

MTV's *Staying Alive* 2002 HIV Prevention Campaign

Research on campaign exposure in three countries shows the campaign reached substantial numbers of youth.

In 2002, MTV – the world's largest television network targeted to youth – expanded its HIV prevention campaign, called *Staying Alive*, to a multicomponent effort. The expanded campaign included short public service announcements (PSAs) and long-format programs – a documentary, concert, and forum of opinion leaders who attended the International AIDS Conference in Barcelona.

MTV broadcast the campaign over its 37 channels (the number of channels has since grown to 41) and made the entire campaign available rights-free to any third-party broadcaster who signed an agreement with MTV. Worldwide, some 800 million households had access to the campaign; 300 million households in China alone had access to the documentary.

To determine how many youth ages 16 to 25 (the target audience) saw elements of the campaign and how it affected them, YouthNet conducted an evaluation using quantitative and qualitative data from three urban areas in three different regions of the world. This brief reports estimates of actual exposure in each site, describes youth who saw parts or all of the campaign, and identifies predictors of exposure as they varied by site. Other research findings not reported here found that the campaign had significant impact on interpersonal communications about HIV/AIDS and also affected social norms in some cases.

Methods

To measure exposure and impact in the three urban areas, household surveys were administered to 1,000 young people ages 16 to 25 in each of the cities, using a population-based sample. The surveys were conducted at baseline and after

the *Staying Alive* campaign aired in Kathmandu, Nepal; Dakar, Senegal; and São Paulo, Brazil. These three sites represented a mix of exposure via MTV channels and third-party broadcasters.

Results

The study found the highest exposure rate at 82 percent in Dakar, where the campaign was aired via third-party broadcasters, including radio and print media. The exposure rate in São Paulo was 23 percent, where the campaign aired over MTV/Brazil and MTV/Latin America. Third was Kathmandu at 12 percent, where the campaign aired over MTV/India. By virtue of having the largest population of 16- to 25-year-olds, the greatest number of young people exposed among the three cities was in São Paulo (see table).

Exposure Rates and Estimated Viewership by Site for Young People Ages 16 to 25

Site	% Exposed	Estimated Number
<i>Kathmandu</i>	12	50,000
<i>São Paulo</i>	23	400,000
<i>Dakar</i>	82	220,000

Among the campaign components, the PSAs received the most exposure in São Paulo (21 percent of the youth saw them) and Kathmandu (10 percent). PSAs were aired 80 to 100 times in these cities during late November and early December (to coincide with World AIDS Day). In Dakar, where

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the campaign was almost completely produced locally using the campaign themes and logos, campaign exposure was broken down by medium rather than by specific program content. In Dakar, more than 50 percent of the target group were exposed to content from each of these media: TV, radio, and celebrity events.

Several personal, social, and economic characteristics related to campaign exposure were common across sites. In general, the common characteristics were related to dependence upon parents, socioeconomic status, and use of new technologies (e.g., Internet and satellite television).

Predictors of exposure varied somewhat among the three sites. In Kathmandu, young males had less likelihood of campaign exposure. Males and females who had had premarital sex, had ever watched MTV, and had ever used the Internet were more likely to be exposed to the campaign. In São Paulo, having access to satellite television, having ever watched MTV, and being of higher socioeconomic status predicted exposure. In Dakar, access to satellite television, having ever watched MTV, and the use of the Internet were all positively associated with campaign exposure.

Conclusions and Implications

The levels of exposure among the three sites was consistent with the different types of access youth had to the *Staying Alive* campaign and the different ways in which it was implemented in the sites. When examining personal characteristics related to exposure, economic factors were the strongest predictors. While this made sense to some degree in Kathmandu and Brazil, it was unexpected in Dakar, where campaign exposure was not dependent on access to cable or even owning a television.

The estimates of numbers exposed in these three sites indicate that a very large number of young people around the world saw at least one component of the *Staying Alive* campaign. Concerns about the slight audience skew to the higher end of the socioeconomic scale should be assuaged by the sheer numbers of young people who can be reached through such a global campaign, many of them undoubtedly still in need of relevant prevention messages. Audience data can help producers of future campaigns to have a better idea of who they are reaching and how to tailor their messages accordingly.

— *Cindy Waszak Geary*

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