



Namibian musician Stella Kavenjii who has produced an album on HIV and AIDS being interviewed by Katutura Community Media.

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

COVER AGE OF HIV AND AIDS

Other than gender another major cross-cutting concern for the media in the region is the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Internally this has had devastating consequences for many media houses whose staff have been directly and indirectly affected. The media also has a major role to play in educating the public on HIV and AIDS as well as its gender dimensions.

The chapter explores the extent of HIV and AIDS coverage as opposed to the coverage of other news stories. This includes looking at topics; genres; origin; geographic scope; function of sources and who reports on HIV and AIDS. The topics are broken down into different sub-topics to give insight into the most reported categories.

Table nine: Media houses that participated in the Media Action Plan on HIV and AIDS and Gender in Namibia

	Media houses	News rooms
Large		
New Era	1	1
NBC	1	7
UNAM Radio	1	1
Radio Live	1	1
Katutura Community Radio	1	1
Total	5	11

The chapter serves as a benchmark of progress against the 2006 HIV and AIDS and Gender Baseline Study. The study formed part of the Media Action Plan on HIV and AIDS and Gender led by the Southern African Editor's Forum that led to an

extensive roll out of policies with media houses and newsrooms across the region.

Table seven summarises the media houses the developed HIV and AIDS policies as part of MAP in Namibia. These policies covered the work place but also sought to improve the quantity and quality of coverage on HIV and AIDS from a gender perspective.

Quantity of HIV and AIDS coverage

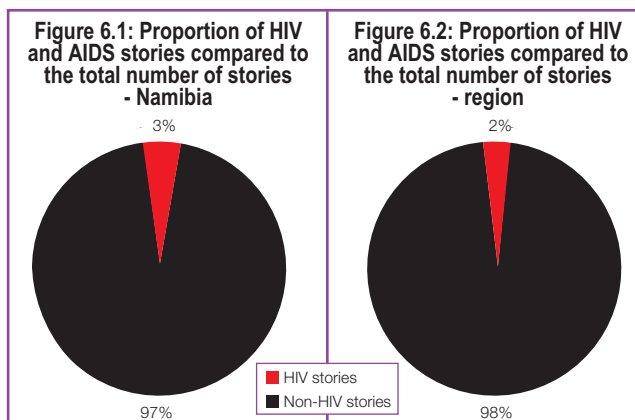


Figure 6.1 shows that HIV and AIDS stories and stories that mention HIV and AIDS make up only 3% of all topics covered by media in Namibia, 1% lower than the regional average of 2% (Figure 6.2). This is low compared to the high rates of infection in the country.

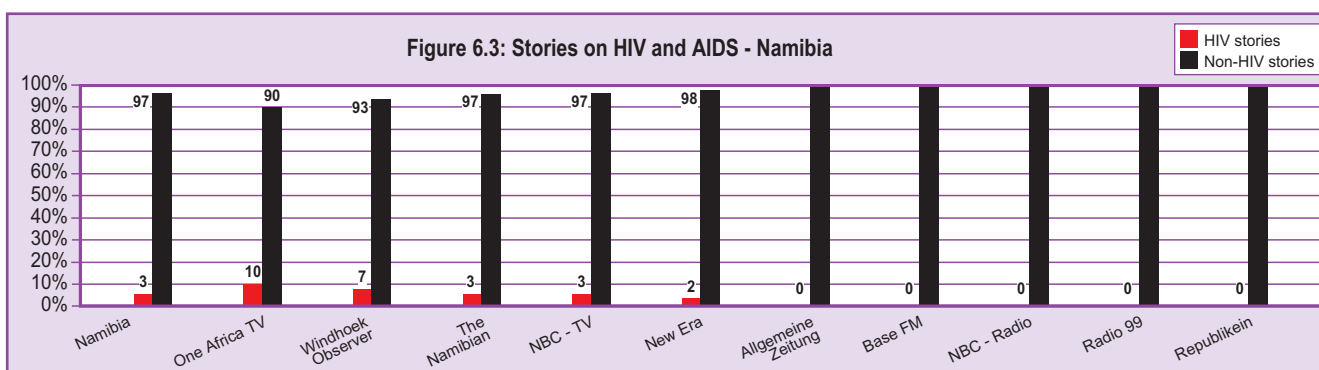


Figure 6.3 shows that there are variations across media houses with HIV and AIDS stories accounting for 10% of *One Africa TV* coverage followed by *Windhoek Observer* at 7% (both media houses that did not participate in MAP). Two MAP media houses (*NBC TV* and *New Era*) carried some HIV and AIDS stories. Five of the media houses did not have any stories on HIV and AIDS during the monitoring period. Radio stations did not report

on this topic. It should be stressed that one of the limitations of the monitoring is that it covered only news. Increasingly topics like living positively with HIV and AIDS (see *Base FM* case study) are covered in other kinds of programming, such as talk shows. But as news is the dominating genre of the media, it is disappointing to find so little news coverage of HIV and AIDS in many media houses.

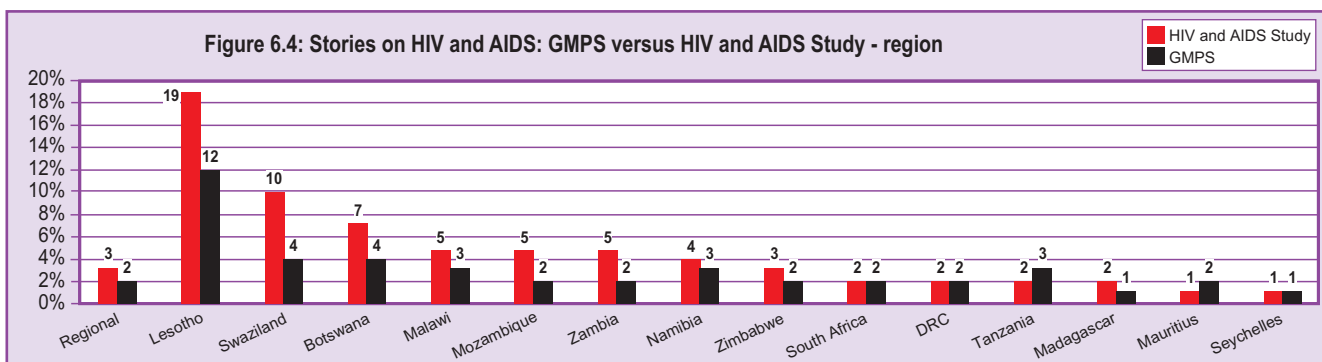
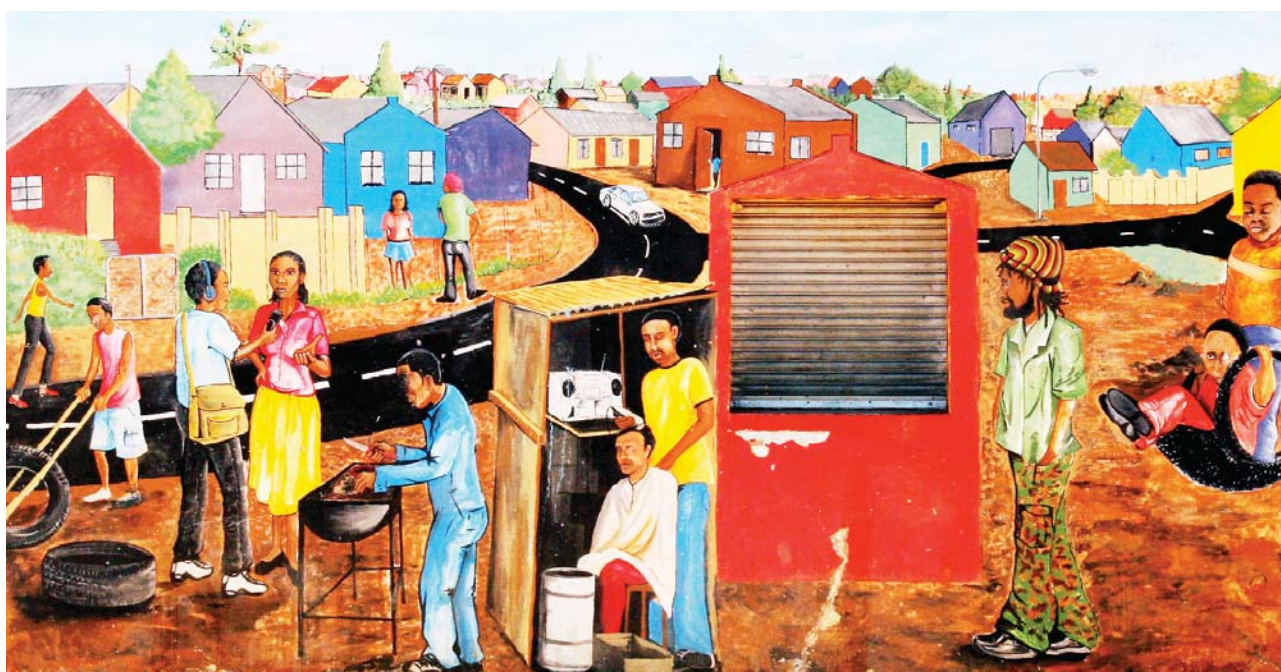
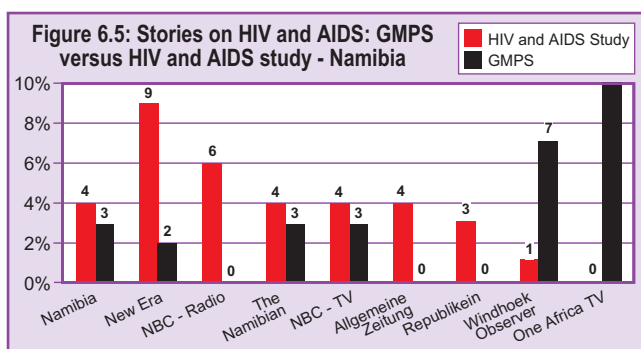
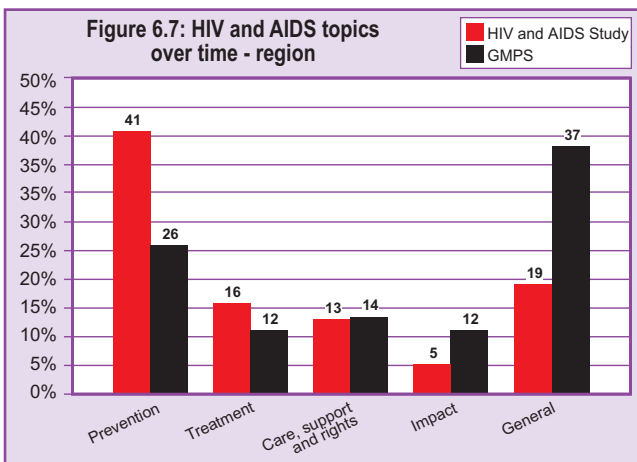
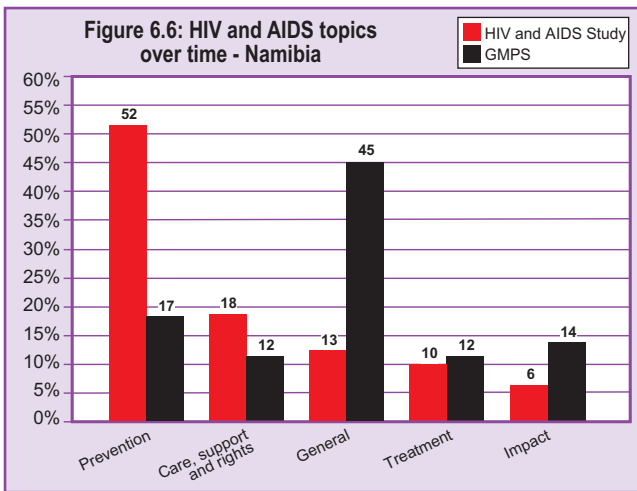


Figure 6.4 shows that there has been a slight decline in the coverage of HIV and AIDS in the region since the 2006 HIV and AIDS, Gender and the Media Baseline Study. The regional average dropped from three to two percent. Tanzania and Mauritius are the only two countries that registered increases in the proportion of coverage. Namibia regressed from 4% to 3%. Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana recorded the highest losses. Lesotho dropped from 19 to 12 percent.

Figure 6.5 shows that the coverage of HIV and AIDS has dropped in most of the media houses. For example, there were no stories in *Allgemeine Zeitung, Republikein* and *NBC Radio*. These media houses reported on this topic during the HIV and AIDS study. Coverage dropped in *The Namibian* and *NBC TV*. On a positive note, *Windhoek Observer* recorded an increase in this study moving from 1% to 7%. *One Africa TV*, which was not monitored in the HIV and AIDS baseline had the highest proportion of HIV and AIDS stories in Namibia. Both in the region and in Namibia a concern raised by editors during the MAP process concerned HIV and AIDS fatigue. This may account for the decline in coverage. Editors emphasised the need to examine quality versus quantity and to cover the pandemic in more innovative ways, which may account for less coverage in the news and more coverage in other kinds of programming (see *Base FM* case study). Qualitative aspects will also be discussed in greater depth in subsequent sections of this chapter.





Scratching the surface?

A story in the *Southern Times* (3 December) typifies the “lazy” and superficial journalism evident in some instances in the coverage of HIV and AIDS. This is a single source story which is told from the point of view of the USAID Acting Director to Namibia (Debra Mosel) who even speaks on what the government of Namibia has been able to do. The article neither consults other officials nor those affected and infected by HIV and AIDS. Short, single source new pieces say little about the real challenges facing the country.

Much still needs to be done to alleviate the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Namibia, USAID

Alvine Kapita WINDHOEK - T Debra Mosel, sa the HIV/Aids ef According to and the stakeho ing treatment ai need of life-savi She said that ceiving anti-ret “Approximat Namibians who these medicine: along with our r uted to these ef She added th fected while the fight against HI hard. But it is on the national re

The most marked shift in coverage of topics on HIV and AIDS has been an increase in general stories in the GMPS from 13% to 45% in Namibia and 19% to 37% in the region. The key to the graphs provides details on what is covered under “general” including people living with or affected by HIV and profiles of people in the HIV field or people affected by HIV. Linking the finding on the increase in general coverage with the substantial increase in the proportion of those directly and indirectly affected by HIV speaking out, a conclusion that can be drawn is that there is now far more coverage of the every day reality of HIV and AIDS. This is very important for de-stigmatising the pandemic.

Both in Namibia and the region there has been a decline in stories on prevention (from 52% to 17% in Namibia and from 41% to 26% in the region) and corresponding increase in stories on impact (from 6% to 14% in Namibia and 5% to 12% in the region). This is to be expected as the pandemic progresses, although the declining coverage on prevention is a cause for concern as this should remain a major thrust.

HIV and AIDS sub topics

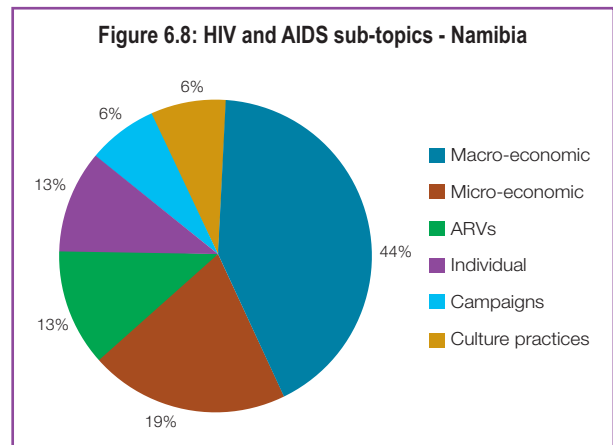


Figure 6.8 gives a breakdown of HIV and AIDS sub-topics. Consistent with the findings on impact, macro-economic stories are the most reported on in Namibian media constituting 44% of all stories. This is followed by micro-economic stories at 19%. ARVs and individual stories are tied at 13%. Stories on HIV and AIDS campaigns and cultural practices are the least covered. These two should ideally be given more coverage as they are linked to prevention.

HIV and AIDS Topics

Prevention

- Prevention strategies, methods, techniques to prevent HIV;
- The role of gender power relations in fuelling the pandemic;
- The intersection between gender violence and HIV/AIDS;
- Cultural practices (such as virginity testing) and HIV;
- Research into preventative methods and technologies;
- Harm reduction programmes.

Treatment

- Treatment and/or care of people affected by HIV;
- Access or roll-out of anti-retrovirals, their use, and efficacy;

Care, support and environment

- HIV and human rights-related issues;
- Legal rights of people living with HIV;
- Care work and its gendered dimension;
- Orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV.

Impact of the pandemic

- Macro-economic impact of HIV;
- Micro-economic impact of HIV on the work place or the community;
- Impact of HIV on different sectors, for example, the media, agriculture, mining, the environment, civil society;
- Impact of HIV on an individual level.

General

- People living with or affected by HIV;
- Profiles of people in the HIV field or people affected by HIV;
- Government policies on HIV;
- The role of regional and international bodies in HIV/AIDS;
- Research and statistical findings on HIV, the impact of the pandemic, mortality rates, infection rates, etc.
- HIV/AIDS and the economy, poverty;
- Drugs and needle exchange.



Genre

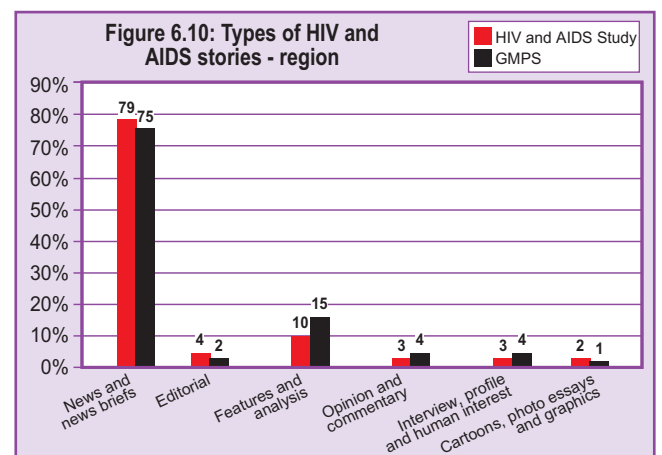
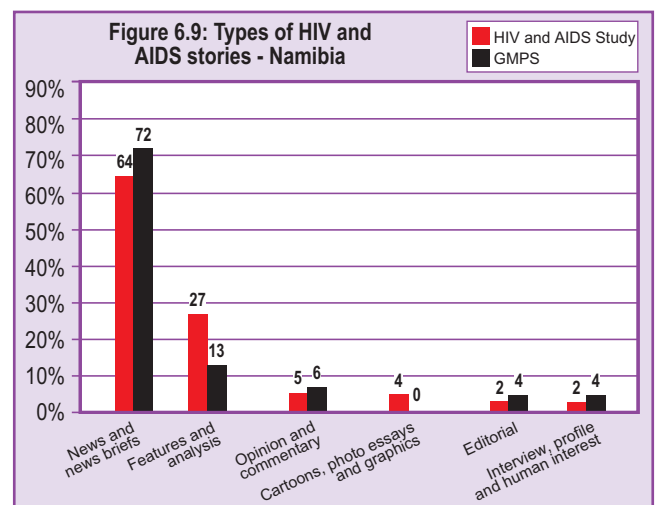


Figure 6.9 reflects changes in genres of HIV coverage in Namibia and figure 6.10 is a similar breakdown for the region. This shows that in Namibia there has been an increase in news coverage and decline in features and analysis, compared to an increase in the latter in the region. This is a concern, as it points to a tendency towards more superficial coverage in Namibia.

Origin

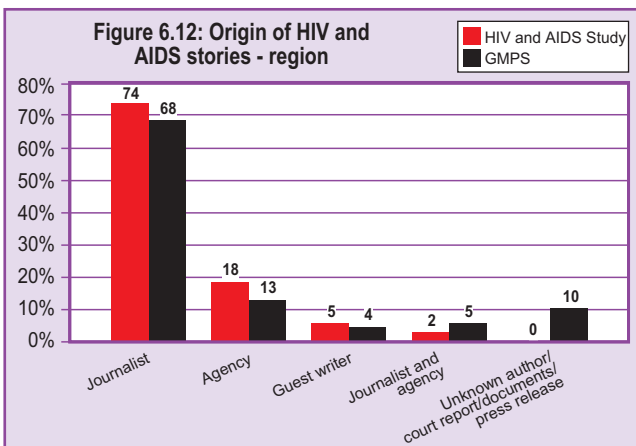
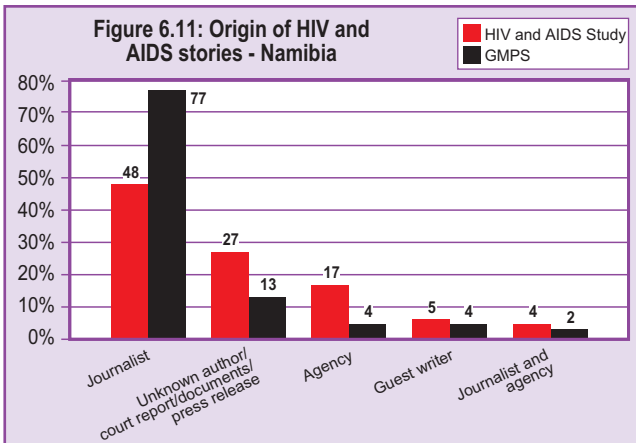


Figure 6.11 reflects changes in the origin of HIV and AIDS stories in Namibia, and figure 6.12 in the region. These graphs show that both in Namibia and the region there has been an increase in the proportion of stories written by journalists as opposed to agencies and other sources. In the case of Namibia the increase is significant, from 48% in the 2006 HIV and AIDS study to 77% in the GMPS. This is a positive development, as it shows greater effort to develop locally relevant content.

Geographical scope

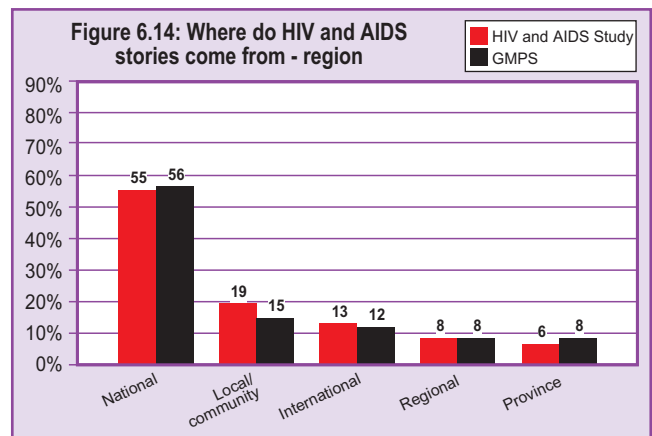
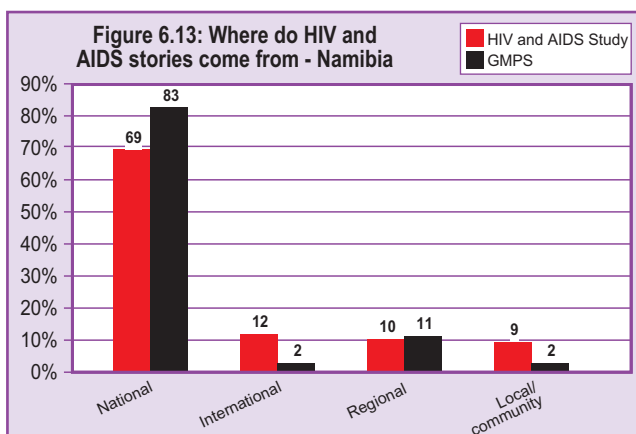


Figure 6.13 is a comparative look at the geographical origin of stories in Namibia while figure 6.14 provides these figures for the region. The graphs show that both in Namibia and the region there has been an increase in national coverage. This is especially marked in Namibia where the proportion of national stories has increased from 69% to 83% of all stories. International stories have dropped from 12% to 2%. The internal focus is a positive development. It is also linked to the fact that most of the stories are coming from own journalists compared to news agencies. News agencies usually bring in more international than local and national news.

Function

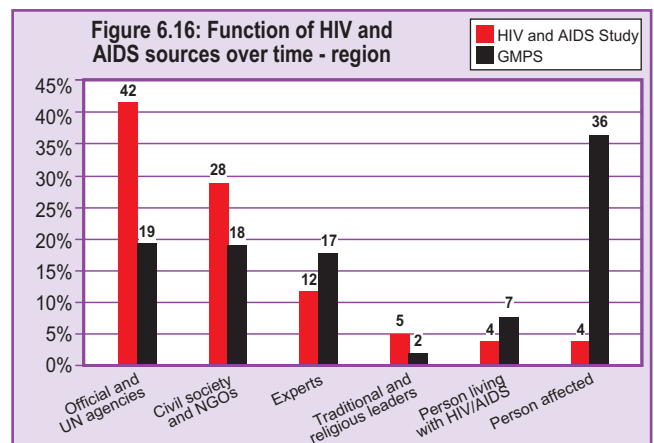
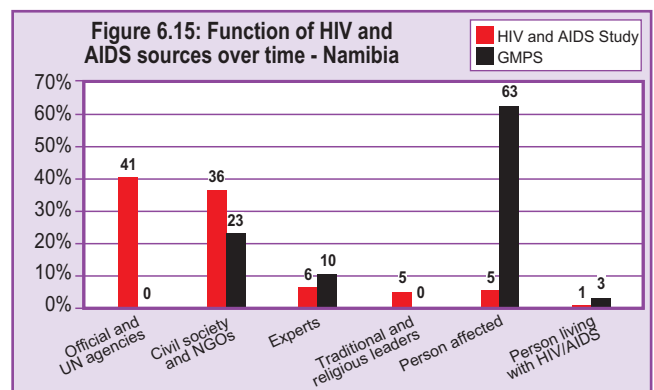


Figure 6.15 is a comparative look at the functions of sources in the HIV topic category for Namibia. Figure 6.16 provides similar data on the region. The graphs show that both in Namibia and the region there have been substantial increases in the proportion of those infected and affected by HIV who are now primary sources. In Namibia, the proportion of People Living with HIV and AIDS accessed by the media has increased from 1% to 3% and in the region from 4% to 7%. In Namibia the proportion of those affected by HIV and AIDS has increased dramatically from 5% to 63% and in the region from 4% to 36%. This is one positive spin off from MAP that placed a heavy emphasis in policy, training and advocacy work on putting those most affected at the centre of coverage. In both Namibia and the region there has been a corresponding decline in the proportion of UN and official sources.

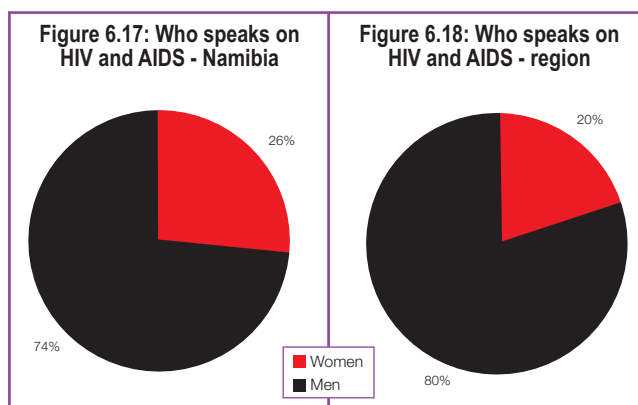


Figure 6.17 shows that at 26%, women constitute less than a third of sources on HIV and AIDS in the media in Namibia, despite being the majority of those affected. This is still higher than the region (see Figure 6.17) where women make up 20% of HIV and AIDS sources.

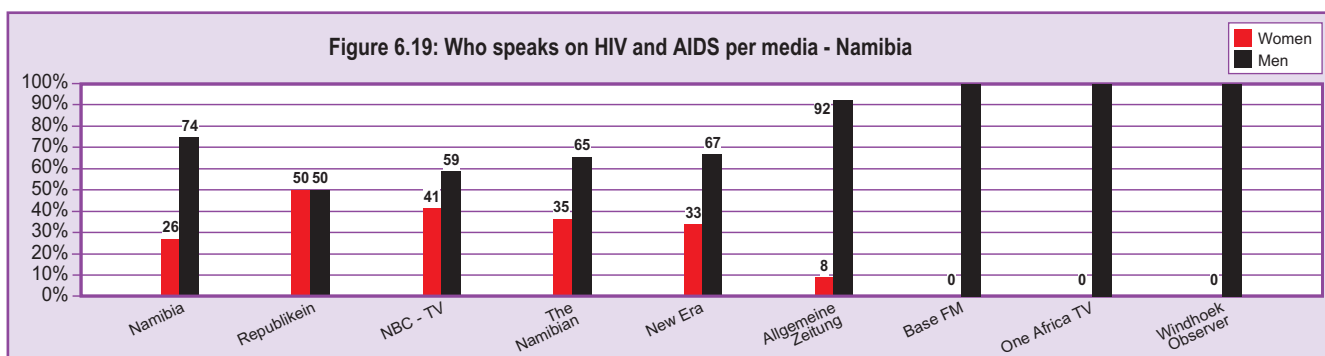


Figure 6.19 shows that Republikein had an equal proportion of women and men sources, while in other media houses men dominated. The fact that one media house achieved gender parity shows that this is possible.

Sources over time

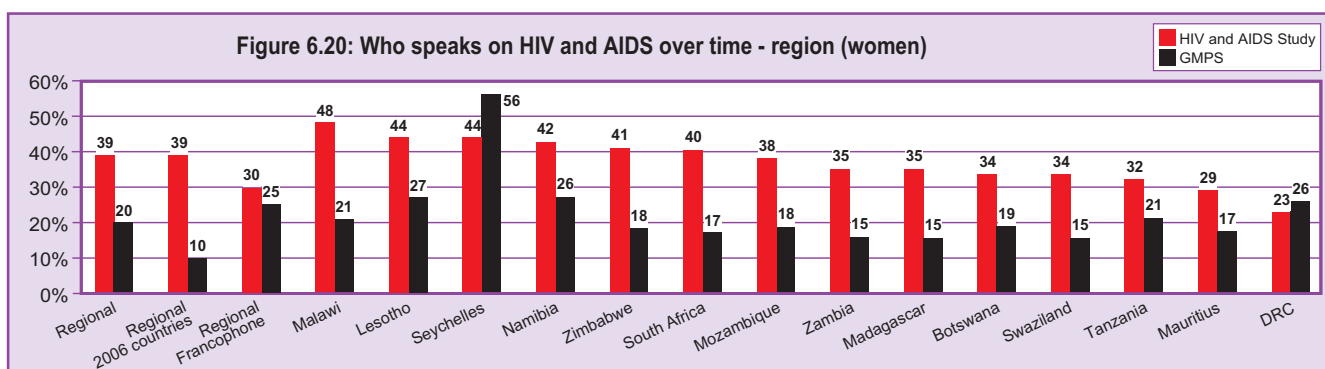


Figure 6.20 shows that there has been a decline in the proportion of women sources in the GMPS compared to the 2006 HIV and AIDS study. The regional average dropped from 39% to 20%, and

Namibia from 42% to 26%. Seychelles and DRC are the only countries that recorded increases, with Seychelles going up from 43% to 56% and DRC from 23% to 26%.

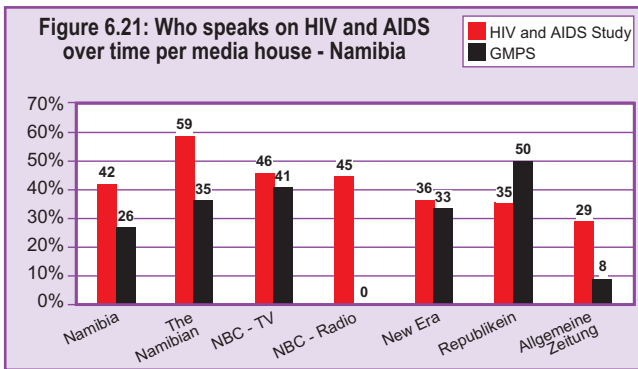
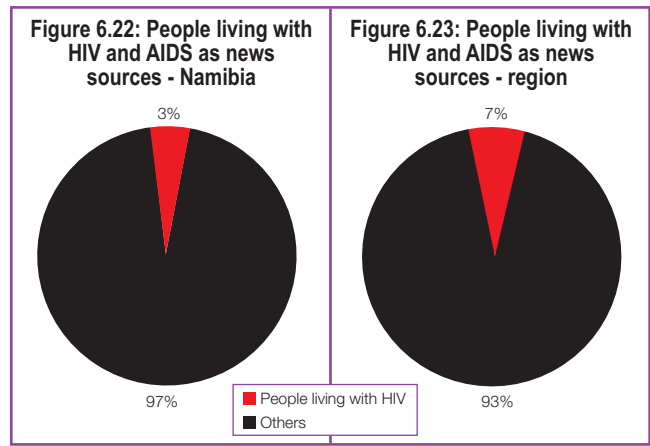
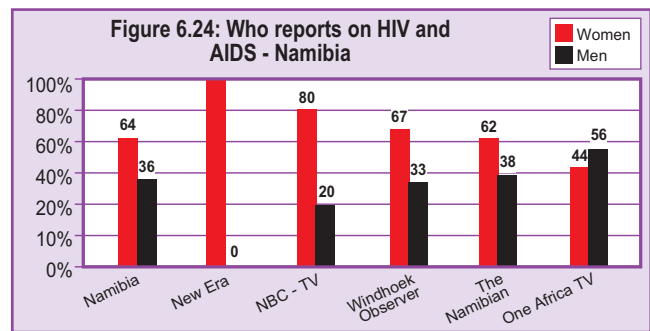


Figure 6.21 shows that *Republikein* is the only media that has a higher proportion of women sources in the GMPS (50%) compared to the 25% in the HIV and AIDS study. The other media houses that participated in the 2006 study went down. The greatest drop was in *Allgemeine Zeitung* which went down from 29% to 9%. *NBC Radio* also fell drastically from 4% to no women sources at all. While it is appreciated that this disaggregation is based on very small samples, the results are worrying. They point to the need for media houses to develop gender as well as HIV and AIDS policies, the current thrust of GL's policy work in the region.

Figures 6.22 and figures 6.23 reflect the proportion of People Living with HIV and AIDS accessed by the media in Namibia and the region respectively (see also function of sources). This shows that the proportion of People Living with HIV accessed as sources in Namibia at 3% is lower than the regional average of 7%. There is room for improvement with regard to directly accessing People Living with HIV and AIDS.



Reporters



Women make up 64% of HIV and AIDS reporters in Namibia. In *New Era*, all HIV and AIDS stories were covered by women. This was followed by *NBC TV* with 80% of stories coming from women reporters. *One Africa TV* is the only media with more male reporters who covered HIV (56%).

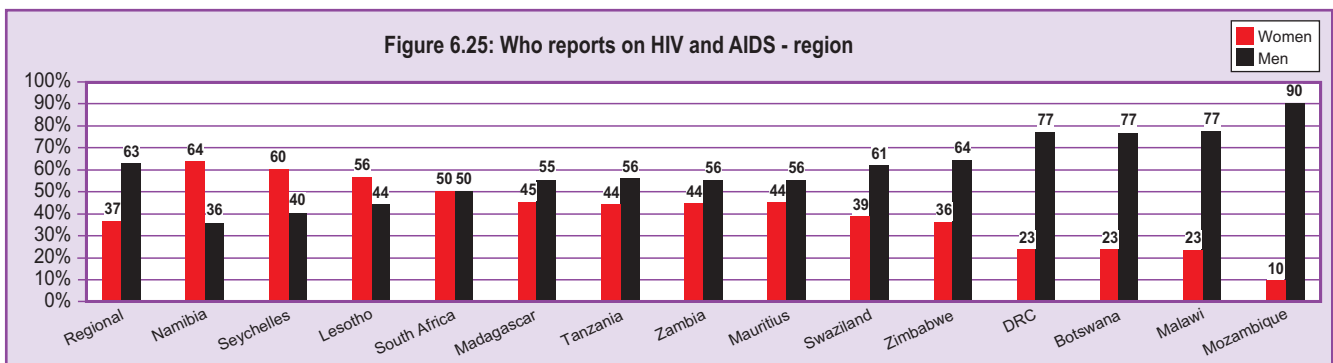


Figure 6.25 shows that the proportion of women reporters on HIV and AIDS is high in Namibia (64%), Seychelles (60%) and Lesotho (56%). Zimbabwe at 36% women reporters on HIV and AIDS is 1% lower than the regional average and

ranks among the countries with the lowest proportions. South Africa is the only country in the study that recorded equal proportions of women and men reporters during the monitoring period.

A closer look at change

While the quantitative data provides useful insight into the media landscape, it does not capture the full extent of change within media houses. As mentioned, the monitoring only covered news, when much of the new innovation around HIV

coverage is taking place in other kinds of programming. This case study of *Base FM*, formerly Katutura Community Radio, provides greater insight into how policies are making a difference within the media and in media practice.



Stella Kavendjii.

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

CASE STUDY: BASE FM

It's late afternoon and a current affairs programme is about to go on air. But not before Namibian singing sensation Stella Kavendjii breezes in unannounced into the *Base FM* studio, baby in her arms, and does an impromptu interview on her new album about HIV and AIDS.

Such is the homely atmosphere at this woman-led community radio station that if anyone has an issue, they come in and chat about it. And they are never turned away.

In 2008, the station won the Media Action Plan (MAP) award for the best gender aware policy and practice on HIV and AIDS in the region. *Base FM*, formerly Katutura Community Radio station, is rooted in a community in which, as reporter Jehoiackim Kateve puts it, "HIV is a reality, not just a story." As the station "owned" by the community, *Base FM* has been at the forefront of fighting stigma, promoting voluntary counselling and testing, and comforting those affected.

So it is with ease and no fanfare that Kavendjii saunters in and is welcomed by one of two female DJs at the station, Che Ulenga, to talk about her new album to be launched on National Testing Day in Namibia. Her message is simple: the best way to fight AIDS is to know your status. One of the songs, "*waifu uaripii?*" means "where were you?" in Otji-Herero. Another, "*okurama kwe temba*" means "love your body; treat it like a temple."

"We (musicians) have a duty to inform people what we know, so that those who are not infected do not fall in the same trap" she said. "For those who are infected and affected, I want them to know we are here for them. I do feel that if I can get the message out then I will be satisfied; my mission will be completed."

Facing off on face book

In another corner of the studio, Ricardo Joaquim, news editor of the rip and read service, is pioneering multi media ways of getting young people involved in the fight against HIV and AIDS. He has chanced on face book; a winner with the youth in the largest township of the Namibian capital. Opening the radio station's face book page, he points to a fresh online conversation with the following postings:

"I am going to get tested today. Who wants to come with me?"

"I'll go at 3pm."

"It's my birthday. I'll do this for me."

"I just came from there last week."

Alex Samuel, a senior staff member, explains that the station changed its name to "base" because it has gone national, but still has its base in Katutura. "Since the station's inception in 2004 we have grown dramatically. We are now a 24 hour station with a national appeal and reach. But everyone has a base."



Ricardo Joaquim has pioneered E chats.

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

He maintains that “what is distinct about *Base FM* is that we cater for all types. We have music, activities, talk shows, discussions about HIV and AIDS. We cater for the youth. We are in tune with the community. We are demand driven.”

Of the 22 staff, ten are women, including the head of the station. Does this make a difference? “Sandra (Williams) brings special qualities,” says Samuel. “She places a strong emphasis on team work; compromise; forgiveness. She is a leader with motherly qualities. She creates room for openness.”



Sandra Williams *Base FM* Station Manager with Elva Gomez.
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Leading from the front

In April 2008, Williams got the Board of Trustees to approve the station's MAP HIV and AIDS policy; an example, according to Samuel, of the station's open approach. “Media plays a very big role in shaping the way we think. As a media house we realised the difference we could make.”

Base FM is the only community radio station surveyed in the GMPS study. This Katutura-based radio station caters for younger listeners in the 16-24 age group. The findings of the 2007 in-house audience survey conducted by Research Facilitation services (RFS) influenced the direction that *Base FM* has taken. This, together with, Gender Links advocacy efforts, has mainly shaped the radio's station's view on gender issues.

According to the Station Manager Sandra Williams, it emerged from the audience survey that the 16-24 age group is the primary group, followed by the 25-34 group. There are not that many listeners in the 35-44 age group. *Base FM* listeners are media savvy and well informed. They are the kind of audience that cannot be taken for granted. They use the Internet; they have cell phones and have access to other forms of media. This information has helped the station to thrive to be the best source of news in Katutura.

The change from Katutura Community Radio (KCR) was part of the rebranding process. *Base FM* assumed its new name in 2008 to reflect the spirit of their target group. Williams emphasised the importance of knowing whom one is serving. Whilst there is a diversity of languages, English mixed with street lingo is the major language. This is followed by Oshivambo, Afrikaans, Otjirero and Damara-nama.

General media practice

The diversity of the community of Katutura, *Base FM's* target audience has called for the radio station to incorporate diversity in its news coverage. This has called for the inclusions of almost all languages.

The growth that the station has experienced over the years also makes it possible for its reporters to go out and get own stories. This growth has come with financial sustainability, which is a major contributor the quality of news. They have the equipment and transport to ensure that this happens. Most of the stories are by own journalist and they mainly concern the target audience. For example it is a basis requirement that all stories are balanced and that they capture a diversity of views. As such vox pops are very common feature as they capture “voices from the ground.”

One of the station's major achievements over the past few years has been the creation of a fully fledged news desk. This desk has between six to seven dedication reporters at any given time. There is now news every hour and a major bulletin between one and two in the afternoon.

What do *Base FM* listeners want to hear about?

The audience survey showed that HIV and AIDS, education, employment, crime and human rights are some of the most popular topics. These are issues which have strong gender dimensions and as such gender

issues are taken seriously at the radio station. The station has participated in Gender Links run projects in the country for a number of years now.

HIV and AIDS

In 2007-2008, *Base FM* worked with GL to develop an HIV and AIDS policy. This policy has made the station more gender conscious over the years. For example in 2008, the station won the HIV and AIDS institutional award at the third Gender and Media (GEM) awards.

Williams cited the story about forced sterilisation of HIV positive women that has been used as a case study in this report as one story that *Base FM* broke just before the monitoring period. Other media picked it up. She cited one of her reporters, Jehoiackim Kateve, as one person who has given massive coverage to HIV and AIDS issues in the communities.

When asked about the absence of HIV and AIDS stories during the entire monitoring period, Williams said that it was shocking and a sign that the radio station still has a lot of work to do to maintain consistency. She also said that considering that monitoring was structured to include some days and leave out others there was a possibility that some stories could have been missed in the days that were not monitored. She however said that the results of this study are quite an eye opener as they show that the Station has not done as much as they thought they had. "This result come at a good time when the station is taking stock of achievements made since the rebranding," she said.

As mentioned earlier, the monitoring only covered news. Through its public service announcements, popular talk shows, outside broadcasts and in its news casts *Base FM* has gone about changing the prevailing message of "HIV kills" to one of "take control" and "be your own hero". According to Kateve the emphasis of the station is: "you are killing you; it's not HIV killing you."

As an employee, Samuel says the policy assures him that "if I find out I am positive, I will be treated as equal; I will keep my job and I will be supported." Other provisions are that at least twice a year, *Base FM* staff will be exposed to training on how to report HIV and AIDS and use language that reflects such awareness.

The station also commits to make every effort to access people living with HIV and AIDS: "As an auditory medium, the station lends itself wonderfully to hearing persons living with HIV and AIDS speak about themselves and how they live." Among the innovations of the station are a "speaker's corner" in which - like Hyde Park - members of the community can air their views on any matter of concern.

Gender in the media

Commenting on the 23% women sources in *Base FM* in the GMPS study, Williams says that this figure is way below what *Base FM* is capable of. When asked what she makes of the fact that community media has more women sources than print and television, Williams said while it is encouraging, this should not stop *Base FM* from thriving for better results. She said with the resources that *Base FM* now has, there is no excuse why there are still gender gaps in news coverage. *Base FM* is interested in working with Gender Links in developing a Gender Policy, to complement the MAP HIV and AIDS policy.

Gender mainstreaming is taken seriously in the HIV policy and the way news is covered. The policy states: "The station shall give equal and fair coverage to both women and men of different educational and cultural backgrounds and class when addressing various aspects concerning HIV and AIDS." It adds that "to avoid stereotyping, ads will depict the voices of a diversity of persons, both male and female."

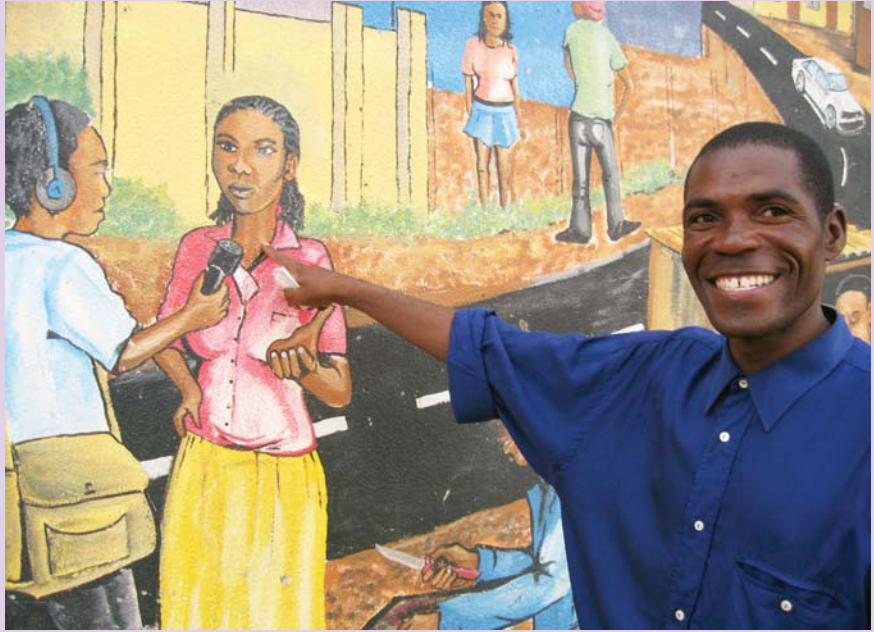
As gender based violence falls within the larger theme of human rights, it is taken seriously by the radio station. It is also one issue that bedevils the community. *Base* has therefore taken this social responsibility of keeping citizens informed of the extent of the problem. This is despite the fact that there were no GBV stories during the monitoring period.

A media that mediates

Award winning journalist Kateve describes how working under a woman manager in a community radio station has turned him into a gender activist. It all started when a woman being followed by a man with a knife late one night phoned the station for help.

As a community journalist, he realised that the police would probably not be much help. So he rushed to the scene where the proverbial might of the pen towered over the sword.

In a community wracked by gender violence, Kateve has become a favourite among women in the community, frequently called on to report on cases that the police otherwise turn a blind eye to.



Journalist with a mission: Jehoiackim Kateve.

Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

Calling himself the “reporter who does not sleep,” Kateve says the notion of the dispassionate journalist is foreign to this station. “We are a media that mediates,” he says. “We go out to make a difference.”

Conclusions

Participants at the workshop were shocked at the low coverage of HIV and AIDS during the monitoring period. As the monitoring took place just before major elections, the low coverage suggested that HIV and AIDS is not a serious electoral issue. Participants also felt that the media have reneged from their social responsibilities. The few HIV and AIDS stories carried during this period were based on statements by NGOs or UN officials and agents. There is a lack of in-depth and analytical reporting on the pandemic.

It was noted that women carry the burden of care work in Namibia yet the gendered dimensions of the epidemic are not captured in media. Namibia has a national policy on care work, but this did not feature in coverage. While the move to des-stigmatise HIV and AIDS within the media and in coverage as evidenced in the *Base FM* case study is welcome, there is scope for considerable improvement in HIV and AIDS coverage and its gender dimensions.