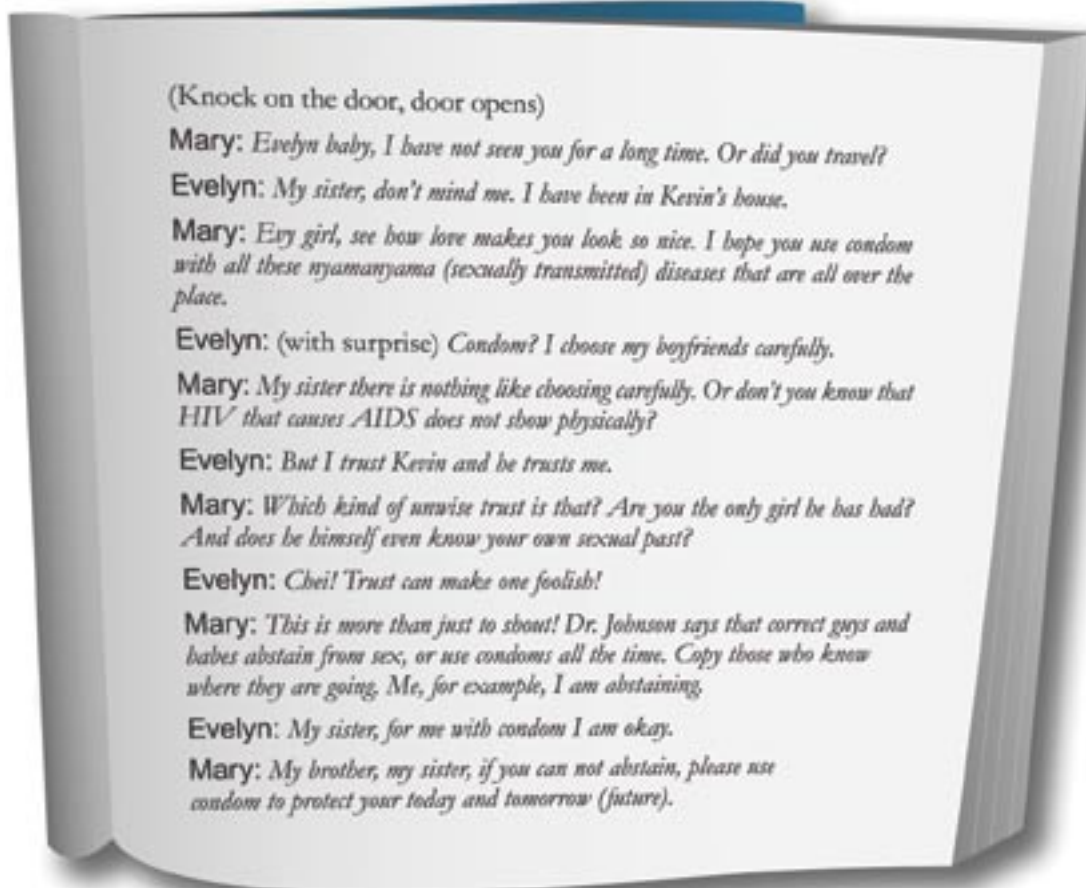


Nigerian Radio Campaign Generates Safer Behavior



PROFILE
SOCIAL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS FOR HEALTH



(Knock on the door, door opens)

Mary: Evelyn baby, I have not seen you for a long time. Or did you travel?

Evelyn: My sister, don't mind me. I have been in Kevin's house.

Mary: Ery girl, see how love makes you look so nice. I hope you use condom with all these nyamanyama (sexually transmitted) diseases that are all over the place.

Evelyn: (with surprise) Condom? I choose my boyfriends carefully.

Mary: My sister there is nothing like choosing carefully. Or don't you know that HIV that causes AIDS does not show physically?

Evelyn: But I trust Kevin and he trusts me.

Mary: Which kind of unwise trust is that? Are you the only girl he has had? And does he himself even know your own sexual past?

Evelyn: Chei! Trust can make one foolish!

Mary: This is more than just to shout! Dr. Johnson says that correct guys and babes abstain from sex, or use condoms all the time. Copy those who know where they are going. Me, for example, I am abstaining.

Evelyn: My sister, for me with condom I am okay.

Mary: My brother, my sister, if you can not abstain, please use condom to protect your today and tomorrow (future).

This excerpt from “*Future Dreams*,” a radio program created by the Society for Family Health (SFH), the Nigerian affiliate of PSI, is part of a successful campaign designed to educate Nigerians about the dangers of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, and to encourage safer sexual behavior. Those exposed to SFH’s campaign messages exhibited increased knowledge and practiced safer behavior, according to a recent evaluation.

See Lessons Learned on last page

SFH’s most ambitious behavior change campaign to date, *Future Dreams* developed four key messages in nine Nigerian languages and broadcast those messages on forty-two radio channels. While the campaign encountered some problems — political opposition suspended the broadcast for months — results were impressive. Knowledge and behavior data showed increased knowledge and significantly safer behavior patterns among those who had listened to the campaign compared to those who had not been exposed.

Population Services International
1120 19th St., NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036 USA
Phone: (202) 785-0072
Email: info@psi.org
www.psi.org

PSI/Europe
Douglas House 1st Floor
16-18 Douglas Street
London SW1P 4PB, UK
Phone: +44 (0)20-7834-3400
Email: info@psieurope.org.uk

The Society for Family Health
Away House (Suite 6), 2nd Floor
Lagos/Badagry Road, Orile Iganmu
Lagos, Nigeria
Phone: 011-234-1-773 0508

SFH also observed a parallel increase in condom uptake — condom sales rates accelerated when the campaign was initiated, and continued to do so through the life of the broadcast. That acceleration abated after the end of the campaign, though sales levels did not drop. Since SFH comprises over 80% of the total condom market, changes in SFH sales levels are indicative of overall market movements.

The Campaign and Its Objectives

Future Dreams was developed to encourage consistent condom use, to increase condom knowledge and efficacy, and to increase skills for condom negotiation among sexually active single women and men aged 18-34.

The campaign aimed to increase self-efficacy (a person's belief in his or her own power to change his or her behavior) with optimistic and empowering messages. In *Future Dreams* all young Nigerians can have a bright, healthy future by abstaining from sex until marriage or, if they choose to have sex outside of marriage, using a condom every time.

The campaign explored four themes:

- **Future fertility:** Information on the risks of sexually transmitted infections and their effects on fertility;
- **Sexual past:** Everyone has a sexual history, and a healthy-looking person can still be HIV positive;
- **We can negotiate:** Encouraging and empowering females to negotiate safer sex with their partners; and
- **I'm not embarrassed:** Aimed at reducing embarrassment at purchasing condoms in northern Nigeria (predominantly Muslim).

The campaign was carefully crafted from an in-depth research base, tailored to audience needs, intensively pre-tested and altered as a result of feedback, and disseminated in a broad though focused manner. While previous campaigns used only English and Hausa to communicate messages — ignoring a plethora of local languages — *Future Dreams* developed separate campaign messages in each of the nine major Nigerian language groups ensuring the highest possible levels of comprehension and social acceptability.



Selection of appropriate media for *Future Dreams* was crucial to the campaign's success. Radio users represented a broad cross-section of the Nigerian population — wealthy and poor, Christian and Muslim — and 65% of adult Nigerians report listening to radio either every day or most days. The recent proliferation of local FM stations in Nigeria also meant that messages could be targeted to clearly defined linguistic groups. A total of 43 radio stations were eventually used, ensuring nationwide coverage.

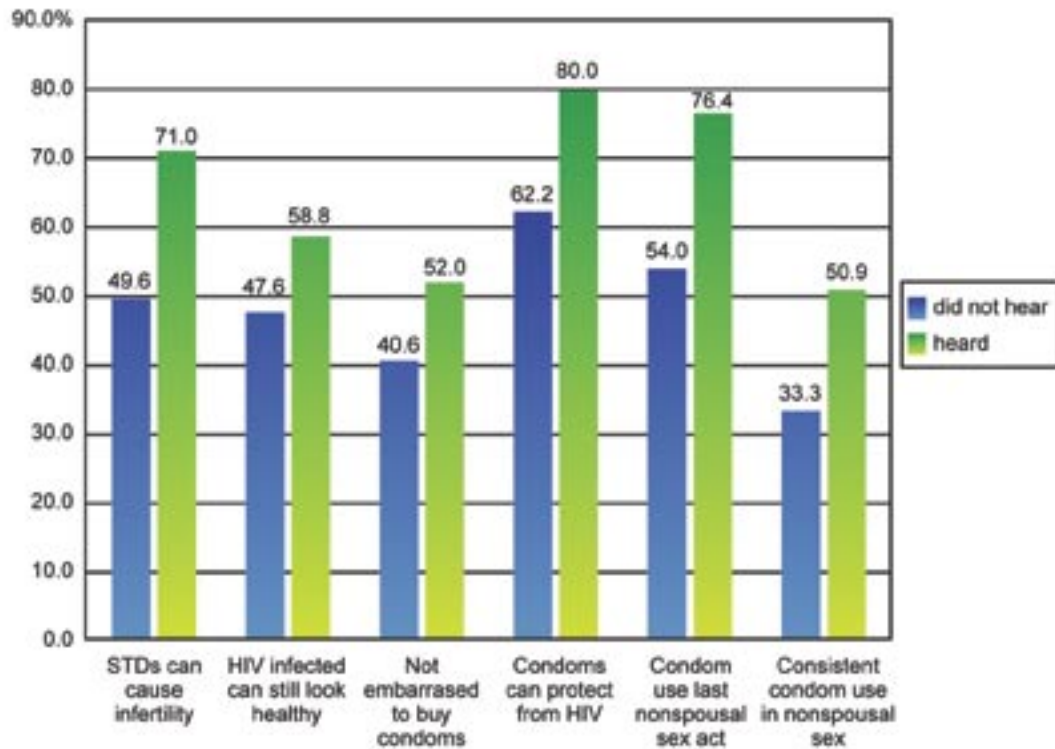
Despite extensive consultation with stakeholders and the approval of all regulatory bodies, the campaign was suspended for four months in 2001 by the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON). APCON objected to messages that suggested it was OK for a woman to stay at her boyfriend's place as long as they used condoms and that it was OK to engage in premarital sex as long as condoms were used. APCON also found the tone of some of the messages "seductive." Publicity surrounding these events was not necessarily negative. The action drew significant attention and appeared to bring in new listeners once the campaign returned to the airwaves.

Evaluation Results

Overall Campaign Coverage

In February 2001, only 19% of all age groups

Effect of *Future Dreams* Campaign on HIV Prevention Indicators



had been exposed to the behavior change messages. By December 2001 that proportion had risen to 39%. Each survey indicated that more men than women heard the campaign, but the increase for women (120%) was higher than for men (99%), signifying that more and more women were reached by the campaign as it progressed. Moreover, the level of coverage among high-risk respondents (30% in February 2001 and 59% in December 2001) was the highest among all the sub-groups.

STIs and future fertility

Childlessness is considered a great family tragedy in Nigeria, but the link between STIs and infertility is not well understood. Seventy one percent of respondents exposed to *Future Dreams* were aware of the possible effects of STIs on future fertility compared to 49% for those who were not exposed. Awareness and understanding increased among all key socio-demographic groups — including rural populations, women and Northerners.

Future Dreams encouraged inconsistent condom users to use condoms consistently. In the evaluation, respondents who did not use condoms in extra-marital sex were asked whether they felt they could now convince their partners to use condoms. Seventy-three percent of those who had heard the campaign thought they could convince their partners to use condoms in the future, compared to 62% of those who had not been exposed.

The campaign also sought to reduce the awkwardness or inhibitions associated with buying condoms with the “I’m not embarrassed” message designed for the North. A higher proportion of those exposed to this message (52%) felt they would not be embarrassed to purchase condoms compared to those who never heard the message (40%).

Condom Use and Sales

Accepting condoms as an effective preventive measure against STI/HIV infection is an important precursor to condom use. A higher proportion of

respondents who heard *Future Dreams* (80%) felt that condoms could indeed protect against the diseases compared with those who had not heard the campaign (62%). The proportion of respondents who were consistently using condoms in non-spousal sex increased 43% between June 1998 (30%) and December 2001 (43%).

Respondents who heard or listened to *Future Dreams* reported significantly higher consistency in condom use (51%) compared to those who had not (33%). These differences remained despite differences in age, educational level, sex, region and residence. Reported use of condoms during last sex act was much higher among those who heard the *Future Dreams* campaign (76%) than among those who did not (54%).

Although condom sales are an imperfect proxy for actual condom use, sales patterns over time indicate whether the condom uptake is remaining static or changing. Throughout 2000 SFH condom sales averaged 6.5 million units per month. The sales rose immediately after the launch of *Future Dreams* and continued rising, averaging 9.4 million units per month for the next six months. Monthly sales more than doubled between June 2000 and June 2001 — from 5.1 to 10.7 million units per month. Careful analysis has not produced a plausible explanation for this sudden rise in condom sales outside of the possibility that significant numbers of non-condom using Nigerians were converted to condom use. *Future Dreams* was the only intense nationally-based behavior change campaign aired in Nigeria during this period.

Lessons Learned

- **Research is essential.** The messages in *Future Dreams* were crafted with great care from a solid base of research material. All messages were tested, and then re-tested by a cadre of trained research personnel.
- **Use local languages whenever possible.** Comprehension was significantly enhanced by the use of local language, but more importantly, messages became more acceptable and “real.” The more localized the message, the better.
- **Do not limit consultation to perceived “problem” areas.** SFH anticipated backlash to the campaign in the North, where religious and cultural barriers were perceived strongest. Extensive consultation in northern Nigeria led to a careful refinement of messages and SFH received almost no complaints about the Northern scripts (in Hausa, Fulfude and Kanuri). Indeed, anecdotal evidence shows that the ads were commended in many circles, including religious leaders. SFH did not anticipate problems in the more liberal South and therefore consulted less widely. Complaints there resulted in the campaign’s suspension.
- **Control campaigns directly.** SFH did not use advertising agencies as intermediaries in its contacts with media houses, or to place media. SFH chose the radio stations, negotiated directly with them and monitored their performance. This resulted in huge cost savings, ensured focus and allowed SFH to leverage the relationships for other purposes.
- **Turn problems into opportunities.** Instead of fighting against the suspension of *Future Dreams*, SFH was quick to agree that a problem existed and tried very hard to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of others. As a result the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria has become an advocate for the work of SFH, and now sits on an SFH Communications Committee that pre-clears all marketing communications work. SFH has experienced no politically inspired blockage of its work since the committee was formed.

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