

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

**THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN REDUCING
HIV/AIDS AMONG WOMEN: CASE STUDY KAYOLE
LOCATION NAIROBI**

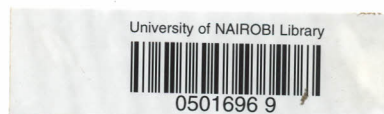
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K50/8040/2006

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF
JOURNALISM, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
THE A MASTERS DEGREE IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES**



SEPTEMBER 2009

ABSTRACT

This study presents findings of the survey conducted in Kayole, to gauge the extent to which communication has contributed to reduction of HIV/AIDS prevalence within the community. It presents views of Key Informants, members of Focus Group Discussions and survey respondents, on the issues of communication in the community in relation to HIV/AIDS.

This study contributes to the discussion about HIV/AIDS prevention efforts for one of the so called high risk groups for HIV/AIDS in Kenya: women. It highlights some key social and economic factors associated with HIV/AIDS. Data from respondents, key informant and group discussions are analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative procedures to examine the nature of the relationship between communication and selected HIV/AIDS variables.

The study sought to unearth barriers that stand in the way of communicating HIV/AIDS messages. It aimed at establishing the correlation between communication and HIV/AIDS. The study targeted all community members over 18 years to establish communication and other factors that have made them adopt positive behavior. Latest global survey says HIV and AIDS campaigners have failed to use effective communication strategies to change behavior.

The study examined communication strategies that have been employed by various stakeholders in the community to create awareness, the major factors that influence the adoption of positive sexual behavior, and those that hinder. It also assessed the factors

that impinge the development of effective communication strategies for behavior change. It focused on the interdependence of communication and health promotion campaigns with particular reference to Kayole area, discussed in the context of other HIV/AIDS strategies in Kenya.

Key findings reveal evidence of reduced prevalence of behavior that has led to the reduced risk. The findings of this study indicate that significant strides have been made in the HIV/AIDS national response. There has been a decline in the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate from 14% in 2000 to 5.1% in 2006. The behavior change was significantly associated with various communication strategies. The findings show Kenya has seen increased scaling up of HIV and AIDS information campaigns, Voluntary Counseling and Testing programmes (VCT), and improved access to Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART).

The findings indicate that behavior change in Kayole area was significantly associated with various communication strategies. Majority of residents attributed the increased awareness to concerted efforts by Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), and Government agencies. Most residents know at least one modern method of prevention. The leading channels of communication were radio, TV, church, workshops and mixed media (a combination of various media - posters, internet, t-shirts, door-to door, road shows, billboards). Some of the practices identified as increasing the transmission of HIV/AIDS in the area include poverty, widow inheritance, polygamy, religious beliefs regarding condom use, among others.

In reflecting on the role of communication in reduction of HIV/AIDS, we inherently admit the importance of communication in the prevention of HIV in a given community and a number of things come into mind. First, is the question of what communication is? Second is the question of who sets that agenda in a given place. Third, is the role of communication in prevention of HIV/AIDS and more importantly the determinate of what channels are used to relay information?

To be effective, the findings of this study recommends that HIV/AIDS programmes need to understand how the target audience perceives HIV/AIDS, condoms, monogamy, opportunistic infections, anti-retroviral drugs and even herbal therapies. The study recommends the need for policy and programs that would increase education and awareness among women, men, the youth including children in communities. This will ensure that the public treat the disease with equal importance.

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