

CHAPTER 4: HIV AND AIDS AND MEDIA FINDINGS

GEMSA runs campaigns to end HIV and AIDS Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

HIV AND AIDS AND MEDIA FINDINGS



This chapter concerns media coverage of HIV and AIDS and its gender dimensions in Seychelles. The monitoring included collecting data on the proportion of HIV and AIDS coverage relative to other issues; what aspects on HIV and AIDS are covered; how these are covered; where the stories originate; who speaks and who speaks on what aspects of the pandemic and who reports on them.

Due to the very low number of stories on HIV and AIDS in Seychelles (five in total during the monitoring period), the data could not be probed in as much depth as in the case of the regional study. For example, it was not possible to do a breakdown on topics into prevention, treatment and care as happened in the other countries. There were also too few stories to comment on ethical practices in coverage of HIV and AIDS, although the South African Editor's Forum (SAEF) principles are attached at Annex A for reference and use by the media in Seychelles going forward. Conclusions are drawn only where it is reasonable to do so.

QUANTITY OF COVERAGE

To understand the extent of coverage, monitors counted all stories about, or that mention, HIV and AIDS and calculated what proportion these constitute of the total.

Figure 28 shows that with HIV and AIDS coverage constituting an average of 2.1% of the coverage in the study, all three countries fall below the regional average of 3% in the HIV and AIDS and Gender Baseline Study conducted as part of MAP in 2006. At 0.7% of total coverage, HIV and AIDS coverage was lowest in Seychelles. The DRC (2.7%) had the highest proportion of coverage in the study followed by Madagascar (2.0%)

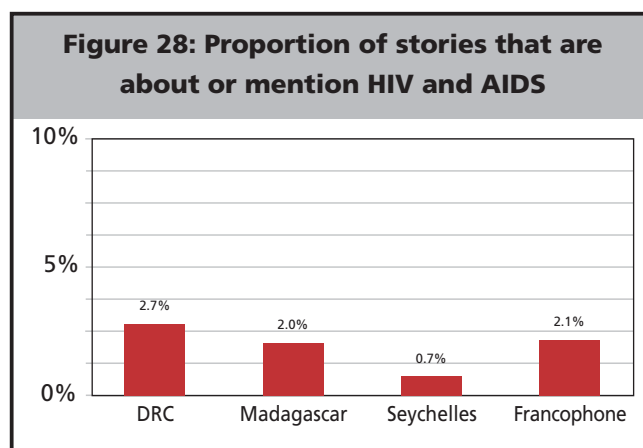
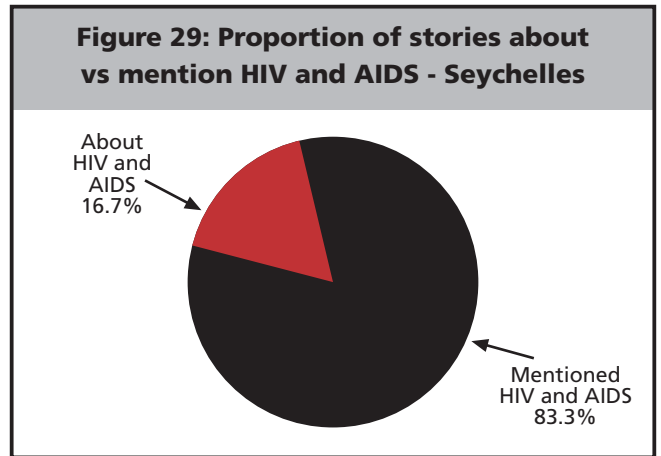


Figure 29 shows that out of the total HIV and AIDS stories in Seychelles only 16.7% of the stories had HIV and AIDS as a central focus compared to 83.3% that just mentioned the subject. These figures contrast sharply with to the HIV and AIDS and Gender Baseline Study (2006) in which the stories that had HIV and AIDS as their central focus accounted for 64% of the total compared to 36% that just mentioned the subject.



Stories that mention HIV and AIDS

A story entitled “Konvasyon Lasosyasyon Madanm SNP” (*Regar, 26 October 2007*) is an example of stories that mentions but is not about HIV and AIDS. The story is on the involvement of the Women’s Convention of the Seychelles National Party (SNP) to curb social problems such as “robbery and vandalism, drug and alcohol abuse and HIV and AIDS”. The article is about encouraging women in the Seychelles National Party (SNP) to fight against social problems.

The issues of concern are mentioned in passing. The story does not give any details or figures on the extent to which the issues outlined are a social problem in Seychelles. As HIV and AIDS being a topical issue, the newspapers could have given some statistics on the situation in Seychelles. The story demonstrates the precedence of politics over social problems such as HIV and AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse and robberies and vandalism.



QUANTITY OF COVERAGE

As an indicator of the depth of stories, the monitors divided stories on or that mentioned HIV and AIDS into what types of stories such as news, features, analysis, cartoons, interviews, feedback etc.

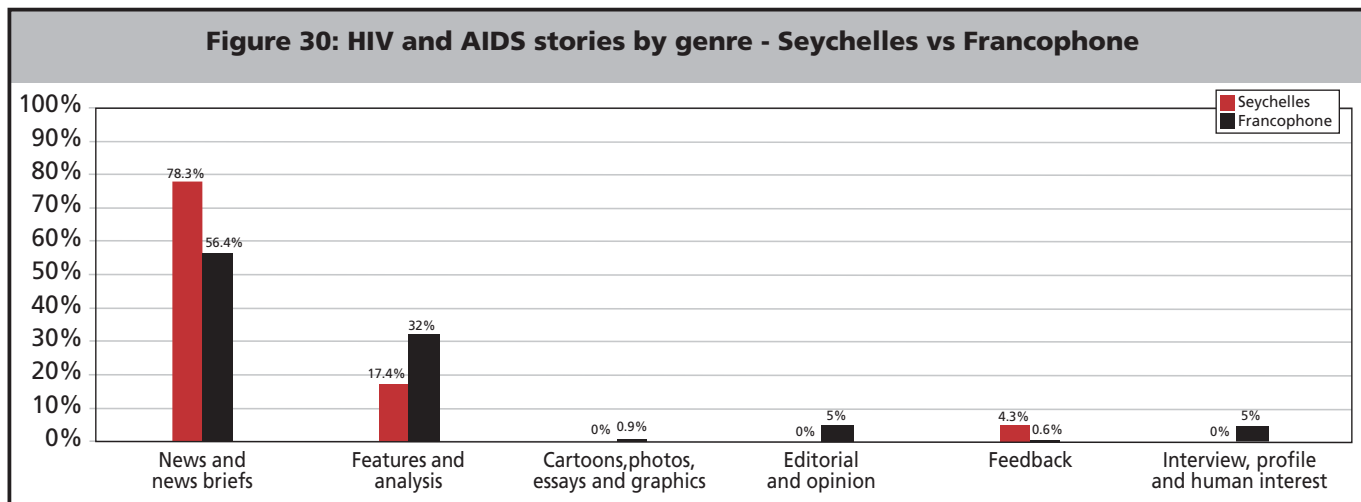
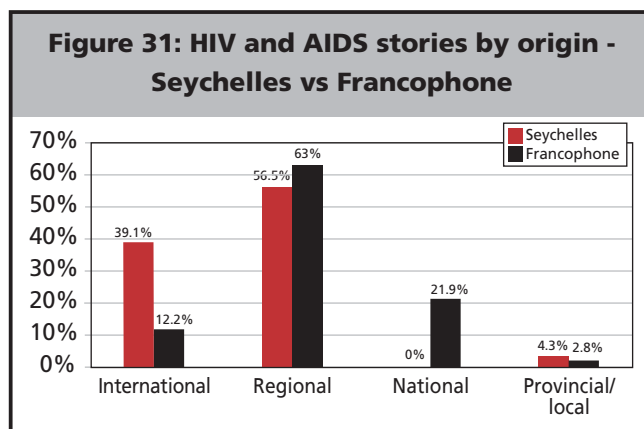


Figure 30 shows that in the study generally (56.4%) and in Seychelles in particular (78.3%) news stories constituted the majority of types of stories. This finding concurs with the larger regional study in 2006, in which 78% of all stories on HIV and AIDS comprised of news stories. This suggests that HIV and AIDS coverage is more event than issue driven. It is heartening however that in the Francophone study features and analysis constituted 32% of the total (17.4%) in Seychelles compared to 10% in the larger regional study.

Origins of HIV and AIDS stories

The origin of stories (international, national, local etc) is an a indicator of how much effort and resources are put into coverage. Whereas international and some national coverage are generally obtained from wire services, the more local level the coverage, the more likely it is to involve on-the-ground reporting by the media house.

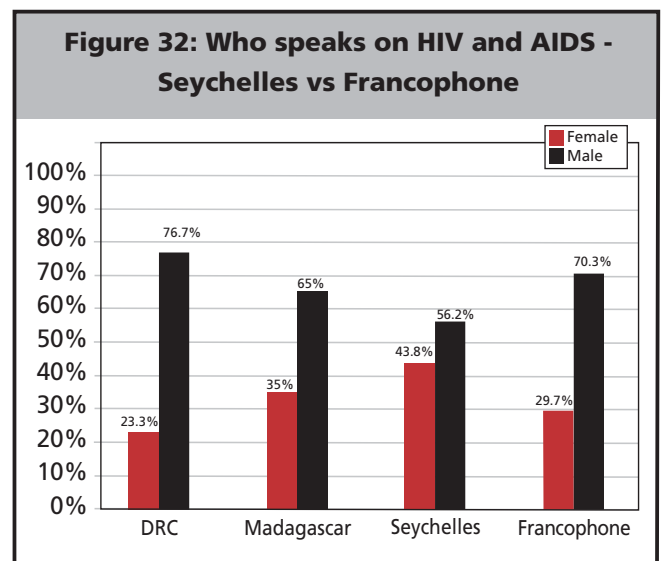
While 39.1% of Seychelles HIV and AIDS stories originate from international sources (higher than the 12.2% in the study and 26% in the larger regional study) this is lower than the figure for the origin of stories in overall coverage. Most of coverage is national (56.5%). Given the small size of the country it is to be expected that provincial/local coverage would be low. There does therefore appear to be an effort to ensure original, country specific coverage.



Who speaks on HIV and AIDS?

Given the gender dimensions of HIV and AIDS, the study analysed the extent to which women and men speak on the subject. In most countries, a key driving factor in HIV and AIDS is the inability of women to demand safe sex. Women are the majority of those who live with HIV and AIDS and also who provide care for those living with AIDS. It is therefore fair to assume that the voices of women should at least be equally heard in the coverage of the pandemic.

Figure 32 shows that Seychelles had the highest proportion of women sources speaking on HIV and AIDS (43.8%) though this is still short of parity. The Francophone regional average of 29.7% female and 70.3% male sources was lower than the findings of the HIV and AIDS and Gender Baseline Study in which female sources constituted 36% compared to 61% male sources. However, the proportion of women sources on HIV and AIDS is higher than the overall average for all three countries of 18%. This is a positive sign.



Function of HIV and AIDS sources

The function of sources is an indicator of what kind of people are accessed for comment. It reflects the extent to which the views of ordinary people and those most affected are accessed as compared to official and expert views. These statistics tell us the extent the media can actually claim to be the “voice of the voiceless.”

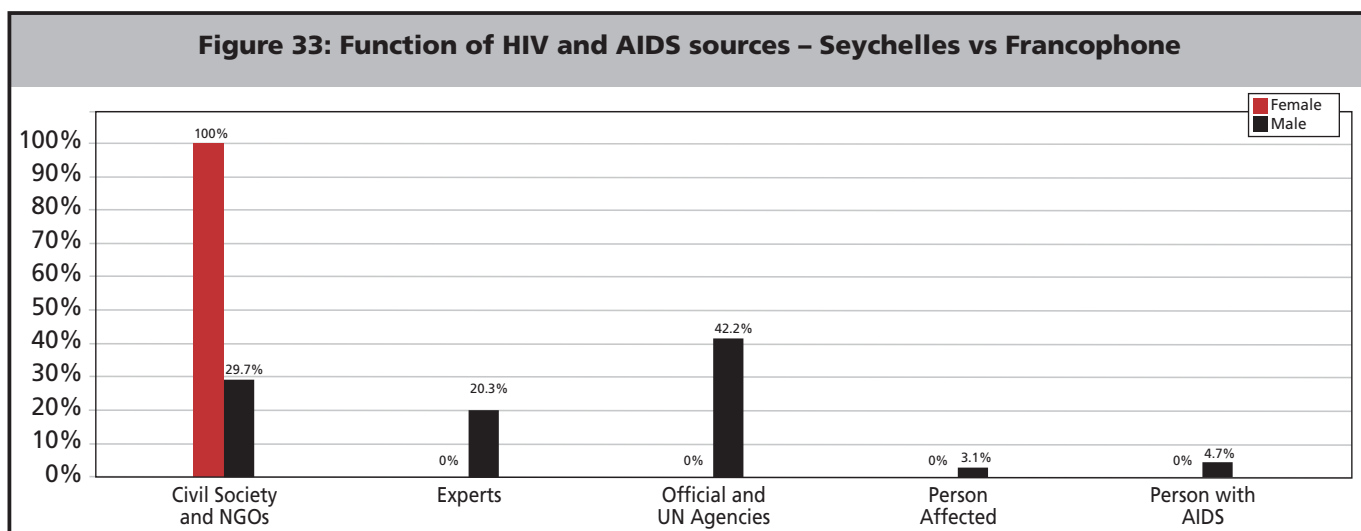


Figure 33 shows that in Seychelles, civil society and NGO sources constituted 100% of the total. No person with or affected by HIV and AIDS was quoted. While this may be a reflection of the relatively small number of people living with AIDS on the island, the fact that the voices of those most directly affected is not being heard is the source of great concern.

The findings of the study overall- that the dominant sources (42.2%) are official and UN agencies concurs with the 2006 HIV and AIDS and Gender Baseline Study for the region that put this figure at 42%; civil society and NGOs (28%) and experts (12%) constituted the majority of the sources compared to people living with and/or affected by AIDS. At 4.7% the proportion of persons with AIDS quoted in HIV and AIDS stories in the Francophone study is slightly higher than the average of 4% in the regional study. In all instances, however, the voices of those most affected are the least heard. This is a serious concern and challenge going forward.

QUANTITY OF COVERAGE

The study included gender disaggregated data on those who report on HIV and AIDS.

Figure 34 shows that Seychelles had the highest proportion (75%) of female journalists reporting on HIV and AIDS. This figure is however slightly skewed by the fact that there were so few stories on HIV and AIDS during the monitoring period.

In general, however, it would appear that there is a higher proportion of women on the HIV and AIDS beats than in other areas of coverage. Madagascar had 51.6% female and 48.4% male reporters the DRC had 61.1% female reporters and 38.5% male reporters on this beat. The average for the study is 55.2% female reporters compared to 45% female reporters in the regional larger HIV and AIDS study.

