

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

QUANTITY OF COVERAGE	% MALAWI	% REGION
HIV coverage compared to total	5	3
HIV mentioned	35	36
HIV central focus	65	64
WHO SPEAKS		
Women and men - all topics	48 (F) / 52 (M)	39 (F) / 61 (M)
Person affected by HIV	3	4
Women and men affected by HIV	100 (F) / 59 (M)	59 (F) / 41 (M)
People with HIV	0	4
Women and men with HIV	0 (F) / 0 (M)	44 (F) / 56 (M)
Traditional & religious groups	14	5
Women and men traditional and religious groups	8 (F) / 92 (M)	18 (F) / 82 (M)
Civil society, NGOs, INGOs	39	28
Women and men in civil society, NGOs and INGOs	48 (F) / 52 (M)	47 (F) / 53 (M)
Experts	16	12
Women and men experts	50 (F) / 50 (M)	36 (F) / 64 (M)
Officials/UN agencies	18	42
Women and men officials/UN agencies	67 (F) / 33 (M)	31 (F) / 69 (M)
Other	10	5
Women and men other	57 (F) / 43 (M)	40 (F) / 60 (M)
TOPICS		
Prevention	58	41
Who speaks on prevention?	56 (F) / 44 (M)	42 (F) / 58 (M)
Treatment	9	16
Who speaks on treatment?	50 (F) / 50 (M)	37 (F) / 63 (M)
Care	4	13
Who speaks on care?	33 (F) / 67 (M)	52 (F) / 48 (M)
General	8	19
Who speaks on general?	22 (F) / 78 (M)	27 (F) / 73 (M)
Impact	6	5
Who speaks on impact?	0 (F) / 100 (M)	35 (F) / 65 (M)
TYPES OF STORIES		
News & briefs	72	78
Cartoons, images, graphics	2	2
Editorial & opinion	9	4
Feature & analysis	6	10
Feedback	7	3
Interview, profile & human interest	5	3
WHERE DO STORIES COME FROM?		
International	8	13
Regional	2	8
National	64	54
Provincial	2	6
Local	24	19
WHO TELLS THE STORIES?		
Original story	86	77
Guest writer	7	5
Agency	7	18
WHO REPORTS ON HIV and AIDS?		
Overall	37 (F) / 63 (M)	45 (F) / 55 (M)
Who reports on what?		
Prevention	48 (F) / 52 (M)	39 (F) / 61 (M)
Treatment	25 (F) / 75 (M)	56 (F) / 44 (M)
Care	0 (F) / 100 (M)	57 (F) / 43 (M)
General	20 (F) / 80 (M)	39 (F) / 61 (M)
Impact	19 (F) / 81 (M)	39 (F) / 61 (M)
Other	27 (F) / 73 (M)	50 (F) / 50 (M)

MALAWI

HIV and AIDS and GENDER BASELINE STUDY



The Southern African Media Action Plan



on HIV and AIDS & Gender

The Malawi 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 Janet Karim conducted the research. The MMP, which leads the monitoring sub-sector of MAP produced the quantitative results and analysed the data. Gender Links (GL), which leads the policy sub-sector of MAP edited the qualitative research and wrote the report.

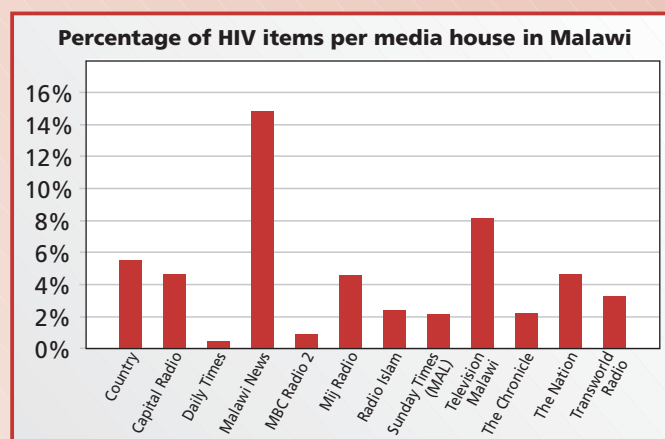
Malawi's HIV prevalence has been stable over the past seven years at 14-15%, with high levels of infection among the youth. Currently 80,000 Malawians die annually from AIDS related illnesses. This is predicted to rise to 120,000 in the year 2010. Approximately 1 million people have died as a result of AIDS related illnesses since the first person with HIV was diagnosed in 1985, leaving about 800,000 orphans. This has resulted in the rise of child-headed and granny-headed households. The loss of breadwinners has also led to an increase in household poverty and food insecurity.

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 Malawi covered 11 media houses. The key findings are summarised in the table at the back of this pamphlet.

KEY FINDINGS

The coverage of HIV is extremely low: Although at 5% of the total stories monitored the proportion of stories that mentioned or focused on HIV and AIDS in Malawi is higher than the regional figure of 3%, this is still low given the gravity of the pandemic.

But there is considerable difference between media houses, with print media on average scoring better than television and radio. This ranged from 15% in the case of *Malawi News* and *Sunday Times* to no coverage at all in the *Daily Times* during the monitoring period.

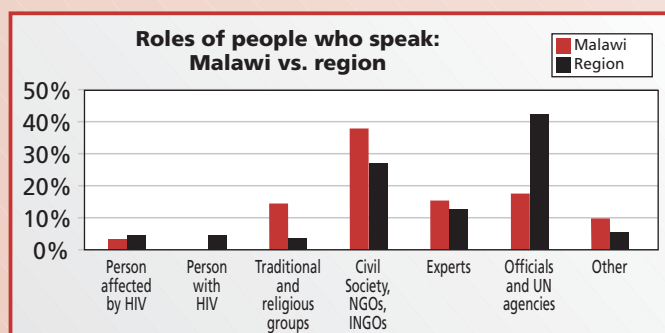


HIV and AIDS is not being adequately mainstreamed into coverage: 65% of all stories monitored had HIV and AIDS as the central focus of the story, while the rest (35%) mentioned HIV. This figure suggests that the media is not adequately mainstreaming HIV into coverage but presents possibilities of this happening.

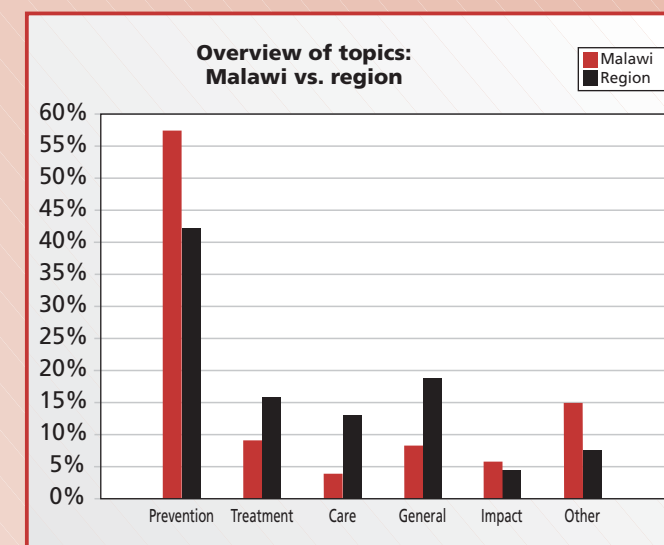
Male voices still predominate: Male voices still predominate, with 52% of all sources being on HIV and AIDS being male and 48%, female sources. However, Malawi does better on this front than in the region overall, where the comparative figures are 61% male sources and 39% female sources.

People with HIV and AIDS are not heard at all: In Malawi, people with HIV and AIDS were not consulted at all as sources during the monitoring period. The comparative regional figure is 4%.

There are more NGOs than official sources: Unlike the rest of the region, there is a higher proportion of NGOs (38%) than official sources (17%) in Malawi. The comparative figures for the region are 28% and 42% respectively. Unfortunately, however, NGOs have not been facilitating greater access of people living with AIDS to the media.



Coverage in Malawi tends to focus on prevention: 58% of all coverage in Malawi focuses on prevention; higher than the regional average of 41%. Treatment accounts for 9% of coverage, compared to 16% in the region. In both Malawi and the region, the impact of HIV and AIDS is not receiving much coverage. Care, which has a major bearing on the lives of women, received the lowest coverage of all (2%) in Malawi.



Stories lack depth and grounding: In both Malawi (72%) and the region (78%), the vast majority of HIV coverage is through news stories. In another trend similar to the region, HIV and AIDS tends to be covered as a national concern (64% of all stories) rather than a local concern (24% of all stories). The remaining 8% of stories came from an international level.

Although there is a relatively high level of origination: On the positive side, 86% of stories from Malawi are original stories written by journalists (compared to 7% obtained from agencies and 7% from guest writers). The proportion of original stories is higher than the region (77%). This indicates that despite the resource constraints that many media houses work under in Malawi, media houses are investing human and financial resources in covering this beat.

Gender parity is yet to be achieved: In Malawi, women reported 37% of the items, compared to 45% in the rest of the region.

Gender dimensions of the epidemic are not receiving sufficient coverage although there are some positive trends: With a few exceptions, gender is not well integrated into HIV and AIDS coverage, much of which is classified in the study as either gender blind or unclear. Closer analysis of the topics showed that:

- ◆ In prevention, the subtopics that examined some of the key gender issues received no coverage, including the prevention of mother to child transmission and the role of men and boys. Other important topics received a small amount of coverage, including gender based violence (8%), gender power relations (6%), cross generational sex (2%). However, sex work and HIV accounted for 6% of the coverage in this topic category, higher than the regional average of 3%.

- ◆ In treatment, the focus of coverage was on medical advances and ARVs, while key gender issues received no coverage at all – including nutrition, prevention of mother to child transmission and where to go for help.

- ◆ In care, support and the environment, home based care received a much higher level of coverage than in the region (Malawi, 25% compared to the region, 6%). But the role of men and boys in the provision of care received no coverage at all.

Policies, training and access to information can help to improve the quantity and the 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 and integrate these into workplace as well as editorial practices. The training, ethics and information arms of MAP will buttress the policy support provided by GL and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA).