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Results

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Randomized Evaluation

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1,200 individuals in 30 villages in Tanzania’s Tanga region

Research Implemented by IPA
Yes
A Radio Drama’s Effects on HIV Attitudes and Policy Priorities: A Field Experiment in Tanzania

Donald P. Green, PhD, Dywan W. Groves, MA, and Constantine Mamba, MA

Abstract
A growing body of evidence indicates how entertainment education influences knowledge about HIV, stigma toward those with HIV, and openness to disclosing one’s HIV status. The present study shows that in addition to these effects, mass media interventions can influence auhtorities’ policy priorities, such as their demand for local access to ART. A randomized (2-by-2) version of a popular Swahili radio drama was presented to rural Tanzanians as part of a placebo-controlled experiment randomized at the village level. A random sample comprising 1,200 participants were interviewed at baseline and treated to assess the impact of the radio drama, and 1,500 control villages were interviewed 1 week later with a response rate of 95%. In addition to increasing literacy and support for disclosure of HIV status, the radio drama increased stable and numerically significant effects on authorities’ priority for HIV/AIDS treatment.

Keywords: attitudes, entertainment education, HIV/AIDS, media

A large body of research investigates the effects of media and entertainment education interventions. This study evaluates the effects of an entertainment education campaign to address HIV/AIDS by tracking the impact of the radio drama "Wakavu" developed by a Tanzanian media organization to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS treatments, reduce stigma, and improve HIV prevention efforts. The study compared the attitudes of individuals in treatment groups exposed to the radio drama with those in control groups. The results indicate that exposure to the radio drama significantly increased awareness of HIV/AIDS and improved attitudes toward HIV/AIDS prevention.

In the study, we present evidence from a field experiment in Tanzania’s southern region. We randomly assigned villages to treatment and control groups to test the impact of an entertainment education campaign addressing HIV/AIDS. The radio drama "Wakavu" was developed by a Tanzanian media organization to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS interventions, reduce stigma, and improve HIV prevention efforts. We conducted a cluster-randomized trial testing the effects of exposure to a continuous version of "Wakavu" in 35 villages in Tanzania. In addition to measuring the impact of the radio drama, we also measured the relative importance of various HIV/AIDS-related priorities among government officials.

Our findings demonstrate the powerful influence that entertainment-education strategies can have on authorities' demands for government action on key public health issues. The results show that exposure to the radio drama increased the demand for government action on HIV/AIDS-related issues, particularly among government officials.

A Radio Drama’s Effects on Attitudes Toward Early and Forced Marriage: Results From a Field Experiment in Rural Tanzania

Donald P. Green, Dywan W. Groves, Constantine Mamba, Beatrice Montano, and Bardia Rahmani

Abstract
Early and forced marriage (EFM) is an increasing focus of international organizations and local non-governmental organizations. This study assessed the extent to which attitudes and norms related to EFM can be changed by locally tailored media campaigns. A two-hour radio drama set in rural Tanzania was presented to Tanzanian villagers as part of a placebo-controlled experiment randomized at the village level. A random sample of 1,200 villagers was interviewed as baseline and invited to a presentation of the radio drama, 95% of whom attended. Two weeks later, 95% of those invited attended a follow-up interview.

In the radio drama, which included messages on the harms of EFM, the role of the media in changing attitudes and norms was highlighted. The results indicate that exposure to the radio drama significantly increased awareness of the harms of EFM and improved attitudes toward ending EFM.

In conclusion, our findings suggest that entertainment education strategies can have a significant impact on attitudes and norms related to EFM. The results also highlight the potential of radio dramas in changing attitudes and norms related to EFM in rural Tanzania.
The Impact of a Radio Program on Challenging Early and Forced Marriage Norms in Tanzania

Researchers evaluated the impact of a radio drama in Tanzania on attitudes toward early and forced marriage. Exposure to the program substantially increased the proportion of listeners who rejected early and forced marriage three weeks later. After 15 months, the effects were smaller but remained positive.

Between 2018 and 2030, approximately 150 million girls under the age of 18 will be subjected to marriage globally.\(^1\) This practice can restrict the autonomy of women and girls, increase the likelihood that they are subject to intimate partner violence, and limit their economic and social empowerment. In Tanzania, 36 percent of women enter into marriage before the age of 18,\(^2\) and 30 percent report having limited or no decision-making power when choosing their life partners.\(^3\) In the northeastern Tanga region, more than 40 percent of rural citizens accept early and forced marriage in at least some circumstances.

Evidence suggests that mass media campaigns can effectively change community perceptions and behaviors regarding gender-based violence. For instance, a study conducted in rural Uganda demonstrated that screening videos encouraging viewers to speak out against violence against women led to a decrease in reported rates of such incidents in the villages where the videos were shown.\(^4\) The rapid expansion of radio coverage in Tanzania has dramatically increased the reach of radio programs that address social issues, including gender relations.\(^5\) Radio may therefore serve as a valuable platform to foster positive changes in attitudes and behaviors related to early and forced marriage and promote gender equality.

Researchers partnered with IPA and the community-based non-governmental organization UZIKWASA to evaluate the impact of a radio program on changing attitudes toward early and forced marriage and gender relations. The radio program, Tamapendo, was a drama written, acted, and produced in Tanga that focuses on locally recognizable Islamic teachings about a girl’s right to resist early forced marriage. In 15 randomly selected villages, 40 villagers were invited to a community event to listen to Tamapendo. In 15 other randomly selected villages, 40 villagers were invited to a community event to listen to an unrelated radio drama about HIV and served as the comparison group. Select villagers were asked about their views on early and forced marriage and gender equality before the screenings, 3 weeks after the screenings, and again 15 months later.
Tamapendo had a significant positive impact on listeners’ beliefs about early and forced marriage. Three weeks after the screenings, listeners were 9.3 percentage points more likely to reject a girl’s forced marriage (from 82 percent to 91.3 percent) and 4.8 percentage points more likely to reject a girl’s early forced marriage (from 94 percent to 98.8 percent). 15 months later, the effects of Tamapendo weakened — dropping to a 2.5 percentage point difference in listeners rejecting forced marriage relative to the comparison group — but remained significant.

Sources


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