

## External Evaluation of the Southern African Regional Social and Behavior Change Communication Program, as Implemented in Zimbabwe

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### OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

The Southern African Regional Social and Behaviour Change Communication Program, funded by the British Department for International Development (DfID), aimed to reduce HIV infection by increasing health awareness and by facilitating social and behavioural change through the use of both mass media and community-based activities. The regional programme implemented its programmes in Zimbabwe through two local partners, Action Institute for Environment, Health and Development (IEHDC) and Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service (SAfAIDS). Action IEHDC implemented several communication activities, including the *OneLove* campaign, launched in July 2009, focusing on the dangers of Multiple and Concurrent Partnerships (MCPs); *Action for life* launched in 2007; and *Action Pals*, launched in 2005, aimed at younger audiences aged 10 to 16 years.

### DATA AND METHODS

Data for this evaluation come from a nationally representative survey of 16,771 males and females aged 15-49 using a stratified, three-stage cluster sampling design. A structured, interviewer-administered questionnaire documented respondent's personal experiences with HIV/AIDS, sexual behaviours, HIV testing and treatment and gender-based violence. With the exception of a few provinces, HIV antibody testing was conducted among 18-24 year olds. Bivariate and multivariate data analysis was conducted in STATA 12.0, including multivariate logistic regression models to assess programme impacts controlling for non-random programme exposure. Programme impacts are reported as cumulative percentages across different exposure levels.

### FINDINGS: ONELOVE, ACTION FOR LIFE AND ACTION PALS

Overall reach of *OneLove*, as measured by exposure to at least one form of *OneLove* multimedia, was high at 62%. Approximately 45% of participants reported exposure to *Action for life*, while 28% of participants recalled the *Action for life* logo. The booklets "Raising children with difficult issues" and "Help stop violence against women" were read by 28% and 26% of respondents respectively. Forty nine percent of respondents reported being exposed to *Action Pals* multimedia.

*Action* multimedia had the biggest impacts on community involvement on HIV/AIDS. Participants exposed to any of *Action* interventions were more likely to report positive community leadership and involvement in HIV/AIDS dialogue. Close to 65% (adjusted cumulative effects) of respondents exposed to *OneLove*, *Action for life* and *Action Pals* reported that community leaders discouraged married men from having multiple partners as compared with approximately 45% of participants who were not exposed to *Action* multimedia interventions. In terms of gender norms, beliefs and communication about HIV, exposure to *Action* multimedia had clear effects in a number of areas. For example, participants reporting exposure to *Action for life* were 3% to 6% points more likely to agree that women should be empowered to demand condom use in unfaithful relationships. Participants exposed to either of *Love Stories* and/or *Untold Stories* regional TV programmes (marginal effects -2%), at least one of *One Love* exposures (marginal effects -2%), at least one of *Action pals* (marginal effects -2%) were associated with lower likelihood of believing that real men have many girlfriends. Communication about sex was high (close to 90% adjusted cumulative effects) amongst all participants who had been sexually active, with those exposed to *Love stories* TV (marginal effect 3), *Untold Stories* (marginal effect 2%), *Action Pals* and *Action for life* programmes more likely to report discussing sexual issues with their partners. Participants exposed to *Action* interventions were 3% to 11% percentage points more likely to report that they discussed sexual satisfaction with their partners than unexposed participants.

Exposure to *Action* interventions had limited impacts on HIV prevention and treatment behaviours. For example, exposure to *Action* had no noticeable association with age at first sexual debut for teenage participants, although the

sample size was small. The effects of exposure on current sexual behaviours were mixed. While some *Action Pals* (marginal effects -4%) and *Action for life* (marginal effects -5%) exposures were associated with lower likelihoods of having concurrent sexual partners, *Untold Stories* (marginal effects 3%), *Love Stories* or *Untold Stories* (marginal effects 4%) and *OneLove* multimedia exposures (marginal effects 6%) were associated with increased marginal effects of reporting concurrent sexual partners. Condom use in regular partnerships was lower (marginal effects of -5% to -11%) among *Action*-exposed participants but the reverse was true in casual partnerships (marginal effects 3% to 7%). Participants exposed to *Yellow dust* (marginal effects 3%), *OneLove* booklet (marginal effects 2%), and *OneLove* multimedia (4%) were more likely to report a sexual relationship involving some form of material gain than unexposed participants. While the prevalence of intergenerational sex was high - close to 45% of participants reported having had a sexual relationship with someone 5 years or older than themselves - exposure to either *Love stories* or *Untold stories* TV Regional series (marginal effects -3%) was associated with a decreased likelihood of intergenerational sex (marginal effects -3%). There was no significant difference in HIV testing in the one year prior to the survey among participants exposed and those not exposed to *Action* interventions. There was no association between HIV infection and *Action* exposures.

### FINDINGS: SAFaIDS

Nineteen percent of all participants reported that they had heard of SAFaIDS. The percentage of participants reporting exposure to at least one of SAFaIDS multimedia material was 34%, with TV being the highest accessed SAFaIDS multimedia (28%). The effects of exposure to SAFaIDS interventions were similar to those of *Action* IEHD. All SAFaIDS exposures were associated with positive community involvement. For example, SAFaIDS exposed participants were more likely to report that community leaders discourage married men from having multiple sexual partners (marginal effects 9% to 32%) as well as discourage older men from having sexual relationships with younger women (marginal effects 11% to 27%). Participants exposed to *Positive Talk* (marginal effects 3%), *New Dawn* (marginal effects 5%), and any of SAFaIDS multimedia (marginal effects 4%) were more likely to report that women should have the power to negotiate the use of condoms in relationships. The effects on stigma were less robust. Close to 43% of all participants felt that HIV was a punishment for sinning, regardless of exposure levels. Even so, participants exposed to SAFaIDS were less likely to believe that one's life is over if one is HIV infected compared to those who were not exposed to SAFaIDS (marginal effects of -3% to -5%). In terms of behaviours, exposure to SAFaIDS interventions showed no effects on having more than one partner in the past year nor on having concurrent partners. SAFaIDS exposure was associated with low condom use in stable relationships (marginal effects 5% to 11%), but it was associated with higher condom use in casual relationships (marginal effects -4% to -8%). There was no association between SAFaIDS exposure and sexual relationships with material gains, neither was there any association with condom usage in such relationships. SAFaIDS exposed participants were neither more nor less likely to test for HIV in the previous year than unexposed participants. Importantly, there was a negative association between HIV status and *Perspectives*, *Simuka Upenyu* and *New Dawn* SAFaIDS exposures.

### CONCLUSION

Both *Action* and SAFaIDS exposures were positively associated with building community and individual skills to deal with HIV and AIDS. Among the full sample, condom usage in stable relationships was low, at 25%, with more exposed participants less likely to report condom usage. However condom usage in casual relationships was relatively high, at 70%, with people exposed to both *Action* and SAFaIDS more likely to report condom usage. There were positive associations among people exposed to SAFaIDS and *Action* interventions on communication about sex in relationships, testing for HIV with a partner and the knowledge that HIV could be transmitted even if one was on ARVs. There was definite impact among respondents exposed to *Action* exposures who reported lower odds of engaging in intergenerational sex.