

Summary of key data from the findings of the HIV and AIDS and Gender Baseline Study in Mauritius

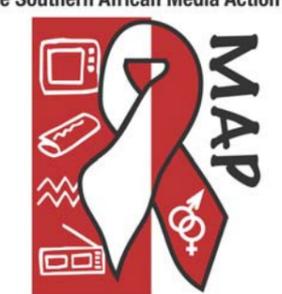
QUANTITY OF COVERAGE	% MAURITIUS	% REGION
HIV coverage compared to total	1	3
HIV mentioned	23	36
HIV central focus	77	64
WHO SPEAKS		
Women and men - all topics	29 (F) / 71 (M)	39 (F) / 61 (M)
Person affected by HIV	2	4
Women and men affected by HIV	0 (F) / 100 (M)	59 (F) / 41 (M)
People with HIV	5	4
Women and men with HIV	0 (F) / 100 (M)	44 (F) / 56 (M)
Traditional & religious groups	2	5
Women and men traditional and religious groups	0 (F) / 100 (M)	18 (F) / 82 (M)
Civil society, NGOs, INGOs	40	28
Women and men in civil society, NGOs and INGOs	28 (F) / 72 (M)	47 (F) / 53 (M)
Experts	9	12
Women and men experts	0 (F) / 100 (M)	36 (F) / 64 (M)
Officials/UN agencies	42	42
Women and men officials/UN agencies	41 (F) / 59 (M)	31 (F) / 69 (M)
Other	1	5
Women and men other	0 (F) / 0 (M)	40 (F) / 60 (M)
TOPICS		
Prevention	50	41
Who speaks on prevention?	32 (F) / 68 (M)	42 (F) / 58 (M)
Treatment	4	16
Who speaks on treatment?	43 (F) / 57 (M)	37 (F) / 63 (M)
Care	9	13
Who speaks on care?	40 (F) / 60 (M)	52 (F) / 48 (M)
General	32	19
Who speaks on general?	14 (F) / 86 (M)	27 (F) / 73 (M)
Impact	0	5
Who speaks on impact?	0 (F) / 0 (M)	35 (F) / 65 (M)
TYPES OF STORIES		
News & briefs	86	78
Cartoons, images, graphics	0	2
Editorial & opinion	2	4
Feature & analysis	11	10
Feedback	0	3
Interview, profile & human interest	0	3
WHERE DO STORIES COME FROM?		
International	14	13
Regional	12	8
National	74	54
Provincial	0	6
Local	0	19
WHO TELLS THE STORIES?		
Original story	96	77
Guest writer	2	5
Agency	2	18
WHO REPORTS ON HIV and AIDS?		
Overall	68 (F) / 32 (M)	45 (F) / 55 (M)
Who reports on what?		
Prevention	74 (F) / 26 (M)	39 (F) / 61 (M)
Treatment	0 (F) / 0 (M)	56 (F) / 44 (M)
Care	67 (F) / 33 (M)	57 (F) / 43 (M)
General	56 (F) / 44 (M)	39 (F) / 61 (M)
Impact	67 (F) / 33 (M)	39 (F) / 61 (M)
Other	67 (F) / 33 (M)	50 (F) / 50 (M)

MAURITIUS

HIV and AIDS and GENDER BASELINE STUDY



The Southern African Media Action Plan



on HIV and AIDS & Gender

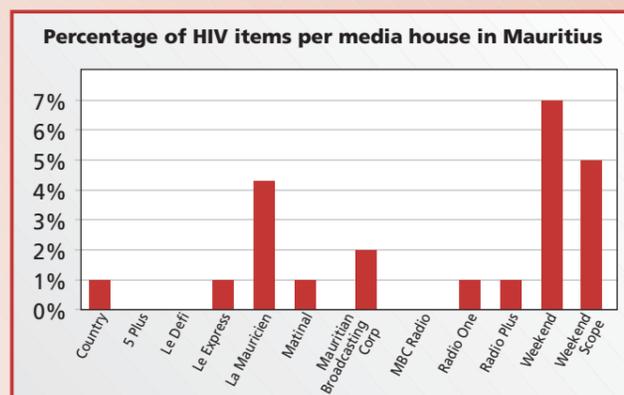
The Mauritius HIV and AIDS and Gender Study is part of the Media Action Plan (MAP) on HIV and AIDS and Gender, led by the Southern African Editors' Forum (SAEF). A team of local consultants led by Loga Virahsawmy, President of Media Watch Organisation (MWO), conducted the monitoring. The MMP, which leads the monitoring sub-sector of MAP analysed the data and produced the qualitative results. Gender Links (GL), which leads the policy sub-sector of MAP edited the qualitative research and wrote the report.

In general, Mauritius has a low prevalence rate of HIV, but a 7.4 percent rate detected among sex workers suggests that the rate is higher among vulnerable groups. Studies also show a progressive increase in prevalence, which points to the need for a vigorous prevention campaign by all sectors of society, and especially the media. Of the 535 reported cases, 96 have already died.

The main mode of HIV transmission in Mauritius is through injecting drug use (46%) followed by heterosexual and homosexual sex and mother to child transmission. The majority of HIV/AIDS cases are found in the age group of 20 – 39 years. More women than men are infected.

The monitoring included 118 media houses in eleven Southern Africa countries, for a total of 15 days staggered over a period of one month between October and November 2005. Monitoring in Mauritius covered 11 media houses. The key findings are summarised in the table at the back of this pamphlet.

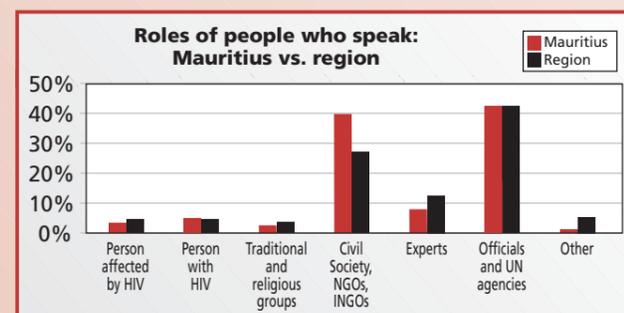
But there was considerable difference between media houses: While the proportion of HIV coverage in *Le Mauricien*, *the Mauritian Broadcasting Corporation*, *Weekend* and *Weekend Group* ran between 2% to 7%, most media houses had virtually no coverage of the topic.



HIV and AIDS are not being mainstreamed into HIV coverage. As is the finding in most countries in the study, most of the items monitored (77%) had HIV as the central focus compared to those in which it was mentioned (23%). This suggests that HIV is being covered mainly as a stand alone issue and that it is not being mainstreamed in all coverage.

Male voices still predominate: In Mauritius, more so than in the region, 71% of all those who speak on HIV and AIDS are men, compared to 29% of women. The comparative figures for the region are 61% men and 39% women.

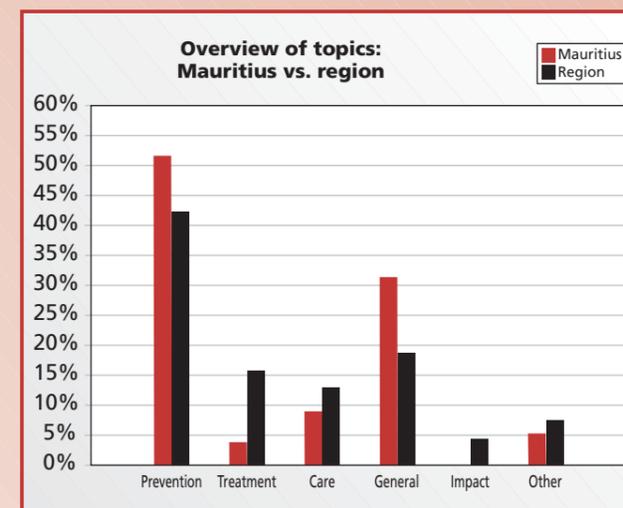
Voices of people with HIV are hardly heard in the media: People with HIV constituted 5% of all sources (slightly higher than the 4% average for the region). As elsewhere, the majority of sources on HIV and AIDS in Mauritius are officials, UN agencies and civil society.



KEY FINDINGS

The coverage of HIV is the lowest in the region: In Mauritius, only 1% of total coverage during the monitoring period focused on or mentioned HIV and AIDS; lower than the regional average of 3% and the lowest in the region. Lesotho, with 19%, had the highest proportion of HIV and AIDS coverage in the region.

Most coverage of HIV and AIDS is on prevention: Similar to the majority of countries in the study, most coverage of HIV and AIDS is on prevention, with this topic accounting for half of all the items monitored. Treatment and care account for 13 % of all coverage while impact received no coverage at all. The latter suggests that the media in Mauritius is not taking a long term view of the pandemic and the consequences for the island should the incidence rate escalate.



Stories lack depth and grounding: In Mauritius, even more so than in the region the vast majority of HIV coverage is through news stories as opposed to features and more in-depth coverage (86% compared to 78% in the region). Most of the stories (74%) concerned national issues, with no local stories at all. 14% of stories concerned international and 12% regional dimensions of the pandemic. While this may be understandable given the low prevalence rate, the fact that HIV and AIDS is still not seen as an issue with local and community level impact is a source of concern.

Interestingly, most stories are original: On the positive side, far more so than in the rest of the region, the majority of stories on HIV and AIDS in Mauritius are original stories reported by journalists, as opposed to being obtained from agencies and guest writers (96% in Mauritius compared to 77% in the rest of the region.) This suggests that media houses are investing human and financial resources in covering the pandemic.

More women than men report on HIV and AIDS: In Mauritius most HIV and AIDS stories are reported by women (68%, compared to the regional average of 45%). However, unlike most other countries in the region, women reporters are less likely to access female sources than their male colleagues. This shows that having women cover HIV and AIDS is not a sufficient guarantee of gender balance in sources and content. Woman and men reporters need to be trained in covering the pandemic and its gender dimensions.

The gender dimensions of the epidemic are not receiving sufficient coverage: Much of the coverage in the study was classified as lacking in gender awareness. Closer analysis of topics showed that:

- In stories on prevention, the sub-topics that examined cross-generational sex, prevention of mother to child transmission, the role of men and boys and cultural practice, all significant gender issues and drivers of the infection amongst women, received no coverage.
- ♦ The prevention of mother-to-child transmission, nutrition and positive living, significant issues for women, received no coverage.
- ♦ The role of men and boys in the provision of care and home based care also received no coverage.

Policies, training and access to information can help to improve the quantity and quality of coverage: Through the collaborative efforts of a number of organisations, MAP offers support to media houses that wish to develop HIV and AIDS and gender policies, as well as integrate these into the workplace and editorial practices.