rights of persons living with HIV from these trainings.

In describing how the training worked, the respondent mentioned that for most of the PLHIV, they had come to understand that despite their health problems, they had rights like any other persons and they felt empowered. Aside these trainings, the respondent was asked if he had come across any entertainment activity which majorly talked about HIV. He mentioned that he could remember some commercials on television that sought to raise awareness on issues concerning HIV. He specifically mentioned “Things We Do For Love” which was a popular television series in the early 2000s. He remembers that the program was used to propagate such issues as HIV/AIDS< preventing pregnancy, safe sex practices, condom use and sexually transmitted infections. He was asked if he remembered any of the characters from the program to

which he answered in the affirmative and went on to mention the names of four of the characters: Mr Blagoojee, Pusher, BB, Marcia, Aluta and Max.

Talking about “Things We Do For Love”, the respondent was asked to describe how the series was used to talk about HIV. He responded that the series tended to portray how unprotected sex could result in someone acquiring the virus. He was asked if he thinks that worked and he affirmed that yes it worked because as far as he is concerned, for a while, people became more conscious of issues of HIV/AIDS. He talks about what he describes as the “age of reasoning” as people started becoming more aware of HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy. The series was for entertainment but it ended up educating him on sex and reproductive health.

On the feature story he was given, he said he was able to identify with all of the characters in the story. He himself had had a situation where his first girlfriend got detached from him because he was at a point where he was trying to figure certain things out for himself. This made him detach himself from the girlfriend who later felt neglected. This helped him to relate with the character of Nii Armah. He also indicated that he knows and has female friends who have complained and felt that their boyfriends were neglecting them. He added that he however does not know of any friend who is HIV positive. Asked if he realized any themes or issues with regards to HIV in the story, he said he did and spoke about how unprotected sex led Aku to acquire HIV. Asked if he thinks such stories can cause people to think about the simple and possible ways of contracting HIV, he said it will, and that if it is extended

to a movie for instance, it will help to reach a lot more people. He believes strongly that such stories can influence HIV education and should be encouraged.

On a choice between short, precise and straight to the point messages on HIV, and messages that are embedded in the kind of story he read, he said he will go for the stories because the characters will make it easier for people to identify with and to realize that simple mistakes can cost them. He believes the straight forward messages were very relevant in the initial stages of the campaign against HIV but as times have changed and people's attitudes have changed too, different approaches such as the feature story should be considered and used extensively. He believes such a tactic will work because some people are of the view that HIV is no more and they are becoming more careless. Such stories can prick them to realize that we still have HIV and it can be contracted quite easily.

The third respondent, George Otoo (not real name) often visits online platforms for news items. The interview was conducted in his office. He has worked with some nongovernmental organizations before and has had quite a role to play with certain aspects of HIV advocacy. He has not been affected by HIV, neither does he know of any family members who have been affected. But he does know some people who are HIV positive. Asked if he had witnessed any educational advocacy with regards to HIV in Ghana, he said he had and went on to speak about the Olof Palm Peace Foundation, a nongovernmental organization in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. He

worked with them as his organization of focus for his first degree project work. He said he worked on an aspect of HIV awareness creation within the Ashanti Region. He was asked by the researcher to choose one of the activities and give an overview of how it was used for the awareness creation. He mentioned that the organization usually organized durbars in the communities. These activities featured the chiefs, queens, elders and opinion leaders and members of the communities. At these durbars, they sometimes used drama to convey specific information about HIV/AIDS to the gathering. As the community they worked in was a farming community, it was sometimes difficult to gather the people for these durbars so the organization adopted door-to-door advocacies as well where they went to the homes and sometimes farms of the people to talk and educate them about HIV. The organization worked in five communities.

The respondent was asked to describe one of the issues of HIV that was treated at one of the durbars organized by Olof Palm Peace Foundation, which he had witnessed. He intimated that majority of the members of the communities believed that HIV/AIDS was a spiritual attack and a price paid to people who did anything the gods did not like. Some believed it was witchcraft or that someone had bought the disease for another person. According to the respondent, this mindset affected the advocacies by the NGO because it was difficult to change people's minds that this was more physical and not spiritual. This was a major challenge because mindsets are difficult to change.

The respondent was asked if he had come across any campaign on HIV to which he responded that he remembers some commercials on television,

asking people to be bold and get tested. He was asked to describe how the commercial talked about HIV to which he answered that to him, it informed him that people should be bold and get tested for HIV as one's status cannot be known from the face or physical appearance. His understanding of the commercial asking for people to be bold stems from the fact that Ghanaians are still somewhat afraid of HIV and knowing their status hence they needed to be encouraged to take the test. Once the status is known, and it comes out negative, you are encouraged to practice safe sex in a bid to remain negative always. If you are positive, you will be informed of the available treatment as HIV can be managed.

On the feature story he read for this research, he said he had read the story and could identify some of the characters in real life as he knows people who do not like condoms for instance and some others who sleep around. Asked if he realized any information on HIV and whether he was able to identify them, he mentioned that he could easily pick up the issue of unprotected sex and how it can result in a possible HIV infection, multiple sex partners on the side of the character Francis, the issue of knowing the HIV status of sexual partners, and how condom use can help prevent HIV infection. Lastly, he also mentioned that he realized there is possible prevention of HIV from a positive mother to a baby, and even if both parents are positive.

The respondent was asked if he thinks such a feature story can influence HIV education to which he answered that it can because such stories can make people realize and attach themselves with the characters. It will go a long way

to make people realize that the simple mistakes that the characters make, which brings them troubles can be made by them in real life too and as such, can cause them to rethink of their actions.

The fourth respondent for this research was Maame Adwoa Prempeh (not real name) the Editor for an online news platform. She was asked if she had read the story which had been sent to her earlier. She affirmed and said it was interesting. She was again asked if it will qualify to be featured on their website to which she mentioned that it will fit into their profile for content on the website. Maame was asked to give a brief profile of their target audience. She answered that they target educated people between ages 18-55, who are seeking higher education or are done with school and seeking employment, or actually working, upwardly mobile people and those who can afford to attend some of the programs the website mother company, runs, as well as people who can afford the services of advertisers on their platforms.

Through her line of work, Maame knows some people who are HIV positive but these are people she met through work. On a personal note however, she did not know of anyone who had HIV. She was asked if she had witnessed any HIV education in Ghana to which she mentioned that she had witnessed a number of programs, one of which was a walk through some streets in Accra. The walk was majorly to inform people that persons living with HIV are as normal as anyone else and that stigma and discrimination kills faster than the virus.

The Editor was asked if the website usually hosts health-related stories to which she answered that they actually have a doctor who writes on varied issues every week and has actually written on sexually transmitted infections. They also do publish feature stories that cover different issues. She was asked if she had come across any entertainment activity that talks about HIV. She answered that she had recently realized that Daddy Lumba, a Ghanaian Highlife musician had a song on HIV. She could however not provide the title of the song but was impressed that he had produced a full danceable song that was on HIV.

The researcher asked of her thoughts concerning the feature story she read and she said that while reading, she was thinking of how just about anyone can get infected with HIV and how people seem to downplay the effectiveness of using condoms. She spoke about how testing for STIs and having protected sex in relationships were mostly downplayed by people.

On the composition of the story and its relevance to HIV education, she said it was interesting how HIV was not thrown out immediately to readers yet the story was able to keep her attention till the end. She did realize and appreciate how the issues on HIV were presented. She was asked to identify some of the issues she was able to pick from the story to which she mentioned medical screening of people in relationships and using protection. She was asked how she thinks her audience will react to it and she mentioned that the audience are quite dynamic in their responses to news and stories on the site. For one, she is

certain the comments will talk on the characters and describe them as well as advice them on healthy sex practices.

The fifth respondent is an HIV positive person who has known her HIV status for seven years. She has been on treatment for the entire period but could not tell for how long she had had the virus before getting to know her status and starting treatment. Jamila Ibrahim (not real name) is a mother of a ten year old girl and a six year old boy. She got to know her HIV positive status as part of routine testing when she was pregnant with her second baby. The man she was pregnant with abandoned her on knowing she had HIV. She was not married to him. She said she had witnessed several educational programs on HIV and has attended a number. Within her community, some people know of her HIV positive status because she has taken it upon herself to educate anyone on how they can still live healthy lives by sticking to their medication. According to her, some people however do not believe that she is HIV positive. They claim she looks too good to be sick. With such people, she says she informs them that HIV is now a chronic ailment like diabetes and so she is looking good because she takes her medication. Some people still do not believe her anyway.

Jamila described one educational program where drama was used to inform the audience about the correct and consistent use of condoms, how HIV positive people can still have healthy normal lives and how the society should desist from discriminating against persons living with HIV. On discrimination, the respondent mentioned that she knows a number of people who are HIV

positive but do not have the courage to inform their families because of the associated stigma and discrimination.

The researcher asked the respondent if she had read the feature story and to give her impression of the story. She said she had read it and was impressed with how HIV came up in the story. She was particularly happy that the story also gave insights into how people living with HIV can still live a healthy and normal life, have families and even get married to persons who are HIV negative. She was however quick to add that such stories will not work for all people and that some people will read but will not be able to realize and learn from the story. She added that such stories will have to be used as one way of educating some people while other means like community durbars can be used to educate others.

The respondent said she could identify with all the characters in the story and knew people in real life who could easily fit into any of the shoes of the characters. She said she personally had a bit of Aku's story in her as she also went seeking attention and fulfilment from a relationship that made her feel drained. The respondent thought issues on HIV such as condom use, testing, faithfulness and prevention of mother-to-child transmission were all well presented in the story and believes that such feature stories can be used to aid HIV education in Ghana and beyond.

#### **4.1 Respondents feedback in summary**

All the respondents selected for this research agreed that the feature story was interesting and could be used to help in HIV education. The Editor agreed that it is something that can be hosted on their website while the persons living with HIV believed it brought relevant issues to bear. The other two respondents also agreed that issues on HIV were presented well enough and should they come across such a story on a news website, they will read it.

In a way, all the respondents have been affected by HIV. The persons living with HIV are directly affected while the other respondents have witnessed issues of HIV infection in various capacities. The Editor has realized such through her line of work as a journalist as, during her interview, she mentioned that she had interviewed some persons living with HIV. The other two respondents had coincidentally worked with NGOs as volunteers. These NGOs had both done work in relation to HIV and AIDS awareness and education.

All five respondents have witnessed various entertaining activities in relation to HIV and AIDS. These activities have been in the form of television commercials, television series and drama. One respondent mentioned the hit series, “Things We Do For Love” which was a youth targeted series that sought to address reproductive health and discussed such common issues as consequences of unprotected sex, and such STIs as gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV. The characters in this series, which was telecast in the early 2000s on Ghana Television, the national broadcaster became very popular and resonated with the youth.

The researcher believes that the two PLHIV who were interviewed, as well as the other two respondents had witnessed drama at the community levels because of their particular involvement in HIV education. It also came up that issues relating to stigma and discrimination were high among the fears or worries of those involved with HIV education. This is because all the drama the respondents spoke about had aspects of stigma and discrimination and sought to make the communities friendlier towards persons living with HIV.

All the respondents believed that issues on HIV were well presented in an interesting way. They all agreed that indeed such feature stories can be useful in the education of the populace. On the question of whether such stories can influence the mindsets of people, all the respondents agreed that indeed it can.

The news Editor was of the opinion that such a story can easily fit as content for their website and she is certain that their target audience can easily read and identify with some for the characters in the story.

## **4.2 Summary**

The objective of this research was “to establish that a mix of entertainment and education will be more relevant and impactful in the support of HIV and AIDS related advocacies.” After going through this research, and all the interviews, the researcher can safely mention that all the respondents agreed that such an approach to HIV education was going to be helpful and impactful. However, it was quiet clear that targeting, as with all relevant projects is important. This will not work as a tailored program for all educational outreaches but it surely

could work for the audience of the website for instance. This same audience which the researcher spoke of as part of the objectives fell into the category of “persons who are attaining higher education, specifically those in tertiary schools and those immediately out of school who seem to think they know all there is to know about HIV and AIDS”. Some people in this group seem to downplay the possibility of transmission especially those in committed relationships though they may not have the medical history of their partner. With the target that the researcher had in mind, it is clear, and agreed on by the respondents that such an approach as the feature story which is meant for education and entertainment will definitely work with the group. It can be said, that in this regard, and based on the testing done, this objective has been established to be true.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The researcher has been involved in HIV advocacies for some years now. This research was thought of on information regarding participants' reactions to certain educational programs in relation to HIV. Some of the outreach programs were enjoyed by some people while some would not be enthused about the same program. The researcher sought to find out whether feature stories with underlining health issues can satisfy the educated and working people, of which the researcher is part.

The research was to find out whether such a story, as was produced for the purpose of this research could help in HIV education in Ghana, where entertainment is concerned.

#### **5.1 Discussion: entertainment education**

Newsom et al (2007) mentioned that people can be manipulated to react in a certain way through power, patronage and persuasion. Entertainment education generally uses subtle means to influence the thoughts of people. For instance characters are created, as with the feature story, "The New Front" which was produced for this research project. The characters are presented to people in a bid to have them entertained. Yet, underlining each character is a lesson for the

people, the readers. Akushika is presented as a young woman who is searching for love, as with most people. In seeking for an emotional attachment, she moves from one unsatisfying relationship to the other, only to eventually realize that she has contracted HIV from one of the boyfriends. Luckily for her, she was able to identify where she got the infection from, though that will in no way change her condition. It has to be stated though that a number of HIV positive people are unable to trace where they could have possibly gotten the virus from. HIV is not transmitted through sex alone, however it is the highest means of transmission.

Using ideologies of entertainment education, the story was set in such a way that reader's suspense is used to get readers glued to the story. The main health or educational issue is subtly introduced as the story progresses. This ensures that readers' are able to associate each character with what might be happening to them. The art of storytelling has been with mankind for a long time. The Holy Bible for instance documents in the New Testament, various stories that Jesus Christ told to people. These stories, often referred to as parables were used by Jesus to illustrate profound situations in order to get people to gain some sort of picturesque understanding into divine truths. The parables had strong and definite characters with each story having a symbolic interpretation.

In the oral traditions of Ghana, mastery of languages has been key in how people entertained and educated each other and especially the young. Proverbs have been used profoundly to get people to think deeper and to gain understanding of a phenomenon. Proverbs however need much deeper thinking

in order to decipher what is meant. Stories were created with characters, be they animals, humans or non living things. These stories often had underlining lessons such as the consequences of being lazy or a gossip. The “Ananse” (spider) storytelling has been used to entertain children and to educate them mainly on virtues.

The use of the feature story to entertain and educate people about HIV has proved to be feasible, as per the responses of the audience. The entertainment front made them want to read and find out what will happen to the characters. The educational part was subtly introduced; nonetheless it was definite and succeeded in providing the respondents with the information that was meant to be provided.

## **5.2 The research input**

The assumptions made for this research were that news editors and readers might be more comfortable with HIV related issues set in entertaining feature stories as opposed to straightforward, single-lined messages such as “AIDS is Real”, “Stop AIDS” and “Get Tested”. Granted, such straightforward messages would have been featured on news websites as strip or banner adverts, and not as content for the website. It was also postulated that such stories will be timeless, and as such might be relevant advocacy materials over long periods of time. This means they will not be time bound nor limited to specific campaigns. The information shared will continue to be relevant over longer periods of time. The last was that HIV and AIDS related issues presented in such feature stories in a subtle yet emphatic way might keep readers attention

for longer times as they may want to find out the end results or consequences a particular character will face.

### **5.3 Success and failures**

The researcher set out to explore the effectiveness of presenting relevant education on HIV through literary devices such as a feature story and to find out whether an informed feature story with issues meant for HIV education set in an entertaining article could help support HIV education.

From the responses from the respondents it can be said that these research questions were proven to be true as the respondents indicated that indeed an informed feature story with relevant messages on HIV can aid in the educational efforts where HIV is concerned.

It was assumed that news editors and readers might be more comfortable with HIV related issues set in entertaining feature stories. This was revealed to be positively true as per the responses of the news editor and the two readers of the website. They all maintained that the way the story was presented made it easy for them to assimilate the information while the suspense in the story made them want to read it all to the end. The information about HIV positive women being able to have HIV negative babies was an eye opener for them as well.

Some of the respondents however indicated certain challenges or failures with the use of such feature stories. They indicated that it will not work among a population that cannot read, or those who are not interested in reading. For a

recommendation, it was suggested that such feature stories should be maintained for certain population such as the readers of such online platforms as citifmonline.com but this should not be a standalone effort. It must be coordinated alongside other efforts such as community durbars, posters, television and radio productions as well as community engagements

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **ENTERTAINMENT EDUCATION FEATURE STORY ON HIV.**

#### **“THE NEW FRONT”**

That relationship was not the best. However it had potential to be one of the best and the only. All Akushika wanted was to have open conversations with the man of her life. Conversation that was unending and reciprocated. She did not want to always be the one to initiate conversation or to make suggestions of dates. Aku had become weary of constantly been let down at the last minute.

Once, Aku had set a date with Nii Armah for a clear two months. The program was the wedding of one of Aku’s friends. With a history of Nii constantly letting her down at the last minute for some other reasons, Aku had constantly reminded him and asked to save this date. The day of the wedding came and Nii sent an early text message that he could not make it. Aku felt crushed but still held on.

Everyone has a breaking point, no matter what. Francis had come into the picture and was giving the attention Aku had been practically begging Nii for. Nii will not respond to text messages nor return phone calls. His reasons were that so far as they are in a relationship, that was all there was to it so this constantly been in touch attitude was not going to add anything to the relationship. Aku had tried severally to explain that such neglect had a bad impact on her as it made her feel neglected, yet Nii will not budge.

Francis and Aku met via Facebook. They had been chatting and eventually exchanged phone numbers. Francis was so on point with his responses to messages and call backs. He initiated conversations. He seemed to do so effortlessly that before she could realize, she begun to wait and anticipate his texts and calls. Upon this realization, and the drift on her part, as she was not calling Nii often, she decided to have another hearty chat with Nii concerning their relationship. Nii was still unrepentant. They had been together for two years and, Aku had never heard him say he loved her aside that one time in the initial stages of their relationship.

As Francis was being himself, Aku's emotions were in turmoil. She had drifted from Nii within a one month period with the worst coming when she intentionally decided to not contact him for a two week period and to check if he would by chance contact her. He never did. By the end of this two week period, Aku had tirelessly drained her emotions from Nii and heightened them in Francis. They started going out for dates until Francis asked her to be his woman. Aku had an easy way informing Nii about her desire to end the relationship.

That evening, after Aku had told Nii that it was over, he just left. After two months of bliss with Francis, she received a text from Nii to the effect that she really hurt him and he never expected that to happen to them. Aku was however not willing to go back to Nii. Tried as he did because she finally relished in this emotional heaven that she was not going back to that emptiness.

Francis had four children with two women and he was even not in a financial stability to take care of his children. None of the children lived with him and he paid less attention to their welfare. His own upkeep was a problem and he still chased any girl he could chase. Aku got to know all these after about seven months. She knew it was wrong to be with Francis. She longed to leave and live, but she had gotten so emotionally involved that leaving spelt pain and doom for her. So she hanged on. His track record with women was not an encouraging one, and Aku knew she had to leave.

Despite this knowledge, Aku who was initially having protected sex with Francis had long forsaken the use of condoms as Francis did not want to use them. She had insisted initially but stopped talking about it after a while. This relationship however did not last as they constantly had arguments about one other woman or the other.

Eventually they broke it off. Aku had an audit of her life and realized that she had chased emotional care and support and had gotten herself into a worse situation. Now single, she had decided to work on herself and focus only on her work for now.

Kojo had just joined the law firm Aku worked at and they had gotten closer much faster than anticipated. This was after two years of ending the relationship with Francis. Kojo had been a keen user of condoms and so when they eventually started having sex, he always ensured he had his condoms. One time during conversation, Kojo had suggested that they should both have some medical tests done just to be sure of each other's medical standing. Among the

tests were syphilis, gonorrhoea, HIV and Hepatitis B. Aku agreed and they had the tests later on.

Kojo was negative of all the checks, while Aku tested negative for all except for HIV. Aku was HIV positive.

She felt shattered. Kojo silently thanked his stars for always using the condoms no matter what. He left Aku to her fate while she went through all the trauma of having to accept her new status. This she pulled through as a result of the clinical counselling she got from the health facility.

Aku, a now twenty eight year old HIV positive young woman has been educating groups of people and individuals on living positively with HIV. She read more and with the support from the counsellor, she does know she can have a normal life, once she adheres to her drugs and can go on to have HIV negative children through the prevention of mother to child transmission programs available.

Aku used to blame herself for her callous behaviour which made her succumb to Francis not using condoms when he had to. She knew he was positive too as she had reached out to him and Nii in a bid to get them to know their status. But for now, she had been able to accept herself, her status and was willing to encourage and educate others so they will not fall into the same trap of chasing lust and throwing all caution away.

Through her educational outreach, she met and got married to Jonas, an HIV negative man who knew he could live with, and have a normal family with an HIV positive woman while he remained negative.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **QUESTION GUIDE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Below is a questionnaire guide for a research being carried out by Mary Sakyiwaa Mensah for a post graduate degree in Communications Studies by the Ghana Institute of Journalism. The research is focussing on the use of entertainment education as a tool for HIV education in Ghana. This study is solely for academic purposes. All information provided will be treated with confidentiality. Thank you.

#### **Interview questions:**

1. Have you been affected by HIV, directly or indirectly?
2. If so, in what way?
3. Have you witnessed any HIV educational advocacy in Ghana before?
4. If so, which one was it, and can you describe how that advocacy worked?
5. What are some of the issues that advocacy(if you answered yes to question 3) treated?
6. What are some of the issues that have been challenging so far?
7. Have you come across any entertainment activity (drama, literature, television or radio production) that solely talks about HIV?
8. Can you describe how the tool in 8 above was used to talk about HIV?

9. You were given a feature story on HIV to read. Did you read it?
10. Are you able to identify with any of the characters in the story? Or do you know anyone who identifies with any of them?
11. Do you think information on HIV was presented well enough in the story?
12. Do you think the story as written can cause people to think again about the possibility of getting infected with HIV?
13. Do you think such a story can influence HIV education?
14. If so, how do you think it can be done?

\*\*\*Additional questions for the News Editor and the online platform audience

15. The feature story you just read, is it something you would want to host on your website?
16. If so, why? If no, why not?
17. Does it fit into your house style for your website?
18. Have you hosted such stories before?
19. If yes(to question 18) what was the audience reaction to it?