SCENARIOS FROM AFRICA: empowering children and young people in HIV communication

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Scenarios from Africa

- A community mobilization, education and media process, involving hundreds of partners
- Carried out with and for young people, originally in Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso
- Running since 1997 with funding from:
  - Comic Relief
  - DFID
  - UNFPA
  - Pfizer
  - The Pfizer Foundation
  - CANAL+
  - HORIZONS
- Drew inspiration from French project (CRIPS & partners)
- Involves the production of short fiction films on HIV/AIDS by leading African directors
Scenarios from Africa

- 1997-2005: four contests organised, inviting under-25s to come up with ideas for short films on HIV/AIDS

- Contests implemented by over 1,000 local and international NGOs, CBOs & individual outreach workers

- >105,500 participants from 37 countries to date, over 40% female

- Around half of all participants members of a mixed-gender team

- Increases dialogue, reflection, information-seeking, awareness & use of services, cognitive rehearsal…
Jason
Kibiswa,
aged 21,
DRC, 2005
Contest participation, 1997-2005

1997 & 2000
Total entries: 6,714
Total participants: 21,676
Total countries: 3

Entries by region:
- Western Africa: 6,714
- Central Africa: 0
- Eastern Africa: 0
- Southern Africa: 0

2002
Total entries: 7,217
Total participants: 20,576
Total countries: 25

Entries by region:
- Western Africa: 7,083
- Central Africa: 123
- Eastern Africa: 11
- Southern Africa: 0

2005
Total entries: 22,894
Total participants: 63,327
Total countries: 35

Entries by region:
- Western Africa: 19,247
- Central Africa: 227
- Eastern Africa: 1,419
- Southern Africa: 2,001

Cumulative total: 36,825 entries, 105,579 participants
Scenarios from Africa

Winning ideas selected by succession of juries – at national, then international level.

Juries composed of:

• former contest winners and other young people,
• people living with HIV and other specialists in HIV prevention, treatment and care, and
• specialists in film production, including the internationally acclaimed film directors who go on to direct the films.

2005 contest: 234 jurors from 204 organizations. Each read over 100 creative works individually, followed by group discussions: rich forum for exchange.
Scenarios from Africa

- Films between 1 and 14 minutes long
- Average three per year produced since 1997
- Range of subjects – evolving with epidemic
- Donated to broadcasters; broadcast in almost every country in sSA, often at prime time
- Available in range of European and African languages
- 50,000+ copies on video, DVD, CD & audio cassette distributed in Africa
Evaluation

Range of evaluation activities, both internal and external, including:

- pre- and post-contest surveys of young people;
- data on service provision especially VCT;
- focus group discussions and individual interviews with participants, mentors, partners;
- ethnographic studies;
- formative evaluation and pre-testing;
- extensive reporting by partner organizations;
- empowering exchange evaluation visits between national coordinators;
- analysis of contest scripts….

• Priority: to operate within a culture of learning
“Nancy and Kady inspire our women to contemplate what they want out of relationships. The men in our groups also appreciate these strong women: as one male seminar participant recently noted, ‘I want a woman like that, because then I’ll know that when she says yes, she really wants to be with me.’”

Personal correspondence, representative of Mozambican CBO
“A girl who watched Scenarios films during the contest was very moved by the situation of AIDS orphans. So, she wrote a letter to the President of the Republic, asking that more be done on behalf of orphans and vulnerable children.”

(Contest report, Senegal, 2005)
Empowerment of vulnerable groups

“Far too often, we’re considered to be ‘risk groups’ by practically everybody involved in HIV/AIDS. For us, taking part in this contest is a way to tell all of them that we are every bit as aware of AIDS as they are, and just as committed to doing something about it, and we owe it to ourselves to protect ourselves.”

Young commercial sex worker, Burkina Faso

"Scenarios from Africa is reaching every corner of the continent, changing attitudes towards those of us who live with the virus – and WE are at the heart of it all! You can't imagine what that means to us. It makes us feel so useful, so strong."

Person living with HIV, Burkina Faso
“…The characters embody our own—often hidden—struggles and emotions, and give an example of how we too may respond. They portray a very real world—an African world, where HIV is raging and heroes are learning to fight back.”

Personal correspondence, representative of Mozambican CBO
Scenarios from Africa

• Community mobilisation as springboard for media campaign - motivating and empowering
  • Promotes civic engagement
  • Fosters community capacity to address epidemic on own terms; culture of learning
  • Drawing on existing local infrastructure & resources, fostering supportive environment
  • Partnership, team-spirit, ownership
  • High quality African films: non-didactic; emotionally powerful
  • Available in African languages
  • Promote hope, reflection, and dialogue

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