

An investigation of how Kampala teenagers who read *Straight Talk* negotiate  
HIV/AIDS messages.

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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to all teenagers of Uganda and the world in the fight against this century's catastrophe, HIV/AIDS. You can stop AIDS. We trust you for posterity.

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## Abstract

This study is a qualitative ethnographic investigation of how teenagers in Kampala, Uganda, who read the HIV/AIDS publication aimed at adolescents, *Straight Talk*, negotiate HIV/AIDS messages. It seeks to establish to what extent these secondary school teenagers accept the key messages (known as ABC; Abstain, Be faithful or use a Condom) and understand the factual aspects of the messages about HIV/AIDS, its process of transmission and prevention. It also seeks to probe how the lived realities of the teenagers affect their particular negotiations of the HIV/AIDS messages. It includes a focus on how proximity to HIV/AIDS, gender and family economic disposition might affect teenagers, negotiation of the HIV/AIDS meanings.

To investigate the respondents' reception of HIV/AIDS messages, the study employed focus groups that consisted of two stages, namely the 'news game' and group discussions. In the 'news game' stage (Philo, 1990; Kitzinger, 1993) the teenage participants were required to produce a version of a one-page copy of an HIV/AIDS newspaper targeting teenagers. In the second stage of the focus group a structured discussion probed the teenagers' negotiation of the HIV/AIDS media messages.

In the news game, the teenagers on the whole reproduced the key *Straight Talk* HIV/AIDS messages 'Abstain, Be faithful or use a Condom' and also images showing the effects of HIV/AIDS but featured fewer images depicting the factual aspects of HIV/AIDS process of transmission and risky behaviour.

In the structured discussion that followed the news game, it was evident that not all the teenagers necessarily believed the messages they produced. In spite of producing the ABC *Straight Talk* messages, some of them were uncertain and confused about the absolute safety of the condom because of fears that they were either porous, expired or would interfere with sexual pleasure. Secondly, though many of the teenagers in the study reproduced images that showed that they consider marriage as desirable and talked about their desire to abstain from sex till marriage, a considerable number think

abstinence is not achievable due to competing values. Thirdly, the participant teenagers could differentiate between HIV and AIDS but many did not realise that with the advent of anti-retroviral drugs even people who have AIDS can look normal. In spite of repeating the *Straight Talk* message that “no one was safe” and being aware of the risky behaviour that their fellow teenagers get involved in, the teenagers seemed to think that their age cohort is safe from HIV and it is the adults who are likely to infect them.

The study findings further indicate that the teenagers’ lived experience at times influence their negotiation of HIV/AIDS media messages. This was probed in terms of economic standing, gender and proximity to HIV/AIDS. In relation to gender one surprising discovery was that certain girls in the study feared getting pregnant more than getting HIV/AIDS.

The study finally suggests that these findings are of significance for designing future media initiatives in relation to HIV/AIDS.

# Chapter One

## Introduction

This qualitative ethnographic research into the meanings Kampala teenagers, who are *Straight Talk* readers, negotiate when reading HIV/AIDS messages is informed by literature within the broad field of media studies and particularly that of reception theory. *Straight Talk* is a reproductive health monthly publication that targets secondary school students aged 15-19 and young adults in institutions of higher learning aged 20-24.

This chapter provides the general background to the study. It first highlights the immensity of the global and Ugandan HIV/AIDS problem and describes the role *Straight Talk* has sought to play in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In order to present a clear picture of the form of content of *Straight Talk* it provides a textual analysis of the structuring with reference to three issues produced just before this study. This is crucial since this study seeks to investigate how Kampala teenagers who read *Straight Talk* negotiate HIV/AIDS messages. Thereafter the chapter presents the purpose of the study, motivates for its significance and lays out the structure of the thesis.

## Context: HIV/AIDS in Uganda

The researcher is located in Uganda, a country that has been severely affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The UNAIDS/WHO 2001 global report estimates the total number of infections to HIV/AIDS at 60 million and the world deaths due to the HIV/AIDS at 24 million, while the Ugandan Ministry of Health reports a cumulative figure of 947,552 recorded deaths in the country. About 7% of the adult population in Uganda is infected with the HIV virus (Uganda Surveillance Report, June 2002). The epidemic impacts on all Ugandans in that most families have lost a member and many Ugandans have to grapple with looking after an increasing number of children orphaned by AIDS. With two million children orphaned by AIDS, Uganda has the highest number of the world's 14 million AIDS orphans. The Ugandan Government has adopted an open and multi-sectored approach to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS.

According to Ministry of Health statistics the country's HIV infection prevalence rates have begun stabilising. Whereas in 1989 the rates of infection were reported at 44.2% in some urban surveillance centres, in 2000 statistics dropped to 8.7% and 4.2% and in 2001 were at 8.8% and 4.2% in the urban and rural sites respectively. There has been a sustained government campaign to combat HIV/AIDS in Uganda premised on sexual abstinence, faithfulness to one sexual partner and condom use. The Ministry of Health reports changes in sexual behaviour and increased knowledge of safe sex practices (Uganda Surveillance Report, June 2002).

In line with government policy on openness about HIV/AIDS, the media is a key partner in the campaign to sensitise the public about HIV/AIDS and *Straight Talk*, a four-page monthly publication, has been the most consistent print media intervention targeting teenagers. Since this study seeks to investigate how Kampala teenagers who read *Straight Talk* negotiate HIV/AIDS messages, in the following section a brief history of the publication is presented, followed by a content analysis of three issues of the publication.

### ***Straight Talk* newspaper**

*Straight Talk* was first published in 1993 and out of it the Straight Talk Foundation, a health communication NGO that produces Information Education Communication (IEC) materials for adolescents, was born. In addition to *Straight Talk*, they now publish *Ener Eitena*, *Lok Atyer Kamaleng* and *Tushenshure* in three of Uganda's local languages so as to educate out-of-school youth on safe sex. They also produce radio programmes that are broadcast on different radio stations in English and other local languages in addition to conducting school counselling visits. This study will concentrate on the English version of *Straight Talk*, which has a print run of 156,600 copies every month and is posted to 3,246 addresses in and outside Uganda, 1,465 of which are secondary schools. It is also inserted into *The New Vision*<sup>1</sup> newspaper and distributed through approximately 500 non-

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<sup>1</sup> *The New Vision* is Uganda's largest Newspaper and it is circulated through out the whole country. It has a print run of 40,000 copies and an estimated readership of 500,000 people daily.

government organisations, community based organisations, churches and individuals. More than 230 voluntary Straight Talk Clubs have been formed in secondary schools and communities ([www.straight-talk.or.ug](http://www.straight-talk.or.ug)). In these clubs issues relating to adolescent sexuality are discussed and *Straight Talk* newspaper is used as one of the resource materials. Straight Talk Foundation supports these clubs but they are initiated and run independently by the adolescents. The declared aims of *Straight Talk* are to advocate safe sex, including abstinence and condom use. They are derived from the Ugandan government ABC model (Abstain, Be faithful or use a Condom). *Straight Talk's* major foci are to equip adolescents so that they better understand their sexuality, to counter the spread of HIV/AIDS by promoting safer sex practices, and to help adolescents acquire life skills. The *Straight Talk* editorial policy is underpinned by a belief in the dignity and self-worth of every individual. They believe that abstaining from sexual intercourse, is the most effective method of preventing pregnancy and HIV/STD infection for all adolescents, but they acknowledge that young people may explore their sexuality as a natural part of growing up and so advocate that adolescents have the right to information about reproductive health and safer sex options, including condom use. *Straight Talk* further believes that such education does not necessarily cause adolescents to be more sexually active and they address issues concerning sexuality and HIV/AIDS openly. The Straight Talk foundation is funded by UNICEF and other multi-national agencies.

*Straight Talk*, a four-page tabloid size newspaper, is colourfully designed to attract teenagers with key information broken down in simple short sentences and short paragraphs so as to make it accessible to a varied audience with different language abilities. The language is factual and the terminology tends to be anatomical and so avoids terms that are colloquial or might be considered offensive. For example, in a section on 'vital facts' the vagina is described as follows:

Hi readers, read this and learn about the vagina. You will understand better how HIV is passed from a male to a female. Vagina walls are spongy, stretch and quite tough. They have to allow childbirth. However they are also prone to small tears and grazes. These are also called micro-abrasions (*Straight Talk*, September, 2003).

A persuasive campaign approach is used and often there is a tone of solidarity or comradeship between the newspaper and the teenage audience. Many teenagers write in to say thank you for the role *Straight Talk* is playing in a society where it is a taboo to discuss sex openly. Below are two such letters,

Here in Acholi, parents don't tell us about sex. I thank *Straight Talk* for talking to us about it ([www.straight-talk.or.ug](http://www.straight-talk.or.ug)).

I thank *Straight Talk* for changing my behaviour. I've learnt that there is no gain from unprotected sex. I also had an HIV test which was negative. I have decided to abstain from sex until marriage ([www.straight-talk.or.ug](http://www.straight-talk.or.ug)).

In many sections of society in Uganda, parents and teenagers do not freely discuss sex and sexuality and *Straight Talk* is playing that counselling role now. Letters written by parents appreciate this role too. Below is a letter from a parent:

I'm a father of two and also a lecturer. I like 'Straight Talk' because it tackles a problem we parents cannot handle very confidently at the moment ([www.straight-talk.or.ug](http://www.straight-talk.or.ug)).

The newspaper covers specific topics every month, for example between March 2003 and August 2003 they covered love, abstinence, testing for HIV, parents/teenage relationships and early pregnancy. The newspaper is teenage driven with many short letters and pictures sent in from teenagers from all over the country. The letters range from those in which the teenagers share their experiences, advise each other, ask questions, to those in which they thank *Straight Talk* for the service being offered.

*Straight Talk* has a consistent format with page one carrying the red *Straight Talk* masthead and a spiritual corner at the top left or right hand corner with one verse relevant to the main issue at either the left or right top column. The verse is usually from the Bible. This page also carries factual information on the main topic identified for the issue and is written in short simple paragraphs. In most cases, page one carries a striking picture of one or more teenagers and one large headline with a few short teenager letters connected to the main theme. A look at the issues published between March and August 2003 shows that most of the issues carried a front-page picture of a boy and girl. In a

patriarchal society like Uganda, this is important since it gives girls a chance to be seen and heard where they were left out before.

Page two is usually dedicated to letters from teenagers recounting their experiences in relation to the main theme established on page one. *Straight Talk* gets between 500 and 1,000 letters from teenagers every month from many parts of the country. Page three carries a carefully illustrated and researched health section on the issue of the day as well as more letters from teenagers offering advice about a range of issues to their peers. Page four carries a UNICEF sponsored counselling column, 'Dear SYFA'. Here the teenagers write in with queries about their health, sexuality and relationships which are answered by a group of trained counsellors and doctors for the benefit of all the readers. Apart from the biological illustration and the one-off news picture most of the pictures used are casual album snaps sent in by the teenagers themselves. To further illustrate the structure and content of *Straight Talk*, three issues published about the time when this study was undertaken are described in terms of content, themes and style.

The September 2003, issue of *Straight Talk* focused on encouraging teenagers to get correct information about sex. The page one lead headline was 'Don't stay in the Dark'. Covering almost half of page one is a big captivating picture of a teenage boy and girl posing for the camera. Some of the letters from the teenagers in this case are about their personal sexual experiences and what they were told about sex. The two letters below are included to illustrate this.

I first heard about sex from my sister when I was in Primary Three, she told me it was sweet. This made me have sex early (*Straight Talk*, September, 2003: 1).

I first heard about sex when I was six. My elder brothers told me they would train me on how to have sex so that I could be a man like them (*Straight Talk*, September, 2003: 1).

*Straight Talk* then comes in with advice under a subtitle: 'Get correct information'.

Below is the advice,

You can protect your self from what you know but it is hard to protect yourself from what you don't know. Know the facts and stay safe. Crosscheck what you

hear about sex from a reliable source. Look for the facts. Do not be shy. Having the right facts helps you to delay sex, handle your body and mind, strong feelings are part of being a teenager, test for HIV when you have a partner before sex. Always have protected sex when you start (*Straight Talk*, September, 2003: 1).

On page two messages from teenagers about how, when and from whom they first heard about sex are continued. It includes ten letters as well as two pictures from the teenagers. Page three carries a factual section about the physiology of the vagina with clear illustrations and a discussion about how the sensitive vaginal tissues are easily exposed to the HIV virus. The bottom half of the page contains letters from teenagers from all over Uganda sharing their positive condom experiences with pictures of two of the teenagers besides their letters. Below are examples of two letters:

The first time I used a condom (male condom) I panicked. I feared that it would get stuck in my vagina. I also felt uncomfortable it was a bit hard to fix it. I thought the condom would harm me. All went well it did not get stuck. I always use condoms and I feel safe. I protect myself from HIV/STDS and early pregnancies. I had an HIV test with my partner. We both tested negative. We will continue using condoms to protect ourselves (*Straight Talk*, September 2003: 3).

At first I had sex without condoms. But I realised that it was risky. When I used condoms, I was more comfortable, relaxed and felt cleaner and safe. Unfortunately my partner says that sex with a condom is painful and that the condom 'burns' her. Sometimes she refuses to have sex with me. But I stick to condom use (*Straight Talk*, September 2003: 3).

Page four carries the 'Dear SYFA' counselling column answering teenagers' queries on different issues. For example, one letter inquires about why urine is tested to confirm a pregnancy. Another seeks advice on how to handle strong sexual feelings and yet another seeks information on how to help a friend who is practicing prostitution.

The August 2003, issue of *Straight Talk* focused on early pregnancy. The page one main picture is of a smiling boy and girl with their backs slightly turned towards each other. It is placed in the middle of the page and captioned "Smart young people know that abstinence is the best protection against pregnancy, HIV/AIDS". On the top right corner of the page is a smaller picture of Graca Machel visiting the *Straight Talk* club at Lake Side College, Luzira. The bottom half of the page carried letters from students describing

their personal experiences under the headline 'Early pregnancy is risky'. One of the letters read:

I had my first sexual encounter at 17 years. I was in Senior 2. I did not bother using condoms on my first sexual encounter. The girl got pregnant. I was shocked! I did not expect it to happen the first time. I had a very rough time settling the issue with the girls' parents. My parents had to pay a very heavy fine and I still have the responsibility of looking after the baby and the girl. Since then I decided never to have sex without a condom. Condoms not only prevent unwanted pregnancies but also STDs and HIV (*Straight Talk*, August 2003: 1).

*Straight Talk* then comes in with a caution:

You do not have to wait for this to happen to you. Before getting involved in sex think of making wise and responsible choices on your sexual behaviour. Being a parent takes physical and emotional maturity (*Straight Talk*, August 2003: 1).

Page two carries a well-illustrated educational section on the social and biological consequences of early pregnancy for both the girl and the boy. Three quarters of the top part of page three is dedicated to letters from different adolescents on different issues to do with their sexuality like experiences with condom use, abstinence, parent-child talk. In the bottom quarter of the page the health corner of this particular issue deals with a fistula, a hole between the girl's bladder, vagina and sometimes the rectum. This condition is common in underage mothers. The section details what the condition is, the consequences, the solution and how to prevent it. Page four carries the 'Dear SYFA' counselling column. This particular issue dealt with queries on condom use, body changes, HIV/STDs and pregnancy. This page also contains a corner dedicated to condom tips as below:

Reduce the chances of condom breakage during sex

- Always check for expiry date before buying the condoms. Using expired condoms can lead to breakage.
- Storage – Keep your condoms in a cool place avoid keeping them in your pockets.
- Friction – It is important that before having sex the girl is ready and willing to – have sex. If she is not ready and willing, there will be friction during sex. This can easily lead to condom breakage.
- Avoid being rough and using a lot of force during sex.
- Be careful with your condoms. Vaseline products and long nails can damage a condom leading to breakage.

- If you are sexually active, make condoms your best friend for protection against HIV/STDs and pregnancy (*Straight Talk*, August 2003: 2).

Turning to the June 2003 issue, the key message encouraged adolescents to be tested for HIV. Page one carries the official *Straight Talk* message encouraging the youth to go for testing and explaining the advantage of the test in making decisions about sex as below:

If you have tested negative and have never had sex: Do not take the result as a sign to start! You have merely acquired some useful information. Your best choice is to still abstain.

If you do decide to start sex, you MUST inform your self fully about condoms. Never have unprotected sex.

If you test negative and have had sex the results will be a great relief.

Think about stopping sex until you are very sure it is the right time.

If you do not stop make sure you never expose your self to risk again. Make sure your partner tests and ALWAYS use condoms correctly all the time (*Straight Talk*, June 2003: 1).

Page two runs fourteen letters relating these adolescents' accounts of why they went for an HIV test and what they are doing with the results. One letter is reproduced below:

I shared a girl with another man. I had a girl we had tested together before sex. But she abandoned me for a sugar daddy. I thought I had been sharing her with the man. I got a skin rash. I was really scared so I tested again. I was negative. Now I am abstaining. I am able to abstain because of the advice I got from *Straight Talk* newspaper and the radio show (*Straight Talk*, June 2003: 2).

At the bottom of the page the teenagers are directed on where to get an HIV test. Page three follows with 16 letters advising fellow youth on different issues like respecting elders, delaying sex, abstaining and using condoms. In answer to two teenagers' questions the health corner in this issue is dedicated to education on the safety of oral sex "Can some one get HIV through oral sex?" *Straight Talk's* response is, "Yes! You can get HIV, gonorrhoea and many other STDs. Oral sex is not safe at all" (*Straight Talk*, June 2003: 3). They then briefly explain what oral sex is and how the cells in the mucous lining of the mouth may carry HIV into the lymph nodes of the blood stream. *Straight Talk* treads carefully here, in their own words, "Straight Talk does not usually talk about oral sex. Traditionally in Africa it has not been practiced much. But when we saw these letters we had to say something!" (*Straight Talk*, June 2003: 3). Page four, as usual, is dedicated to the 'Dear SYFA' counselling column.

As seen from the above analysis *Straight Talk* addresses teenage sexuality and HIV/AIDS education in a candid and yet dignified and professional manner. Various topics are also covered with a lot of teenage participation. *Straight Talk* attempts to make a major contribution in educating teenagers about HIV/AIDS and their sexuality. *Straight Talk* has an in-house evaluation team, which regularly monitors their activities.

### **Statement of the problem**

In spite of the acknowledged role of *Straight Talk* as a key partner in the fight against HIV/AIDS for the last ten years, there has been no accessible audience reception study to assess how teenagers who are *Straight Talk* readers negotiate HIV/AIDS media messages, and how their lived realities might affect their negotiation of these messages.

### **Objectives of the study**

This research sets out to investigate how Kampala teenagers who read *Straight Talk* negotiate HIV/AIDS messages. The study does not examine how they read *Straight Talk* but how readers, for whom *Straight Talk* is arguably a constant and validated source of information, negotiate HIV/AIDS messages. The central question that underpins this research is: How are HIV/AIDS messages negotiated by the teenagers who read *Straight Talk*?

In line with this, the study focuses on two areas: First, it seeks to establish to what extent the teenagers reproduce the major ABC (Abstain, Be faithful or use a Condom) messages of *Straight Talk* and the other factual aspects of the messages intended by the publishers about HIV/AIDS, its process of transmission and prevention. Secondly, it seeks to establish how the lived realities of the teenagers affect their particular negotiations of the HIV/AIDS messages. It includes a focus on how proximity to HIV/AIDS gender and family economic disposition might affect the teenager's negotiation of the HIV/AIDS meanings.

## **Research issues and assumptions**

The research is necessitated by the assumption that for the last ten years *Straight Talk* has been the major print media intervention targeting teenagers with HIV/AIDS messages countrywide. Every month, 1,465 secondary schools each get at least 30 copies of *Straight Talk*. It is also inserted in the largest Ugandan newspaper, *The New Vision*. There is therefore need to establish how teenagers who read *Straight Talk* negotiate HIV/AIDS messages.

## **Significance of the study**

The researcher as a parent, a former teacher and currently a print media worker is concerned to better understand how teenagers relate to HIV/AIDS media campaigns. The study might contribute to the understandings of how teenagers negotiate HIV/AIDS media messages and how gender, economic disposition and the teenagers' lived realities may influence their negotiations of these messages. Such knowledge might usefully inform media initiatives that target teenagers with HIV/AIDS messages.

## **Methods of the study**

This research is an ethnographic study that employs focus groups to investigate teenagers' reception of *Straight Talk*. The focus groups consist of two stages, the 'news game' and the group discussions. The news game (Philo, 1993; Kitzinger, 1993) involved asking audience groups to produce their own news items on a given issue to test how they construct the topic. In the 'news game', the teenagers were required to produce a version of a one-page copy of an HIV/AIDS newspaper targeting teenagers. The teenagers were given newsprint, scissors, glue, markers and a variety of HIV/AIDS related-pictures. As anticipated following Philo (1993) and Kitzinger (1993), the teenagers generally produced the official line on safe sex in *Straight Talk*. In the subsequent discussion stage, the research probed the extent to which the participants accept or reject the constructed media messages and how their lived realities affect their negotiations of such messages.

## **Thesis outline**

The thesis report is divided into five chapters. This chapter includes the statement of the research problem, the history of HIV/AIDS problem in Uganda and an analysis of *Straight Talk*. It also provides a summary of the methodology, the study objectives and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two tackles the theoretical framework of the study. Insights obtained from audience research reception studies of the 1980s and 1990s inform this study. The chapter draws on reception analysts like Morley (1986), Ang (1996), Hermes (1996) and Hall (1979) who agreed that audiences are active participants in the construction of meaning who interpret what they hear and see in the context of what they already know or think. They might therefore accept the preferred reading of a message, or do a negotiated reading or an oppositional reading. Based on a number of reception studies including June & Maibach (1990), Andsager et al. (2002), Greene et al. (1996), Marcus (2002), Kelly and Parker (2000), Strelitz (2003) and Nyanzi et al. (2000), the chapter also analyses the extent to which the teenagers' gender, economic disposition and the teenagers' lived realities influence their perception of the media messages.

In Chapter Three the justification for the ethnographic qualitative methodology and the focus group research methods employed to investigate teenagers' reception of *Straight Talk* are discussed. The chapter explains the two stages of the focus group: the 'news game' and the group discussions based on Philo (1993) and Kitzinger (1993) studies.

Chapter Four discusses the study findings. In line with Philo (1993) and Kitzinger (1993) the teenagers' reproduced the key *Straight Talk* HIV/AIDS messages 'Abstain, Be faithful or use a Condom'. However, on further probing contradictions arise in the negotiation of the media messages by the teenagers and this chapter highlights these contradictions on how the teenagers' lived realities, gender and economic disposition may influence negotiation of the media messages. Chapter Five presents concluding reflections on the study.

## Chapter Two

### Theoretical framework and literature review

#### Introduction

This study sets out to investigate how Kampala secondary school teenagers who read *Straight Talk* negotiate HIV/AIDS messages. This chapter first presents a broad literature review of media audience reception in order to establish the theoretical basis for the study. The second section explores recent studies that directly have a bearing on this study with emphasis on two specific studies, namely those of Philo (1990) and Kitzinger (1993) that inform the methodology of this study. The third section discusses how lived relations like gender, economic disposition, proximity to HIV/AIDS, perceived risk and cognitive development have been investigated in other studies in relation to teenage reception of media messages.

#### Media audience reception theory

This research draws on theoretical insights obtained from audience research reception studies of the 1980s and 1990s (including Hall, 1980; Morley, 1986, 1999; Moores, 1996; Alasuutari, 1999; Ang, 1996). Since the 1980s media audience research has tended to turn away from questions about direct media influence and effects to focus on audience behaviours and beliefs, and on how audiences make sense of and interact with media content and the media (Hansen et al., 1998; Philo, 1993). This research focuses on the analysis of audience reception with an emphasis on teenage reception of health media messages.

By analysing the tendencies in reception theory writers have retrospectively identified three generations of audience reception theory. The first generation has been referred to as the encoding/decoding model, the second as the ethnographic turn and the third as the sociological turn to a discursive or constructionist view of the media and audiences (Alasuutari, 1999; Moores, 1996). However, the development of audience reception theory is not as linear as this three-fold progression might suggest and the reference to generations is merely metaphoric. Reception studies are multi-faceted and this history could be framed in many other ways. However, for the purpose of mapping out the

theoretical framework for this *Straight Talk* study Alasuutari's three generations are deployed to provide a framework for discussion.

Accordingly, what is now described as the first generation is based on Stuart Hall's (1980) encoding and decoding model of media reception theory. Hall proposed that readers do not blindly accept the encoded meaning but are active participants in the construction of meaning. The late 1960s and early 1970s reception studies continued to regard audiences as subject to the ideological work by media institutions, which together with the family and school were considered part of state ideological apparatuses (Moores, 1996). The audience therefore accepted the predominant message prescribed in the text. This textual determinism, also predominant in *Screen*, the British film journal, was challenged by the critical paradigm that developed in media studies. The media group at Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) to which Stuart Hall belonged, considered the 1970s Screen theory inadequate in addressing the possibility of divergent readings and in reaction put up a model that recognised the power of the audience best captured by Hall (1980) in his encoding and decoding theory (Moores, 1996).

Hall (1980) acknowledged the power of the audience in making meaning but did not invalidate the power of the text because he argued that ideological forces serve to construct and close down the range of readings and so texts are not entirely open to any interpretation (also subsequently Moores, 1996; Kitzinger, 1993; McQuail, 1997). Hall considered the different moments in the chain of production of messages and meanings as both complex structures of relations and also distinct moments of production, circulation, distribution/consumption and reproduction. At the beginning of the chain is the production process where meaning is encoded and at the end, the reception moment where meaning is decoded. Encoding and decoding are distinct but determinant moments in the communicative process as a whole because before messages can have effect they must first be meaningfully decoded.

His model recognised that the encoded messages are, however, not always decoded as intended. The degree of understanding or misunderstanding in the communicative exchange depends on the degrees of shared cultural, social or political codes between the receiver and sender. Certain codes may be so widely distributed in a specific culture and be learned at such an early age that they appear not to be constructed. However, such codes are still specific and may be decoded differently depending on the cultural, social or political context of the audience or reader.

Hall recognised the power of the text to propose and prefer particular ideological readings but also recognised that readers are active decoders who do not blindly accept the encoded meaning. As active participants in the construction of meaning they interpret what they hear and see in the context of what they already know or think. He highlighted three positions from which the reader could decode textual meaning. First, they might accept the preferred reading of a message, and in this case the reader takes the dominant-hegemonic position “full and straight and decodes the message in terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded” (Hall, 1980: 209). Second, the reader might undertake a negotiated reading. In this instance, s/he would understand and acknowledge what has been dominantly defined but operate within exceptions to the rule by making a more negotiated application to suit his or her own conditions. Finally, the reader might make an oppositional reading; s/he perfectly understands both the literal and the connotative codes but decodes the message in a globally contrary way.

David Morley (1986), whose study of *The Nationwide Audience* draws on Hall’s encoding/decoding model, investigated how various audiences decoded an edition of *Nationwide*. *Nationwide*, a 1970s current affairs programme screened by the British Broadcasting Corporation, adopted a magazine format with human-interest stories and a down-to-earth look at the day’s major events. Morley undertook a qualitative survey of viewers’ interpretations. The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which different readings might be related to the varying social economic positions of the audience such as trade union membership, youth sub-cultures, class, sex, race and age. Video recordings were shown to 29 groups of different audiences inclusive of students,

trade unionists, shop stewards and managers. The participants were then asked to comment on the extracts they had watched. This research, a key moment in audience analysis, confirmed and developed Hall's moments of decoding and also indicated that groups occupying the same class position could decode the same media text differently (also discussed by Ruddock, 2001: 21; Jancovich, 1992; Ang, 1996). Morley, however, cautioned that social economic factors only indicate what cultural code a person has access to and that they may not necessarily determine how a given text is read. This research drew Morley's attention to the possibility that he could compare the decodings made by the same person within the differing contexts of the workplace and the home.

Having observed the limitation of his *Nationwide* research, Morley recommended that social patterning of tastes and preferences be investigated. He also introduced a new concern for media consumption to be investigated in its natural setting. This criticism could be said to mark the beginning of the 'second generation' of audience reception ethnography which Moores (1996: 27) calls the '1980s revised agenda'. It placed emphasis on studying reception from the audiences/readers' point of view by conducting in-depth interviews. The study that was based on conversational interviews with 18 white working class/lower middle class nuclear families in south London, was conducted with the intention of finding out how television material is interpreted by its audience within the family context. Morley found that the men and women in the *Family Television* study had different feelings about their homes. For the husbands, it was a site of leisure while for the wives, even when they had paid employment elsewhere it was a place of work (Moores, 1996). From his longitudinal studies on the reception, recounted in *Family Television*, Morley emphasises that men and women relate in contrasting ways to television. In the family setting, the wives interviewed by Morley tend to watch television less attentively, at the same time doing other things such as talking or doing housework while the husbands prefer to view attentively, uninterrupted (Morley, 1986). He does not attribute this difference to any biological essentialism as Hermes (1996) notes in relation to this issue. One observation he (Morley) makes is that there is nothing inherently masculine about the wish to watch television with full concentration (as some of the men interviewed reported), and that there is nothing inherently feminine in the tendency of the

women in the study to watch distractedly. Instead, Morley interprets this empirical gender difference as resulting from ‘the dominant model of gender relations within this society’ (Hermes, 1996: 123).

What emerges here is the beginning of an interpretive framework in which differences in television-viewing practices are not just seen as expressions of different needs, uses or readings, but are connected with the way in which particular social subjects are structurally positioned in relation to each other. Reception analyst Ien Ang<sup>2</sup> similarly notes that “the home has different meanings for men and women living in nuclear family arrangements: for husbands it is the site of leisure, for wives it is the site of work” (Ang, 1996: 50).

Morley’s (1986) *Family Television* study shows the complexity of a reader as a social being who may negotiate a reading in a particular way depending on the environment or social relations they are placed in. In his introduction to Morley’s *Family Television*, Stuart Hall explains this complexity in audience reception:

We are not “viewers” with a single identity, a monolithic set of preferences and repetitive habits of viewing, all exposed to a single channel and type of “influence” and therefore behaving in predictably uniform ways. We are all in our heads, several different audiences at once, and can be constituted as such by different programmes. We have the capacity to deploy different levels and mode of attention, to mobilise different competencies in our viewing. At different times of the day, for different family members, different patterns of viewing have different ‘saliencies’. Here the monolithic conceptions of the viewer, the audience or television itself have been displaced – one hopes forever – before the new emphasis on difference and variation (in Morley, 1986: 10)

As will be seen in the following chapter, the methodology employed in this study namely, the news game, allows for different responses, which are then probed in the subsequent structured discussion.

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<sup>2</sup> Ang (1996) conducted a groundbreaking reception study on *Dallas* in which she analysed viewers’ letters.

Subsequently, other television ethnographies of everyday consumption of media messages were conducted. Radway (1987), an American theorist, studied women's consumption of romantic fiction. She conducted in-depth interviews with women who regularly read romances whom she contacted through a store that specialised in selling romantic fiction. The research identified the consumption of romance novels as a social event through which women blocked off the "demanding and emotionally draining task of attending to the physical and affective needs of their families" (Radway, 1987: 92). She subsequently proposed that instead of the predictable circuit of producer, text and audience, "people's daily lives must be the point of departure and object of research" (Radway, 1988: 361).

Since the 1990s yet another generation of audience reception studies which Alasuutari calls "the third generation" has emerged, namely "the sociological turn to a discursive or constructionist view of the media and audiences" (Alasuutari, 1999: 8). The sociological turn in media reception studies which is, according to Alasuutari, still unfolding does not abandon ethnography but spreads from there to engulf the concept of contemporary media culture, particularly the role of the media in every day life. It covers questions of meaning and use of particular media programmes by particular groups of people and addresses cultural concerns that surround media use and media messages. Worth noting are three developments. First, audience reception is reframed within the broader discourses within which the audiences are situated. This means that audiences are investigated within the broader social, cultural and economic context. Second, the sociological approach to audience reception rethinks the uses that the audiences make of the messages. Third, in the new agenda interest in a research topic stems from the prevailing concerns in society, the viewpoints and subject positions taken in relation to the media texts, how and by whom it is discussed in public, and how people in everyday-life comment about it (Alasuutari, 1999).

Morley in his assessment of the 'third generation' of reception research cautions that, there is nothing like a 'linear succession of truths' and that reception research is 'multidimensional', with the latest model building on rather than displacing the previous

ones. He acknowledges the role of the media as a link to the public sphere and the prevailing concern with the moral dimension of broadcasting and its consumption and advises that these are too important to be neglected, but rejecting the earlier reception approaches would be like throwing out the baby with the bath water (Morley, 1999).

In response to Morley's caution, this study of the HIV/AIDS meanings that Kampala secondary school teenagers who are *Straight Talk* readers negotiate takes a multidimensional approach. It draws on all the three generations of audience reception theories encompassing Hall's encoding and decoding model of meaning, exploring how the teenagers' lived realities may affect their negotiations of the HIV/AIDS media meanings and at the same time exploring the sociological issues surrounding HIV/AIDS in asking the questions: what do the HIV/AIDS messages mean to the teenagers and how do they use them and what cultural issues or concerns arise in relation to *Straight Talk*?

### **Contemporary reception studies**

The following section focuses on three examples of multidimensional audience reception studies that could be considered third generation. The three studies Strelitz (2003), Philo (1990) and Kitzinger (1993), build on the three generations of audience reception theories, namely Hall's encoding/decoding model, the 'ethnographic turn' and the more explicitly sociological approach which engulfs the role of the media in every day life. These studies investigate questions of negotiated meaning and use attributed to particular media programmes by particular groups of people and also address cultural concerns that surround media use and media messages. Two studies, particularly those of Philo (1990) and Kitzinger (1993) influence the methodology of this study.

### **Research on global/local reception (Strelitz, 2003)**

In his study on media representations and the reality of being black, Strelitz's interviews with black students at Rhodes University, South Africa, reinforced that their lived realities influence negotiation of media messages (Strelitz, 2001; Strelitz, 2003; Strelitz, 2004) One of Strelitz's interviewees, 'Zukile', who grew up as a black subject under

apartheid, experienced *Dallas* and other American television programmes he enjoyed watching, as ‘local’ because to him they reflected the local conditions in South Africa at the time. In his social environment just as in the programmes, he saw ‘white people in comfort and luxury’. Zukile even assumed Michael Jackson was white because ‘he looked happy and rich’ (Strelitz, 2003: 144). Zukile’s interpretation of the American programmes was influenced by realities in his social environment.

Though Strelitz’s focus is on the relative importance of media consumption and lived context in the process of identity formation and not the complex meanings that audiences make at the point of media consumption, it reaffirms Halls (1980) decoding and encoding model. Strelitz explains how Zukile decoded television news during the 1980s social protests in South Africa. Zukile kept in touch with the main political events through television, well aware that government controlled the news. He perfectly understood the dominant meaning on the news broadcasts but he read it oppositionally. He says,

I would simply look at the people singing and chanting. It ended there for me. We knew a lot was happening and we would reinforce that and say, if other people are doing it, why are we not doing it. The interpretation (of the newscaster) that followed, and that negated what people were doing, did not have an effect on us because once a white face or a black puppet came on trying to explain, we did not listen. We switched ourselves off until the next time and then we would watch it again (Strelitz, 2003: 146).

Strelitz thus identifies how the particular social and cultural context inform the readings made by his respondents.

### **Audience reception of the 1984/85 miners’ strike (Philo, 1990, 1993)**

In a similar vein then, Philo identifies two crucial aspects for consideration in any audience study, first, how messages work to convince those who receive them and, second, how and why a message might work for some groups and not others. He notes that political ideology, culture, gender or class differences within audiences affect the way in which information from the media is received and it is “these ‘pre-existing’ structures of consciousness within the audience” that have to be investigated “as well as

the use of common sense knowledges of logic and ways of evaluating what was seen or heard” (Philo, 1993: 258).

Philo’s (1990) study undertaken in the United Kingdom explored audience understanding of television coverage of the British miners’ strike of 1984-5. He investigated if the audiences perceived the strikes as mostly violent or not and whether they associated the violence with the miners or the police. He conducted focus groups with pre-existing groups of police officers, a group of catering staff, residential groups, miners and women’s support groups and print workers. His focus group method was structured to include a ‘news game’ (news writing activity) and discussions. It was in this study by Philo that the ‘news game’ was first used as a research method. His use of it involved asking audience groups to produce their own news items on a given issue to identify how they construct the topic. Philo found that the constructions of the miners’ strikes by his groups were predominantly in line with the hegemonic discourses. Yet, in the subsequent discussion stage, the research probed the extent to which the participants believed, accepted or rejected the constructed media messages and it became evident that the participants negotiated a much broader range of meanings in line with their lived worlds. It was also remarkable how closely some of the group stories produced for the ‘news game’ reflected the structure of actual headlines. Most of the participants agreed that the miner strikes were not desirable, but they did not agree on whether the strikes had been mostly violent or not, and even those who agreed that they had been violent did not agree on whether the police or the miners were to blame for the violence. Some people rejected dominant ideas within the media or even within their own group. In Philo’s study the most powerful reason given for rejecting the television account of violent miner strikes was that it was not consonant with direct or indirect experience. In spite of class and political culture, most people who had been at picket lines said the strikes were not violent.

### **Audience reception of HIV/AIDS messages (Kitzinger, 1993)**

Kitzinger examined audience understandings of HIV/AIDS media messages of a wide range of people from all over Britain. She conducted focus groups with a total of 351 individuals in 52 pre-existing groups inclusive of students, office cleaners, male prostitutes, groups of women living on the same estate, a lesbian friendship group and doctors. Her study methodology drew on Philo's (1990) research described above and was similarly structured to include a news game and discussions in the focus group.

Kitzinger found that though in the news game a wide variety of people produced similar images about AIDS, some individuals within groups produced very different interpretations and that while some people rejected media messages, others created alternatives, or even oppositional, accounts. She also concluded that because people reproduced a particular media message in the news game that did not necessarily mean that they believed it. Even those who produced the more 'typical' news statements sometimes made it clear that they personally had a different point of view. Likewise, as discussed in Chapter Three and Four, the *Straight Talk* research explores the teenagers' negotiation of the HIV/AIDS messages they reproduce.

Kitzinger's study established that "people can 'know' something on one level but reject it on another, or they may know what they 'ought' to think but find it hard to act on" (Kitzinger, 1993: 293). She illustrates the point as follows. Most participants in the study agreed that you could not tell who is infected by HIV by just looking at them but many research participants reported discriminating between potential partners by their looks. Some women reported discouraging their children from relating too closely with any child who might be infected though the women said they knew that HIV could not be spread through casual contact. She argues that audience negotiation of media messages is a complex contradictory process, "with power imbalances, structural position and different ideologies" (Kitzinger, 1993: 295) influencing audience negotiations of media messages. Her findings reveal some complexities and contradictions in negotiation of HIV/AIDS media messages since the very women who wanted to prevent their children from mixing with others on mere suspicion that the other child could be HIV infected

were reluctant to try using condoms with their husbands even if they had suspicions that their husbands were not faithful.

It is the Philo (1990) and Kitzinger (1993) studies that have provided the methodological framework for this research, which is developed in the following chapter. The findings of these two studies have been published and there has been some debate as to whether the images selected for use in the news game by the researcher serve to close off other meanings and predispose particular response or use. Most of the participants in both the Philo and Kitzinger studies readily recognised the images presented to them in the news game and some of them experienced the pictures as very ‘closed’. One participant in Kitzinger’s study observed that “Some of the photographs really wrote the script by themselves” (1993: 281). Philo, however, clarifies that the photographs “do not determine the text they only stimulate a flow of memories and news language” (Philo, 1990: 134). He tested this out in his work on the miners’ strike by presenting the set of relevant pictures to a group of American students who had not been exposed to the extensive British media coverage of the event and their readings were mostly different from the British focus groups and this difference can be attributed to the difference in lived experiences.

Such research suggests that audiences do not indiscriminately imbibe all information, nor do media messages exist in a vacuum. Both media and audiences are part of wider cultural and political contexts that may either make it difficult or easy to accept certain kinds of representations. Audiences actively construct meaning and interpret what they hear and see in the context of what they already know or think (Hall, 1980; Kitzinger, 1993).

### **Variables – lived realities and teenager reception**

Since the focus of this study relates to how Kampala teenagers who read *Straight Talk* negotiate HIV/AIDS messages, it is appropriate to include and contextualise the lived realities that may influence the teenagers’ reception of the HIV/AIDS media messages. Reception scholars (Hall, 1980; Kitzinger, 1993; Radway, 1987) are agreed that

audiences interpret what they hear and see in the context of what they already know or think.

A study that highlights the relevance of context was undertaken by Steele and Brown (1995). In order to learn more about teenagers and the media, they conducted a study on adolescent room culture which involved a total of about 50 adolescents in Northern Carolina and Michigan that stretched over six years from 1987. They were concerned about the 'social sea' of life in which their adolescent audience operates. They recognised that teenagers are creative in their interpretations of media content, and that their particular life histories influence how teenagers process knowledge available through the media. Also teenagers identify with, and are motivated by, certain media characters but even with their heroes adolescents frequently grapple with conflicting and contradictory messages and it was argued that 'lived through experiences' account for the manner in which the teenagers' process and apply media messages in their everyday lives (1995: 557).

It is in this respect that the *Straight Talk* study, which seeks to establish how the lived realities of the teenagers may affect their negotiations of the HIV/AIDS messages, explores the link between gender, economic disposition, proximity to HIV/AIDS, and perception of risk and cognitive development.

### **Gender and economic class**

The gender schema theory in psychology informed the study of Andsager et al. (2002) in which they investigate the gender factor in teenagers' processing of alcohol-related messages. According to this theory, gender roles are largely internalised by adolescents and therefore gendered identity is seen to affect information processing. Gender-schema theory suggests that society pressures girls to be more caring and collectivist than boys, who are socialised to be aggressive and individualist. In the study, 578 ninth and twelfth graders in central California coast area were exposed to eight alcohol-related messages. The findings indicate gender differences in their responses. Boys found individualistic

messages in alcohol advertising more persuasive and memorable, while girls were more persuaded by collectivist messages in public-service announcements.

Andsager et al. argue that although boys and girls share many similarities in the way they process information:

Boys tend to be more aware and appreciative of individualist messages and production values, especially those in advertisements. Although males and females both found collectivist-based messages to be powerful, the emotional components of the serious messages seemed to increase the persuasive value for females more than for males (Andsager et al., 2002: 266).

Since gender seems to influence message interpretation, the findings suggest that making teenagers, especially girls, think about the real potential effects of alcohol consumption may help reduce the likelihood that they will engage in risky drinking behaviour. They propose that boys may require more stimulation in persuasive messages either in the form of high-intensity messages or a highly involving product. Andsager et al. concluded that gender should be considered in media interventions targeting adolescents with health messages. One would, however, need to be careful not to generalise these findings to all boys and girls without further research.

If gender is one important variable, the question of economic disposition is equally important. In Uganda, the country where the *Straight Talk* study is situated, class is determined by economic rather than social status. It is felt that economic disposition could be a significant variable impacting on the teenagers' negotiation of the HIV/AIDS media messages and so that variable is included in this study. In a piece of social research to explore how school-going adolescents in south-western Uganda negotiate sexual relationships, Nyanzi et al. (2000) established that most of the girls who engaged in sex with multiple partners did it for material gains. These adolescents said their families were not able to provide adequate clothing, food and pocket money and the questionnaire results revealed that most of the students came from relatively low-income families with about eight children for each household to provide for.

Likewise in an HIV/AIDS sentinel monitoring study conducted in six different sites in South Africa, Kelly and Parker (2003) found that despite audiences being knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS, socio-economic and cultural factors influenced behaviour in relation to risk of HIV infection and that lack of resources and poor environments limited personal empowerment and the ability to make safer sexual choices (Kelly et al., 2000; Kelly and Parker, 2003). They describe South Africa's under-resourced criminal justice system as one of the factors contributing to the rising number of rape cases and this directly impacts on the incidence of HIV infection. They also argue that social-economic status impacts on individual involvement in risky sexual behaviour.

In relation to class, Hermes (1996) cautions that though class plays a role in how audiences make sense of text, researchers should be wary of foregone conclusions that such variables will definitely affect text readings. She advises that rather than treating class position as an isolatable 'independent variable' predetermining cultural responses, it could best be seen as a factor (or vector) whose impact as a structuring principle for experience can only be conceptualised within the concrete historical context in which it is articulated (Hermes, 1996: 117).

To clarify her point, Hermes quotes two contradictory studies on women's reception of soap operas. Seiter et al. (1989) extensively interviewed soap opera viewers in Oregon, and working-class women emerged as being more critical or resistant to the preferred meanings proposed by soap opera narratives than middle-class women. On the other hand Press (1990) interviewed viewers of the prime time soap opera *Dynasty* in the San Francisco Bay Area, and found that it was middle-class women that were the more critical viewers. Hermes points out that it is difficult to satisfactorily explain this difference in findings but the possible factors could be in the differences in 'operationalization of social class', in locality, or difference in research guidelines and interpretation of the transcripts. But more importantly she argues that media consumption is a thoroughly precarious practice, structured not by psychological or sociological predispositions of individual audience members but by the dynamic and contradictory goings-on of everyday life. The way in which gender is implicated in this practice is

consequently equally undecided, at least outside of the context in which the practice takes concrete shape (Hermes, 1996: 110).

In accordance with this study's objectives and Hermes' caution, this research investigates the influence of the teenagers' gender and economic disposition as possible but not necessarily important variables that could impact on their negotiation of the HIV/AIDS media meanings in the social cultural context in which they operate.

### **Proximity to HIV/AIDS**

Audience proximity to HIV/AIDS is considered the one single factor that operates independently of the other demographic factors in influencing message processing (June & Maibach, 1990; Jancovich, 1992; Andsager et al., 2002). It is in recognition of this and the fact that Uganda, the country in which the study on teenagers who read *Straight Talk* is located, is severely affected by HIV/AIDS, that the literature on audience proximity to HIV/AIDS is included as relevant to this study and its method of research.

Researchers, June & Maibach (1990), conducted a quantitative study to investigate the implications of educating an audience with low-involvement about an issue of dire importance like HIV/AIDS. Issue involvement is evident when an issue has 'personal meaning' or when an audience perceive the issue to have "significant consequences for their own lives" (1990: 761). The researchers exposed 30 American university students between the ages of 18 and 25 to a sampling of rational and emotional public service announcements all related to HIV/AIDS. They found that viewers with high AIDS involvement recalled more information from AIDS messages than viewers with low AIDS involvement did. They argue that in America many young adults, especially adolescents and college students who perceived little risk, had low personal involvement with the disease. While highly involved research subjects processed information central to the message such as the quality of the arguments, those less involved processed information peripheral to the message such as credibility and attractiveness of the source (June & Maibach, 1990). They then recommend that emotional messages be used among

audiences who consider HIV/AIDS divorced from them to temporarily induce higher levels of personal relevance before rational messages are introduced to create more lasting knowledge and attitudinal changes.

Likewise, South African social researcher Marcus (2002) in a case study of white university students in South Africa found that the students' proximity to HIV/AIDS influenced their perception of who was at risk. This particular group of white students who were aware of the facts about HIV/AIDS and how to protect themselves from infection, were also sexually active and, while engaging frequently in casual sex, they were not necessarily practising safe sex. She reports that, "...by their own account, these students' sexual social relations are conducted in a context of serial and concurrent, multiple partnering, one of the co-factors associated with HIV infection" (Marcus, 2002: 27).

For most of these students their security came from interacting within a closed circle of white friends who they consider HIV/AIDS free. Most of them said they did not know any one who was infected in their circles. These students located themselves outside the high-risk groups of drug addicts, gay men and black people. One of the respondents is quoted thus:

Friends that have been sleeping around generally know the person. Its not like they sleep with strangers. I find that a lot of the people that we hang out with don't have the potential of having AIDS. It's not even a consideration. ... We're brought up in such a safe environment that I don't think of anything going wrong (Marcus, 2002: 27).

Similarly, in an HIV/AIDS sentinel monitoring study in six different sites in South Africa, Kelly et al. (2000) found that the youth were generally aware of HIV infection risk and even in some cases greatly worried about the possibility of getting infected. Yet this did not necessarily result in less risky sexual behaviour. One of the reasons the youth gave for their failure to act was the perception that HIV happened in distant places and those in the rural communities said that those who got it had come with it from the bigger cities. They argue that respondents who have been close to people who are HIV infected are more likely to have empathy for those who are infected and also more likely to avoid

risky sexual behaviour. One respondent says, “Talk only becomes serious when you know someone with it” and in the words of another “knowing someone who died made me see that AIDS really exists” (Kelly et al., 2000: 21). The researchers recommended that the media and other interventions should make people aware of the realities of HIV/AIDS with real-life stories of people with HIV/AIDS as “these appear to have a particularly powerful effect on public perceptions” (Kelly et al., 2000: 8).

### **Risky behaviour and cognitive development**

AIDS prevention is currently only possible through the reduction and elimination of high-risk behaviour so it is important to be mindful of how levels of cognitive development may affect perception of risk and negotiation of health media messages among adolescents.

Researchers Greene et al. (1996) conducted a quantitative survey with 492 American students to explore the utility of egocentrism in health messages. They argue that most adolescents have the capacity to perceive risk and that they engage in risky behaviour not because they lack knowledge but because they do not necessarily weigh the risks in their decision-making. “Egocentrism is an overall focus on self” (Greene et al., 1996: 133). Egocentrism is located in theories of cognitive development in the field of psychology. The researchers quote Elkind (1967, 1978) who proposed two expressions of egocentrism in adolescence: ‘imaginary audience’ and ‘personal fable’. Imaginary audience is described as a situation in which an individual fails to differentiate the object of thought and thinks that others are preoccupied with them while personal fable is a belief in one’s own uniqueness and invulnerability. Adolescents who experience high levels of personal fable easily “ignore warnings in health promotion messages regardless of source because they feel unique, not at risk, or believe health promotion messages do not apply to them” (Greene et al., 1996: 134).

Many adolescents may understand messages about contraceptive use and pregnancy risk and respond to these topics correctly, yet many still engage in risky behaviour.

Gershenson & Handler (1985) report that though adolescents were knowledgeable about risks concerning pregnancy and contraceptive use they still had unprotected sex. In this study teenagers rated risk for themselves and for friends in response to sexual pressure and maintained that what happens to others will not happen to them.

Green et al. argue that the link between peer pressure and ‘imaginary audience’ is important in educating adolescents to expect health behaviour from each other. An educational campaign that includes discussions with peers helps teenagers stop thinking that others are preoccupied with them. As adolescents learn more about what their peers think they gain a better perspective on their individuality and this gives them courage to behave in ways that may not necessarily be similar to the expectations of their friends. The researchers also observe that adolescents’ risk-taking may simply reflect cognitive-social immaturity and recommend that health messages should build on the developmental aspects of adolescent information processing. Highly abstract messages may therefore not be appropriate for the adolescent who is still at the level of concrete operations.

In line with this the *Straight Talk* study explores the teenagers’ reception of risky behaviour messages and other meanings that they make at the point of media consumption incorporating an investigation of how their lived realities may influence their negotiation of the HIV/AIDS media messages.

## **Conclusion**

The first part of this chapter has presented an overview of audience reception literature on which the *Straight Talk* Study is based. Drawing on theoretical insights obtained from the 1980s and 1990s this chapter has attempted to map out the history of audience reception theory through three generations. The first generation which draws from Stuart Hall’s early encoding/decoding model (1980) proposed that audiences decode media messages by either accepting the dominant meaning, negotiating oppositionally, or rejecting the meanings completely. The second generation was the ethnographic turn (Moore, 1996) in which audiences were investigated in their natural settings and, thirdly, the

sociological turn proposes that audiences are located societally, economically and culturally and should be studied as such (Alasuutari, 1999). This *Straight Talk* study has located itself in the third generation of reception study but is mindful of all three generations of audience reception.

The second part of the chapter explored three contemporary audience reception studies two of which directly inform the methodology employed in the *Straight Talk* study, namely, the focus group structured to include the news game and discussions. This study seeks to establish how the lived realities of the teenagers who read *Straight Talk* affect their particular negotiations of the HIV/AIDS messages so the third section has reviewed literature on how the lived realities of gender, economic disposition, proximity to HIV/AIDS and the link between perceived risk and cognitive development may influence audience reception of media messages.

## Chapter Three

### Methods of data collection and analysis

#### Introduction

The context of the study, including an introduction to and textual description of *Straight Talk*, was presented in Chapter One. Chapter Two provided an overview of audience reception theory, the theoretical framework for the study and explored studies that directly have a bearing on this study with emphasis on Philo (1990) and Kitzinger (1993) the two studies that influence the methodology. In addition, it reviewed literature on how lived relations might influence teenage reception of media messages. Drawing on insights that emerge from this literature review, this chapter discusses the research methodology employed in the study. The chapter identifies the methodology used in the investigation of how Kampala secondary school teenagers who are *Straight Talk* readers negotiate HIV/AIDS messages. It describes the study research method, a design informed by the work of Philo (1990) and Kitzinger (1993), and explains the preference for the news game and discussions in the focus group. The method is out-lined including practical aspects of the study like the sample selection, sample size, research procedure, data analysis and it also identifies the problems encountered during the study.

The researcher as a parent, an ex-teacher and a print media worker is concerned about the contribution that the media can make in the campaign against HIV/AIDS. Since *Straight Talk* has been a key partner in the fight against HIV/AIDS for the last ten years the researcher set out to investigate how the teenagers who read *Straight Talk* accept or reject HIV/AIDS messages, and how their lived realities might affect their negotiation of these messages. The central question that underpins this research is: How are HIV/AIDS safe sex messages negotiated by the teenagers who read *Straight Talk*? In line with this, the study seeks to establish the extent to which the teenagers reproduce the more factual aspects about HIV/AIDS from *Straight Talk*, its process of transmission and prevention and how the lived realities of the teenagers affect their particular negotiations of the HIV/AIDS messages. It includes a focus on how gender and family economic disposition might affect the teenagers' negotiation of the HIV/AIDS meanings.

## **Research design**

This research is an ethnographic audience reception study that employs focus groups to investigate teenagers' reception of the HIV/AIDS messages in relation to *Straight Talk*. Ethnographic research frequently involves extended periods of participant observations in the field and unstructured conversational interviews with the participants so as to enable an understanding of social behaviour from the participants' point of view (Moores, 1996). In media studies it is relatively difficult to access audiences in their natural setting for lengthy periods, but media reception studies can still be considered ethnographic even when they are not based on extensive periods in the field because, like anthropological research, they have a similar concern with questions of meaning and social context (Moores, 1996; McQuail, 1997; Ruddock, 2001). Ethnographic studies enable the study of audiences as "interpretive communities" within the general cultural and social context that shape their perception (McQuail, 1997; Ruddock, 2001). This is necessarily so because most media messages are open to several possible interpretations and can be read differently by different social and cultural groups and sometimes form meanings completely different from those intended by their originators (McQuail, 1997). Kitzinger (1993) argues that audiences are like journalists and are engaged in the active process of making meaning from the media products so research needs to "to explore what happens to media messages as they enter into the social worlds of audiences" Kitzinger (1993: 300). It was considered necessary to do an ethnographic study so as to enable an investigation of how the teenagers who read *Straight Talk* negotiate HIV/AIDS media messages from their point of view and to establish how the lived realities like gender and family economic disposition might affect the teenager's negotiation of the HIV/AIDS meanings.

## **Method**

The preference for the focus group method in this study was informed by the argument that focus groups "offer dynamics and ways – not available in individual interviews – of eliciting, stimulating, and elaborating audience interpretations" (Hansen et al., 1998: 262 also Ruddock, 2001). Focus groups are popular in ethnographic audience studies because

they allow audiences to discuss in a more natural setting. The interaction of participants in a group enables them to think and talk about a topic for longer than would otherwise happen in conversation and so rich data is produced (Morgan, 1988).

The focus group in this study is structured to include two stages, the news game and discussions. The news game is a method first used by Philo (1990) in his study on the coal miners' strikes and then by Kitzinger (1993) in a study analysing peoples' beliefs and attitudes about AIDS (as discussed in Chapter Two). The news game demonstrates the aptitude with which people can reproduce media accounts and concepts and even use similar language. The news game as devised by Philo involved asking audience groups to produce their own news reports in order to establish audience knowledge on a particular topic and to enable the researchers to investigate the process by which they arrived at their beliefs. In both the Philo (1990) and Kitzinger (1993) studies, the news game was followed by discussion to enable the researchers compare what the group members had produced with what they actually believed to be true and to examine why the audiences either rejected or accepted the media account. Though the texts produced by some audience groups in the news game were similar to those in the media, the texts on their own did not show the exact source of the messages nor did they explain why people were reproducing certain messages and not others. To get insight into these choices of the media messages, both the Philo and Kitzinger studies considered the dialogue that led up to constructing the text in the news game and followed it up with a guided discussion. The way in which the people reproduced the facts and sentiments in the news game showed the relationship between the media messages and people's negotiations of the messages. This exercise gives the researchers the opportunity to initiate discussion on any topic in peoples' own words, and the words they attribute to the media, without the researcher introducing their own terminology (Kitzinger, 1993). Philo (1990) and Kitzinger (1993) investigated audiences in their pre-existing groups because they wanted to explore the ways in which peoples' social interaction influences their understandings of the media messages.

### **News game and discussion**

Just like in the Philo (1990) and Kitzinger (1993) studies, the focus groups in this study were structured to include the news game and discussions. The news game involved asking the teenagers, all *Straight Talk* readers, to make their own one-page copy of an HIV/AIDS newspaper to enable the researcher to gauge the extent to which the teenagers reproduce HIV/AIDS media messages. The news game also acted as an icebreaker in discussing sensitive and personal issues and assisted in the creation of an environment in which embarrassment or self-consciousness could be minimised. It also enabled the teenagers to initiate discussion on HIV/AIDS more spontaneously. This method also produced important information about what respondents think are appropriate messages.

The discussion during and after the news game thus enabled a probing of the messages that the teenagers had produced during the news game so as to establish to what extent the teenagers believe the more factual aspects of the messages as reproduced in the news game and also to establish how lived realities like proximity to HIV/AIDS, gender and family economic disposition might affect their particular negotiations of the HIV/AIDS messages.

### ***Straight Talk***

As established in Chapter One, for the last decade *Straight Talk* which is a four-page tabloid-size newspaper that advocates safer sex, including abstinence and condom use, has been the most consistent print media HIV/AIDS publication targeting teenagers in Uganda. It is distributed to 1,465 secondary schools all over the country and inserted into *The New Vision* newspaper once every month. More than 230 voluntary *Straight Talk* Clubs have been formed in secondary schools and communities and in these clubs issues to do with adolescent sexuality are discussed.

### **The physical location of the study**

Although *Straight Talk* is distributed countrywide, this is a contained study that looks at Kampala, Uganda's capital city, and the immediate surroundings. This decision was determined by the scale of this research project and justified on the grounds that as the

capital, Kampala has a high population and people with a cross-section of cultures and different economic backgrounds. Kampala also has a broad mix of schools.

### **Population of study**

The sample was drawn from secondary school students in their third and fifth year, who fall in the *Straight Talk* target age of 15-19. These teenagers are considered sufficiently representative of the *Straight Talk* audience. The Senior Three and Five classes were selected because students do not write official examinations at the end of the year and unlike Senior Four and Six, are not pressurised to focus exclusively on academic work. Only schools that have *Straight Talk* or HIV/AIDS clubs and receive monthly copies of *Straight Talk* were included in the study.

### **Sample size and selection**

The researcher is aware that if focus groups are the major method of investigation, it is advisable that they should be conducted till the responses begin to get repetitive. Moreover, in a qualitative survey the number of focus groups required in a study should be determined by the nature of question and available resources (Hansen et al, 1998; Morgan, 1988; Ruddock, 2001). However, bearing in mind the limited scope of this study, four focus groups were considered sufficient and each focus group comprised between eight and ten participants. This is close to what Hansen recommends: “The optimum group size for focus group discussions is in the region of between five and nine people” (1998: 270).

In qualitative research, especially focus groups, the nature of the topic should determine the way the sample is selected. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) argue that researchers should “encompass diversity and compose structured rather than random sample, guided by the particular research questions which they are addressing” (1999: 7). Purposive sampling rather than random sampling was employed in this study to include participant teenagers who read *Straight Talk*.

To inform selection, a list of Kampala schools, which receive *Straight Talk*, was obtained from the Straight Talk foundation and used. All the selected schools receive 30-50 copies of the publication every month. The schools also had either voluntary *Straight Talk* or HIV/AIDS clubs through which copies of *Straight Talk* are read and sexuality and HIV/AIDS issues are discussed among the teenagers. In all the selected schools some copies of *Straight Talk* were always available in the library and the teenagers confirmed that they were easily accessible.

Since the study sought to establish how the lived realities of the teenagers affect their particular negotiations of HIV/AIDS messages, the sampling incorporated the demographic factors of gender and economic disposition so as to enable the research to establish whether and to what extent these factors may affect these teenagers' negotiation of the HIV/AIDS messages. Rather than bring together teenagers just for the study, it was considered necessary to use pre-existing groups of teenagers who schooled and socialised together so as to explore the ways in which social interaction influences audience understandings of media messages (Hansen et al., 1998; Kitzinger, 1993).

In line with the study objective to establish the influence of gender on negotiation of media messages, it was necessary to create exclusive groups of girls and boys as well as a mixed group of both. This would enable the researcher first, to establish gender differences in the teenagers' negotiation of the HIV/AIDS message and secondly to establish if the interaction of gender, as is the case in the co-educational schools, influenced the negotiation of the HIV/AIDS messages. Equally, to establish if economic disposition influenced negotiation of the HIV/AIDS media messages, it was considered necessary to include schools with varied economic backgrounds.

There are few single sex schools located in Kampala and as they were only three up-market girls' schools on the *Straight Talk* distribution list, the nearest was selected for inclusion in the study. As there were only two boys-only schools, the researcher chose one where she had taught 15 years ago because she had contacts, which facilitated her entry there. The economically disadvantaged co-educational school and the mid-income

co-educational school were selected at random from the *Straight Talk* schools distribution list. Four schools were selected but after the researcher realised that the recordings in the first mid-income co-educational school were not clear, a school with similar demographics was added to the study. Each school constituted one focus group. The following schools<sup>3</sup> were consequently selected: Kanabiri Girls School, Kanasatu Boys School, Kanemu Co-education School and Kaine Private School.

Kanabiri Girls School is a government funded up-market girls' boarding school. Most of the 700 students in the school would be from economically advantaged families. The school is a few kilometres from Kampala and most of the students are picked from and driven back to school at the beginning of the term by their parents. During the school term the students are protected by strict school rules from moving out of the school. The school has an HIV/AIDS club with a dedicated teacher to co-ordinate the club activities.

Kanasatu Boys College is one of the oldest and reputed government funded up-market boys' boarding schools in the country. It is Christian founded and most of the 900 students here would be from economically advantaged families. The large and spacious school is located a few kilometres from Kampala. The school has an HIV/AIDS club and receives monthly copies of *Straight Talk* and the teenagers said they had access to them.

Kanemu Co-education School is one of the largest government funded co-educational day schools in the country. It has over 2,500 students of mixed backgrounds, most of them from mid-income families. It is a few kilometres from Kampala City and many of the students who stay in the mid-income city suburbs, commute to school by public transport. The school has an active *Straight Talk* club and a teacher who acts as a counsellor and co-ordinates education on sexuality and HIV/AIDS related issues. It is important to note that this teacher is a devout Christian and pastor as this issue comes up in the discussions by the teenagers later.

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<sup>3</sup> Due to the sensitive nature of the study pseudo-names are used for the schools.

Kaine Private School is a small privately owned co-educational school in the poorer suburbs of Kampala. It has poorer buildings and is squeezed on a small plot of land. Most of its 250 students would be from economically disadvantaged families. Some of the students are in the boarding section of the school but many are day scholars who walk to school daily. The school has a *Straight Talk* club with a co-ordinating teacher.

In summary, four schools were selected as sites in which to conduct the focus groups, Kanabiri as the advantaged girls school, Kanasatu as the advantaged boys school, Kanemu as the mid-income co-educational school and Kaine as the disadvantaged co-educational school. Though this sample is not considered exhaustive it is sufficient to produce interesting data.

### **Research tools**

In June 2003, through contacts with colleagues who worked with *The New Vision* before they left to join *Straight Talk*, the researcher together with the *Straight Talk* School Visits Co-ordinator visited a nearby school in preparation for this study. This particular visit was to facilitate teenagers' discussion on the prevention of HIV/AIDS. This exposure enabled the researcher to get familiar with the teenagers' perception of the HIV/AIDS issue, the questions they ask, the language they use to discuss the issue and the effect the presence of an outsider might have on their involvement in the discussions. The information gathered here proved helpful in writing the research proposal, preparing the tools and carrying out the research.

### **Picture selection**

In order to plan for the news game, thirty-three pictures (Appendix i) were identified and selected in line with the key objective of the study, namely to establish how the HIV/AIDS messages are negotiated by the teenagers who read *Straight Talk*. Also unlike the Philo (1990) study that had twelve pictures and the Kitzinger (1993) study with thirteen, the intention was to present a broader range of images since the discussion during the picture choice was of interest to the study. The choice of images, how they

chose to use them or what caption they chose to write was thus open. Pictures that could be interpreted to carry an HIV/AIDS messages were therefore included. All the pictures were obtained from *The New Vision* library and were used by courtesy of *The New Vision*.

It was not always possible to make a neat categorisation of these pictures because in practice a single picture could be used to illustrate more than one theme but broadly the picture selection by the researcher can be placed in five categories. In category A, pictures were selected to represent the major HIV/AIDS messages of *Straight Talk*, which are; Abstain from sex, Be faithful or use a Condom (ABC). This category includes pictures on weddings, love relationships, and condom displays. Category B pictures were selected to show the extent of the teenagers' understandings of the more factual aspects of the messages intended by the *Straight Talk* publishers about HIV/AIDS and its process of transmission. Pictures in this category include those of breast-feeding mothers, an injection and blood. Category C is the 'alternative lifestyle and activities' category and pictures here were chosen to gauge the teenagers' understandings of activities/relationships that could keep them away from risky behaviour or encourage healthy relationships. Such pictures included teenagers jogging, sports personalities, church activity and stylishly dressed teenagers. Category D catered for pictures of teenagers engaged in risky behaviour and such pictures included alcohol abuse, drug abuse, teenage couples in compromising situations and street children. Category E is the 'HIV/AIDS effects' category and these pictures were selected to reflect how the lived realities of the teenagers, like proximity to HIV/AIDS, might affect their particular negotiations of the HIV/AIDS messages. Under this category were pictures that showed sickness and graves. Below the pictures are categorised and briefly described.

**Table 1 (picture description)**

<b>Pictures by category and number</b>	<b>Brief description of picture</b>
<b>A- AIDS ABC messages</b>	
<a href="#">Wedding 1</a>	Wedding of Natasha Museveni
Wedding 2.	Wedding of Ndawula (Radio D-Jay)
Man-woman 3	Adult lovers out in a garden
<a href="#">Gaetano 4</a>	M-Net Big brother housemate lovers, Gaetano and Abby, share a drink
<a href="#">Condom 5</a>	A group promoting the Protector Condom
<a href="#">Condom 6</a>	Social worker displaying male condom
<a href="#">Condom 7</a>	Social worker displaying female condom
<b>B- HIV Transmission</b>	
<a href="#">Breastfeed 8</a>	Two mothers breastfeeding
<a href="#">Breastfeed 9</a>	Mother breastfeeding malnourished child
<a href="#">Injection 10</a>	Health worker prepares injection
<a href="#">Injection 11</a>	Child being immunised
<a href="#">Safe blood 12</a>	Children in safe blood campaign
<b>C- Alternative lifestyle/ activities</b>	
Sport 13	Local football star, Edgar Watson
<a href="#">Sport 14</a>	International teenage athlete, Inzikuru, in action
<a href="#">Sport 15</a>	Athlete Inzikuru, displays medal
<a href="#">Sport 16</a>	Teenage girls jogging
<a href="#">Sport 17</a>	Local football star, Hassan Mubiru
<a href="#">Sport 18</a>	Magic Johnson, celebrity, living with HIV/AIDS
<a href="#">Pastors 19</a>	Pastor Kayanja popular with youth
<a href="#">Teenagers 20</a>	Co-educational school teenagers in uniform
<a href="#">Teenagers 21</a>	Teenagers dressed stylishly pose for a picture
<b>D- Risky behaviour</b>	
<a href="#">girl-boy 22</a>	Intimate teenage lovers out at night
<a href="#">Girl-boy 23</a>	Intimate teenage lovers
<a href="#">Alcohol abuse 24</a>	Child drinking beer
<a href="#">Alcohol abuse 25</a>	Two teenagers lie on a veranda
<a href="#">Drugs 26</a>	Five men chew miraa, a psychotic drug
<b>E- HIV/AIDS effects</b>	
<a href="#">Sick boy 27</a>	Emaciated ill teenager
<a href="#">Sick child 28</a>	Mother with emaciated ill child
<a href="#">Bongole 29</a>	Sickly Bongole Lutaya with mother. Bongole, a music celebrity, was first Ugandan to publicly say he had AIDS
<a href="#">Bongole 30</a>	Bongole Lutaya addresses audience
<a href="#">Street kids31</a>	Street children under a bridge
<a href="#">Street kids32</a>	Group of street children rough-up another
<a href="#">Graves 33</a>	Elderly woman with many children standing besides two graves

After making the picture selection (September 2003) the researcher pre-tested the pictures with a group of 15 adolescents aged between 14 and 19 who were having an informal HIV/AIDS discussion with their families. These teenagers all had ready access to *Straight Talk* through their families who buy *The New Vision* regularly. The researcher conducted the news game activity followed by the discussion, which was used also as a learning activity for the adolescents. This activity in addition to giving the researcher an opportunity to practice the facilitation of the news game was also used to assess the suitability of the pictures and gauge if the gathered data would be useful. The newspapers created by this informal group gave some indication as to the suitability of the exercise in gathering data and some pictures which were considered irrelevant were dropped from the study altogether.

### **Discussion guideline (Appendix ii)**

The discussion was informed by the central goal of the study, which was to investigate how the teenagers who are *Straight Talk* readers negotiate HIV/AIDS messages. The discussion guideline therefore aimed to establish how the teenagers negotiate the HIV/AIDS messages they reproduce in the news game and how proximity to HIV/AIDS, gender and family economic disposition of the teenagers might affect their particular negotiations of the messages.

Accordingly, the created discussion checklist and questions fall in three categories:

Firstly, in order to probe the teenagers' awareness of HIV/AIDS messages in *Straight Talk*, the researcher created the following checklist:

- What HIV/AIDS messages do the teenagers' reproduce?
- How do they reproduce them?
- Do they reproduce the *Straight Talk* preferred meaning? (Abstain from sex, Be faithful or use a Condom?)
- Do they negotiate a different meaning?
- Or do they produce an oppositional meaning?
- Do the teenagers use language similar to *Straight Talk*?
- What language do they use?
- Do they find the information credible?
- Do they find the sources credible?
- Are the HIV/AIDS messages considered relevant?
- Are *Straight Talk* messages considered humorous/emotional?

How and what do they identify with/evaluate/critique?

To enable a further step-by-step probe on why each picture was selected, used or captioned the way it was in the news game the following questions were formed.

- What key message did you want to bring across in your newspaper?
- How different or similar are the messages you have produced to those in *Straight Talk*?
- What important lessons do you learn from *Straight Talk*?
- Do you think your friends believe the messages in *Straight Talk*? How do you know?
- What messages do they find believable?
- What messages don't they find believable?
- What messages do you like in *Straight Talk*? Why?
- What messages don't you like in *Straight Talk*? Why?
- What do you remember most in *Straight Talk*?

Secondly, to establish how the teenagers' experiences and proximity to HIV/AIDS influence their reading of *Straight Talk* the following checklist was created:

- Who are these students?
- What messages and characters do they identify with?
- How do they interpret the messages?
- Do they see themselves/friends in the messages?
- How do they perceive *Straight Talk* as penetrating their environment/space?

From the above checklist the following questions were formed:

- Do you think your friends are practising safe sex? How do you know?
- Do you think your friends are abstaining?
- Do you think your friends use condoms?
- Do you know anybody with HIV/AIDS?
- Do you have a relative with HIV/AIDS?
- Have you nursed any patient with HIV/AIDS?
- Do you think your friends could get HIV/AIDS?
- Do you think you could get HIV/AIDS?

Finally, to establish how gender and economic disposition might affect teenage negotiations of HIV/AIDS messages, the focus groups were selected to cater for the variables of gender and family economic disposition and the following checklist guided the researcher:

- Do girls perceive the HIV/AIDS media messages differently from boys? How differently?

What is different? Note any difference in material selection or use.  
What is more likely to appeal to boys/girls?  
How does family economic background affect the teenagers reading of the HIV/AIDS messages in *Straight Talk*?  
How differently are the meanings negotiated?  
What meanings do the economically disadvantaged make?  
What meanings do the economically advantaged make?  
Are the economically disadvantaged likely to be more keen for knowledge?  
Is there a difference in the way *Straight Talk* is considered/used by the socially advantaged/disadvantaged?

### **Research procedure**

In September 2003, the researcher made appointments with the individual co-ordinating teachers to explain to them the purpose of the research project and to seek permission to hold the research in the schools. Some schools were very willing to assist with the research but it was more difficult getting permission in two of the schools. In one of the schools only the head teacher could give permission for research involving students and he was not available till later and in the other, the head teacher needed assurance about the researcher's ability to handle the teenagers on such a sensitive issue involving sexuality and HIV/AIDS. These misgivings were cleared in an interview with the head teacher and researcher, and here the researcher's profile as an ex-teacher in one of the Kampala schools served to convince the head teacher. Due to time limitations and lack of ready access to the schools it was not feasible for the researcher to personally select the participants though it would have been preferable. The co-ordinating teachers did the selection of the participants through the students' voluntary *Straight Talk* or HIV/AIDS clubs to enable the inclusion of students who read *Straight Talk*. Since one of the major resource materials in these clubs is *Straight Talk* newspaper it is assumed that the participants would be regular readers. The researcher still emphasised that only students who read *Straight Talk* regularly be invited for the focus groups. At the beginning of every focus group the participants were asked if they read *Straight Talk* regularly and in most cases they did, even the few who did not read it every month said they read it whenever it was available. Subsequently between October 8 and October 15, 2003, four focus groups were conducted in Kanemu Co-education School, Kanabiri Girls School, Kanasatu Boys College, and Kaine High School.

## **News game**

For the news game the teenagers were provided with material like glue, pairs of scissors, markers, newsprint and 33 pictures. In practice each group used between six and ten of the available pictures. After brief introductions in which the purpose of the research was stated, the eight or ten teenagers were divided into two groups of four or five each and given materials with which to produce their newspaper. The instructions given were that they play journalists and produce their own front page of a newspaper aimed at educating their age-mates about HIV/AIDS (News game guideline, Appendix iii). They were to decide on a name for their newspaper and which HIV/AIDS themes to cover, to choose pictures from the provided selection, write their own captions, write short 50-100 word stories and draw cartoons if they so wished. Though the students were asked in advance to bring additional raw material which they might want to use to make their HIV/AIDS newspaper, no group did. They therefore used what the researcher provided and in a few cases drew cartoons and wrote brief stories. The news game was followed by a structured discussion.

## **Data collection and analysis**

To help in the voice identification during the transcription the participants introduced themselves briefly at the beginning of the focus group. They were asked their name, age and career aspirations. As the teenagers discussed their product, the researcher noted their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about HIV/AIDS.

During the news game the focus groups were divided into two groups of four to five teenagers each and each of these smaller groups produced a newspaper. In their groups the teenagers shared out roles and worked at the tasks as the researcher monitored the activity. Eight newspapers were produced altogether by the four focus groups (Appendix iv). During the process the researcher recorded how much of the HIV/AIDS messages the teenagers reproduced and how different/similar the HIV/AIDS messages the teenagers reproduced were from those in *Straight Talk*. The newspaper creation exercise and the actual newspapers created gave useful insights into the teenagers' grasp, understanding and negotiations of the HIV/AIDS media messages. In the next chapter, the newspaper

picture selection, use, captioning, stories, cartoons, headlines are analysed to enable an insight into the key HIV/AIDS messages as negotiated by these youth. The newspapers are also probed to see if the teenagers reproduce the *Straight Talk* dominant messages or reject them, or if they negotiate a different meaning.

The discussions during the news game and the subsequent structured discussion were also recorded, transcribed (Appendix v) and later analysed to probe the teenagers' negotiations of HIV/AIDS messages. One key aspect analysed in this category is the teenagers' reproduction of the major messages of *Straight Talk* (Abstain from sex, Be faithful or use a Condom). The discussions are also probed to see if the teenagers reproduce the *Straight Talk* dominant messages, reject them or reproduce different messages altogether.

To establish how the teenagers' lived experiences influence the teenagers' negotiations of the HIV/AIDS messages, the recorded material was probed for major themes like the teenagers' proximity to HIV/AIDS, risky behaviour and their perception of their own vulnerability in relation to HIV/AIDS. The material was also assessed for the teenage participants' perception of *Straight Talk*'s penetration of their environment/space.

The focus groups had been formed with the demographic factors of gender and family economic disposition in mind so as to enable an assessment on how the two factors may affect the teenager's negotiation of the HIV/AIDS messages. The discussions were therefore assessed to see whether girls would perceive the HIV/AIDS media messages differently from boys. Accordingly the recordings were also probed for any differences caused by economic disposition in the reading of the HIV/AIDS messages.

### **Difficulties encountered**

In some cases the recording quality was poor and it was difficult identifying the different voices during the transcription. The researcher found it necessary to visit five schools in the study instead of the proposed four because the recordings in the first co-educational school were not clear.

It was difficult to gauge the time for the news game activity because of the differences in the ability of teenagers. The more advantaged schools got into the journalist role more easily and faster than the less advantaged school.

## Chapter Four

### Study findings

#### Introduction

Having set the context for the study, in Chapter One and provided the theoretical framework and research methodology in Chapter Two and Three respectively, this chapter now reports the findings of the research. The study was undertaken with four groups of Kampala teenagers<sup>4</sup> who are all readers of *Straight Talk* and are also either *Straight Talk* or AIDS Club members. The findings are reported in three sections. The first section describes the eight newspapers produced in the news game by the teenagers<sup>5</sup>. The second section then gives an account of the teenagers' reproduction of the key *Straight Talk* messages namely, Abstain, Be faithful or use a Condom. It also reports on the teenagers' awareness of modes of HIV transmission including teenager perception of risk. Finally, the third section reports the findings on how lived realities like proximity to HIV/AIDS, gender and economic disposition interact with the respondents' negotiation of HIV/AIDS messages. While the researcher attempted to include only teenagers who frequently read *Straight Talk* in the study, these teenagers do not depend only on *Straight Talk* for information on HIV/AIDS. As discussed in Chapter Two, it is acknowledged that people are not dependant on a single source for information and that acceptance and rejection of a media message is influenced by the people's beliefs, histories and experiences (Philo, 1993).

#### News game

As identified and described in Chapter Three in each of the four schools included in the study, one focus group was conducted and for the purpose of the news game, was divided

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<sup>4</sup> The study participants are referred to as teenagers in the discussion.

<sup>5</sup> In Uganda though English is the official language and the medium of instruction in schools, it is a second language to most people. Many teenagers may therefore not have a good grasp of the language. Quotes from the teenagers' discussions or writings in the news game are presented unedited, so as to avoid tampering with their originality.

into two groups of four or five teenagers each. Each news game group produced one front page of an HIV/AIDS newspaper targeting youth, producing eight newspapers in total. The front pages that were produced are each discussed below by considering first their picture choice and captions, the HIV/AIDS themes covered, and the stories and cartoons they included. The pictures are discussed with reference to the five categories identified in the previous chapter, that is the ABC *Straight Talk* HIV/AIDS messages (category A), the *Straight Talk* HIV/AIDS transmission messages (category B), the ‘alternative lifestyle/ activities’ (category C), ‘risky behaviour’ (category D) and the ‘HIV/AIDS effects’ category (E). Table 2 below shows the pictures used in each category and each newspaper. See Appendix i for actual pictures<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Pictures are identified by numbering in Appendix i

**Table 2: Choice of pictures selected for news games**

Pictures by category	Total Pix by category	Kanabiri Reality	Kanabiri Teens Against AIDS	Kanasatu Teens speak out	Kanasatu The Eye opener	Kaine The Youth Talk	Kaine This Life	Kanemu Speaking Facts	Kanemu The Youth Daily
<b>A- AIDS ABC messages totals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
Wedding 1	5		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Man-woman3	3	✓			✓			✓	
Gaetano 4	2			✓				✓	
Condom 5	5	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Condom 6	1				✓				
Condom 7	5		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
<b>B- HIV Transmission totals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
Breastfeed 8	2	✓				✓			
Breastfeed 9	1		✓						
Injection 10	1		✓						
Safe blood 12	2		✓						✓
<b>C-Alternative lifestyle/ activities totals</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Sport 15	2			✓			✓		
Sport 16	4		✓	✓				✓	✓
Sport 17	1					✓			
Teenagers20	2	✓							✓
Teenagers21	1	✓							
<b>D- Risky behaviour totals</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Girl-boy 22	4			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Girl-boy 23	1						✓		
Alcohol 24	1		✓						
Alcohol 25	3				✓	✓	✓		
Drugs 26	1					✓			
<b>E- HIV/AIDS effects totals</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Sick boy 27	3	✓			✓		✓		
Sick child 28	1	✓							
Bongole 29	3				✓	✓	✓		
Bongole 30	5	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓
Street kids32	3		✓				✓	✓	
Graves 33	7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Total Pix by groups</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

## Newspaper front-page analysis

### School 1: Kanabiri Girls School

The two newspapers produced by Kanabiri Girls School, a single sex up-market school, were named *Reality* and *The Teens Against AIDS* (See Appendix iv for the eight teenage newspapers). During the news game the girls were split into two groups of 15-16 and 17-19 by accident rather than design because the older girls had another commitment and came in 20 minutes later. *Reality* newspaper produced by the 15-16 year old girls contained nine pictures evenly distributed across their broadsheet page. They placed a thin masthead<sup>7</sup> stating the newspaper title, *Reality*, at the top and below it a kicker<sup>8</sup>, “Fact or fiction”, and their main headline, which is placed at the top left-hand side was “This is the truth”. Below the headline they introduce their newspaper with the words,

There is no need for teenagers to pretend or hide their heads in the sand, AIDS is real. Many teenagers assume that they know all about AIDS but do you really know? ... We are discussing what most of you think you know - the spread of AIDS.

The selected pictures and captions fit the theme “The spread of AIDS”. This group gave each picture a bold headline at the top and often, though not always, a caption at the bottom, a common feature in Ugandan newspapers though not used in *Straight Talk*. Of the nine pictures used, four were taken from the HIV/AIDS effects category (thereby privileging this category), two from the ABC *Straight Talk* messages, one from the HIV transmission category, two from the ‘alternative lifestyle/ activities’ category and non from the risky behaviour category (see Table 2 for picture choice and categories).

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<sup>7</sup> A ‘masthead’ is the newspaper name usually bold and in large print and carried at the top of page one; it is also referred to as a flagship or banner.

<sup>8</sup> A kicker is a sub headline, less bold than the main headline placed above or under the main headline to highlight an important point that the headline has not picked on.

Their central image, placed in the centre of the page and presented larger than the others was taken from the ‘HIV/AIDS effects’ category E. It presents an image of an emaciated, ill and hospitalised teenager who, however, might appear much younger (27)<sup>9</sup> with the headline “*AIDS don’t discriminate*” and no caption. Immediately below is another picture from this category with the mother carrying an emaciated and sickly looking child (28), with a headline “Children can contact the virus from the mother”. They used two other pictures from ‘HIV/AIDS effects’ category, namely that of the late Philly Bongole Lutaya (30), headlined “Open up” and captioned “The only way to solve the problem is to talk about it”. Bongole was a famed local musician who was among the first Ugandans to publicly declare that he was living with AIDS. *Reality* also used the picture of a rural elderly woman with eleven children, presumably grand children all orphaned to AIDS, posing for a photograph besides two graves (33). It is captioned “Many children become orphaned every day as a result of AIDS.”

Two pictures from category A ‘ABC *Straight Talk* messages’ were included. After a heated debate on whether to include the condom picture (5) lest it gave false confidence to their imaginary audience, one of the teenagers convinced the rest that it was desirable to give people who could not abstain from sex an alternative. Eventually it was agreed that the picture be included but cautiously, with the headline, “Condoms are not 100% safe” and the caption, “Condoms are not a guarantee that you will not get affected so it is best to abstain”. They thus produce a negotiated decoding (Hall, 1980) of the dominant *Straight Talk* message about condoms. The other picture from this category was that of a man and woman in a garden (3) and it was captioned, “Early relationships with older men should be avoided”.

The *Reality* team used two pictures (20 and 21) from ‘alternative lifestyle/ activities’ (category C). In the discussion surrounding the choice of “schoobies” (their terminology for schoolboys) the girls showed real interest in the picture of teenage boys, their age

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<sup>9</sup> In the discussion pictures are identified by numbers placed in brackets.

cohort, and even seemed to recognise some faces. The girls in this up-market school obviously identify with the stylish boys in the picture who appear to be from affluent backgrounds and would probably attend up-market schools. They gave the picture the headline, “Stand out from the crowd, Abstain!” and captioned it “Learn to stand up to your age mates not every thing they say or do is right”. They included another similar picture of smartly dressed teenagers in a co-educational school with a headline “You can have a health girl-boy relationship” and the caption “Girls and boys can be friends without involving yourselves in sex. In many relationships either the boy or girl may demand for sex but is your duty to say no”. This younger girls group was the only one that used these two pictures together.

In summary then, *Reality* included more images of the effects of AIDS, sickness and death, it had two pictures each from the alternative lifestyle/ activities and the *Straight Talk ABC* messages and excluded images from the risk category. It therefore could be argued that this group demonstrate a concern for the effects of AIDS and an interest in healthy boy-girl relationships, but are reluctant to include the condom message because of their acceptance of abstinence which in effect renders the condom message redundant.

The other newspaper produced in Kanabiri Girls School, *The Teens Against AIDS*, comprised of older girls aged 17-19. They produced a neat newspaper with the pictures evenly spaced across the page. They cropped some of them and shaped others as they saw fit. A neat masthead was centred at the top of the page and their newspaper included eleven pictures and a cartoon drawn by one of them. They identified their themes as “The struggle against HIV/AIDS” and “We need the teens alive” and stated these at the top and bottom of the page respectively. Of the eleven pictures used, three each were selected from the three categories of: the *ABC Straight Talk* key messages, the HIV transmission, and the HIV/AIDS effects. In addition one picture was selected from each of the risky behaviour and the alternative lifestyle activities categories.

The picture of the mother breast-feeding a malnourished, sickly baby (9) was given more space than the other images and positioned carefully on the page first. It was from

category B (the effects of AIDS) and was captioned “Infected mothers can also infect their own babies”. Under it they listed other modes of infection: “Other causes could also be: Unprotected sex, peer influence, blood transfusion (infected blood)”. They seem to be aware of the modes of HIV transmission though their inclusion of peer influence in this list indicates a confusion of actual transmission with social influences. Besides this they had a picture of an arm filling a syringe (10) with a caption “Unsterilized needles used on infected people transmit AIDS. Beware”. They also used picture 12 of school children in a campaign for safe blood captioned “young people should join clubs”. *The Teens Against AIDS* was the only newspaper that used three pictures from the HIV transmission category the others used either one or none.

From category A of the ABC *Straight Talk* messages, three pictures were selected: namely, that of a church wedding (1) with the caption: “Not before marriage learn to wait” and two pictures of condoms (7 and 5). This older group was more tolerant of the condom message than the previous one. The picture of a social worker demonstrating the use of a female condom (7) and the picture of a group promoting the Protector Condom (5) were both captioned: “Always use condoms.”

Then, from HIV/AIDS effects category this group selected three pictures (30, 32, 33). The image of Bongole was captioned: “Infected patients should share experience with the youth”. The rural elderly woman with eleven children besides two graves (33) read: “He died of AIDS and now they are all alone”. Their concern for HIV/AIDS orphans is manifest in their use of a picture of street children (32) with the caption: “Orphans then become street children”. The picture of a ten-year-old drinking from a beer bottle while he holds another beer can in the other hand (24) was captioned, “His parents died of AIDS, and now he is drinking”. This picture was included by the researcher as a possible illustration for risky behaviour, but here the group employ it differently and attribute the boys’ abuse of alcohol to the effects of HIV/AIDS.

The two other pictures include a picture of a teenage couple taken at night (24) selected from the risky behaviour category. Here, a boy who is holding a girl has his back to the

camera while the girl faces the camera and appears to be looking straight into his eyes. This picture was captioned “Learn to say no”. Arguably this caption is talking to girls. The picture of teenage girls jogging (16) is from category C ‘alternative lifestyle/activities’ and captioned “Let us involve ourselves in co-curricular activities”.

Interestingly both groups at Kanabiri Girls School foreground children. *The Teens Against AIDS* is worried about orphans and three of their pictures are used in relation to orphans. For *Reality*, the younger group, out of the nine pictures used three contain children’s images. This, it can be argued may relate to their gendering as girls and the nurturing / mothering role socially anticipated of them.

Of all the groups, *The Teens Against AIDS* used the largest number of pictures from the ABC *Straight Talk* messages and the HIV transmission category, six pictures in all. Their newspaper comes out as reproducing the key HIV/AIDS *Straight Talk* messages most. Their layout which is picture-based is, however, not similar to *Straight Talk*.

It was also noted that the older girls were more balanced in their choice of pictures and used pictures from all categories while the younger girls used no picture from the risky behaviour category, a sign that the younger girls could be ignoring risk or assuming sexual abstinence. Greene et al. (1996) observed that adolescents’ risk-taking may simply reflect cognitive-social immaturity and recommend that health messages should build on the developmental aspects of adolescent information processing.

## **School 2: Kanasatu Boys College**

The focus group in Kanasatu Boys College, an economically advantaged, single-sexed, boys’ school produced *Teens Speak Out* and *The Eye Opener*. The newspaper, *Teens Speak Out*, contains seven pictures arranged in two rows with plenty of white space in between. They do not cut out any of their pictures and do not spell out their themes. Their masthead is small and centred at the top of the page. Of their seven pictures, three are

from the ABC *Straight Talk* messages, (category A), two from ‘alternative lifestyle/activities’ (category C), one each from the risky behaviour and the HIV/AIDS effects categories respectively, but none at all from the HIV/AIDS transmission category. They also wrote two advice pieces to their imaginary audience of teenagers.

The most prominently used picture in their newspaper was that of a girl and boy out at night (22) selected from the risky behaviour category (D). It was presented as larger than the others and was the first picture to be pasted on the page. It is captioned, “Why not? A boy and his girlfriend meeting outside a pub, the boy is apparently convincing the girl to have sex. Isn’t it worth waiting for?” The other picture used here in relation to risky behaviour is a picture of housemates from the M-Net reality television show, Gaetano and Abby (4). It is anchored thus: “What Gaetano and Abby did in the big brother house is not good for teenagers (having sex). Teenagers should abstain from sex until after marriage since AIDS is still present<sup>10</sup>.” The group follows this up with an advice piece:

Is it worth waiting?

Fellow teenagers, what if we didn’t have early sex and instead waited for a happy marriage, wouldn’t it be nice? You guys and girls should know something, in movies all seems to be fine and there always happy endings which is not reality but where we live there are terrible consequences, so let us not let what we see in the newspaper or even in books turn us away from the correct path.

The inclusion of the advice piece indicates that this group of teenagers are aware of situations that could lead to HIV/AIDS exposure and they advocate abstention as a remedy. The message is critical of media portrayals of love and sex as unrealistic, with potentially devastating rather than romantic consequences.

*Teens Speak Out* also included two pictures that relate to the major *Straight Talk* HIV/AIDS messages (category A). The illustration of the Protector condom promotion

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<sup>10</sup> This picture had been introduced in relation to the major ABC messages of *Straight Talk* (category A) with the assumption that the teenagers would consider the Gaetano and Abby relationship as between two adults who most probably would have protected sex.

(5) is captioned, "Life is about making decisions. You can't abstain then use a condom". The church wedding picture (1) is captioned: "Here is a chance: Waiting for your chance to have a trustworthy partner like the above couple could be a better resolution. Remember that premarital sex is dangerous to your life". The second advice piece is consistent with the major ABC *Straight Talk* messages, which this group aptly reproduced.

AIDS kills beware!

By fellow teens

It has been already talked about, the scourge of AIDS. Even singers like Destiny's Child encourage using condoms and most importantly abstinence. Having self control, self-respect and even being optimistic about your future could be found quite useful in avoiding death, suffering and even disappointment in life.

Teenagers we can avoid acquiring a preventable disease like AIDS.

From category C of alternative lifestyle/ activities two pictures were used, namely one of girls jogging (16) captioned "Sports can keep your mind busy and away from sex" and the other of teenage athlete star, Docus Inzikuru (15) with the caption, "She's a winner: In order to become a winner in life, you must love it and thus live it". This boys group is the only group that used two pictures from this category, probably an indication of their enjoyment of sports. (When these boys joined the focus group they had their sports wear on and told the researcher they had just been playing football.)

The only picture from category E 'HIV/AIDS effects' used by the *Teens Speak Out*, is of an elderly woman with eleven young children besides two graves (33). The caption reads: "Had they chosen to use condoms, they wouldn't be in the dark, cold and lonely ditches". Interestingly, this contrasts with both groups' from Kanabiri Girls School who used this picture as relating to orphans.

*The Eye Opener* newspaper, which was produced by the second group at Kanasatu Boys College, used ten pictures mostly with lengthy captions. Their masthead is neatly centred in the top middle part of their broad-sheet page. Their pictures are evenly spread on the page with little white space in between them. Their main theme, which they do not indicate on the page but clarify in the discussion, is 'to educate the youth about AIDS'.

They use four pictures from both the ‘HIV/AIDS effects’ and the ABC Straight Talk messages categories (E and A), two from the risky behaviour category (D) and none from either the HIV transmission and alternative activities categories (B and C) respectively. Their four central pictures are from the ‘HIV/AIDS effects’ category E, thereby privileging this category. The emaciated sick boy picture (27) is captioned “This is the results of AIDS. The child above could have probably got it at birth from the mother”. The second picture is of the legendary musician, Bongole Lutaya besides his elderly mother (29) captioned: “AIDS is the leading killer disease, it has ruled over man simply because of ignorance. Despite the amount of money and wealth you have as long as you are ignorant of AIDS it will sweep you off”. Their third picture (30) is also Bongole addressing an audience captioned, “They have been there they have felt the pain. So learn and listen to whatever they say. It is very easy, try it out”. The fourth picture is the graveyard scene (33) captioned, “The people above are unhappy and are mourning after the death of many of their relatives. He/She could have died of AIDS”.

Then, from the ABC *Straight Talk* messages (category A) they included four pictures, two of them of condoms. The female condom picture (7) was captioned “However all this can be prevented through the following ways. For example the use of condoms as shown by the lady above that is having protected sex”. The male condom display picture (6) was captioned: “The man above shows us one of the ways to prevent AIDS. This is by use of condoms, as they say prevention is better than cure”. They also used two pictures to advocate the advantages of abstaining from sex until marriage. Marriage is presented here as desirable and something to look forward to. The picture of Natasha Museveni sharing a drink with her husband on their wedding day (1) is captioned: “NBM: ‘Not Before Marriage’. God made sex to be wonderful not painful through early sex and thus AIDS”. The other picture was that of adult lovers out in a garden (3) and it was anchored: “A happy couple have a good afternoon at the beach. This is a result of waiting till marriage”.

From the ‘risky situation’ category D, *The Eye Opener* selected the image of a girl and boy out at night (22) captioned “When we start relationships as at a young age, we are not

emotionally mature and we are ignorant of AIDS. Watch out live and love your life”. The other picture selected from this category was of two teenagers sleeping outside at night, two beer bottles besides them (25) and it was captioned, “Engaging yourself in peer groups and taking excessive alcohol is very dangerous as this can lead one to lose his self control. You can have sex without your knowledge and without using protective means. This can lead to spread of AIDS which has resulted into sufferings and death of many people”.

It is noteworthy that neither of the boys’ only groups used any picture from the HIV transmission category B, which includes pictures of breast-feeding mothers, injections and a safe blood campaign. In comparison the older girls group from Kanabiri used three pictures in this category. The messages produced by *The Eye Opener* suggest this group of boys have placed emphasis on the effects and prevention of HIV/AIDS but they do not focus on HIV transmission and alternative activities that could keep one safe from HIV/AIDS.

### **School 3: Kaine Private School**

*The Youth Talk* and *This Life* were the titles of the newspapers produced by Kaine Private School, an economically disadvantaged co-educational school.

The pictures in *The Youth Talk* are spread over the broadsheet and separated by captions. The masthead is laid out across the top of the page and their single headline ‘How AIDS is passed on to other people’ is placed in a narrow column on the right hand side of the page. They used a total of ten pictures, three each from the HIV/AIDS effects, and risky behaviour categories, two from the ABC *Straight Talk* messages category and one each from the HIV transmission and alternative lifestyle/activities categories.

Their three most prominent pictures are from the risky behaviour category D. The pictures include alcohol abuse (25) with a caption, “The use of alcohol has led the above men to lose their sense of understanding thus falling on the way, they might be jobless guys who hang around and at the end of the day they are thugs”. A picture of a group of

men chewing miraa, a psychotic drug (26) is captioned “The above are drug addicts. They end up raping girls, defiling, stealing people’s property therefore drugs lead to loss of mental ability and exposure to HIV/AIDS”. The third picture selected from this category is that of a girl and boy in a compromising pose at night (22) with the caption, “Leavers parties attract young girls and boys who end playing unprotected sex and passing AIDS to each other.” It is interesting to note that this school had had a Senior Four leavers’ party the day before the focus group and the caption could relate to risky behaviour observed among some of their peer group. This group also produced a hand drawn cartoon of a girl and boy in a confrontational pose.

From category A of the ABC *Straight Talk* messages *The Youth Talk* foreground pictures of condom displays (5 and 7), one with the caption “Here in this picture, we can view the youth sensitising the mass about the merits of condom use”. The other reads, “The above lady is illustrating how the female condom is used by the females in the normal life”. From category B (HIV/AIDS transmission) they selected picture 8 captioned “Weaning mothers pass on HIV to their babies through breast milk and hence infecting them with the HIV virus ” and from category C ‘alternative activities’ they used a picture of a prominent national football star (17) captioned: “Here we note that some youth end up engaging in sports which helps them pass time and forgetting about love affairs”. This is the only group that used this national football star. In the discussion, it emerged that the picture had been promoted by a boy who liked football. Then from category E of the ‘HIV/AIDS effects’, *The Youth Talk* selected the graveyard image (33) with the caption, “Many Ugandans have lost their relatives and parents due to ignorance about HIV and condom usage”. Then two pictures of Bongole (29 and 30) were included. This group mistakenly captioned one of the pictures “Having had unprotected sex the two partners have lost their weight and their appearance is not good therefore I advise my fellow youth to abstain and always to use condoms because a health body is a health mind”. The teenagers assume that Philly’s mother is his lover and that her frail looks are because she is suffering from an AIDS related illness. That they still think that they can tell from somebody’s appearance if they are infected will be dealt with in subsequent discussion.

*This Life*, the second newspaper produced in Kaine, the economically disadvantaged school, spread their masthead boldly across the top of the page. Their pictures are pasted around the broad-sheet leaving the centre and the right hand side of the page relatively bare. They list the major themes at the bottom left hand corner of the page as “School life, teenage life, HIV/AIDS and how to encourage teenagers”. They use a total of seven pictures with four from the ‘HIV/AIDS effects’ category E, three from the ‘risky behaviour’ category D, one from the alternative activities category C, and none from the HIV transmission and the key ABC *Straight Talk* categories respectively.

Their two central pictures, which are from the risky behaviour category, show a girl and boy out at night (22 and 23). One is captioned “Girls you have to take care of guys because they are liars they are might convince you that they love you yet in actual sense they don’t” and the other “Teenagers do not allow small gifts most especially from the sugar daddies and always stick a big NO not a small one. Do not be taken by worldly pleasures which will end.” The third picture in this category is that of drunken teenage boys lying on a veranda at night (25) with caption, “Teenagers please stay away from drug abuse, rape and even stealing. Most of the teenagers are taken up by small things like smoking, taking alcohol and even joining bad peer groups. Teenagers should take their parents and guardians advice in order to have a good future”. They also draw a cartoon that fits in the risky situation category. A boy is luring a girl into taking alcohol “Hey you come and take alcohol and enjoy the going” and the girl saying “Sorry you are not responsible about my going”.

Four of the pictures are from the HIV/AIDS effects category and the tone is generally empathetic. The emaciated boy (27) is captioned “This life. Young people are affected with AIDS just because of their parents. It really affects and hurts a teenager who finds him or herself affected with HIV/AIDS in future. As a teenager I feel sorry for teenagers in that situation. Parents help the young ones”. Unlike most of the other groups the graveyard picture (33), is captioned both to caution and to advocate empathy: “Teenagers I advise you to take care of your self and do not lose hope. If at all you have HIV/AIDS remember if you play sex you are likely to get other STDs which may kill you faster and

care for the sick because they need our help and education too”. In this category they also use a picture of street children roughing up a colleague and caption it, “Street kids are suffering outside due to uncaring parents. Their parents could have died of AIDS. The girl may get tempted to get an older man to give them what to eat. Of course an older man will ask them for sex and the man might be infected with HIV. So teenagers you have to take care”. Their fourth picture in the HIV/AIDS effects category is Bongole (29) with a caption: “Guys out there you should watch out for the old ones and the remembered ones are mourning and regretting why they had sex but you still have a chance to say No to those who tempt you and if you have got one you trust go for an HIV test please. Please save the coming generation because you are the ones holding it now”.

From the alternative activities category, they use picture 15 of international teenage athlete Docus Inzikuru captioned “It is really good for teenagers to be attracted to sports activities. Like this young boy can never think about drug abuse, stealing and raping because he is ever busy at his sporting activities”. This group mistakes Inzikuru who is consistently in the national media for a boy, an indication that they might have less access to other media as compared to their peers from the economically advantaged schools.

It is noteworthy that this disadvantaged school seems to have placed a lot of emphasis on risky behaviour. In the group discussion the girls expressed fears of rape. They also felt that many times boys and older men took advantage of them. Their social environment exposes them to many risky situations and thus impacts on their negotiation of the HIV/AIDS messages. Their captions for the pictures in the risk behaviour and HIV/AIDS effects categories reflect the sense of risk. Some of the words used by *Youth Talk* in the risky behaviour category include ‘alcohol abuse’, ‘jobless guys’, ‘thugs’, ‘drug addicts’, ‘raping’, ‘defiling girls’, ‘stealing’, ‘exposure to HIV/AIDS’, ‘unprotected sex’, ‘passing AIDS’. *This life*, the other newspaper produced in the same school, employed words like ‘take care’, ‘guys are liars’, ‘small gifts’, ‘sugar daddies’, ‘worldly pleasures’, ‘drug abuse’, ‘rape’, ‘stealing’, ‘alcohol abuse’, ‘bad peer groups’, ‘suffering’, ‘uncaring parents’, ‘death’, ‘tempted’, ‘older men infected with HIV’, ‘take care’, ‘friend raped’, ‘hated men’, ‘failed’, ‘comfort’. In the HIV/AIDS effects category they used words like

‘affected’, ‘hurts’, ‘feel sorry’, ‘death’, ‘regretting’, ‘tempt’. The words selected suggest an awareness of hardship, suffering, vulnerability, exploitation and parental neglect. With this in mind, it is noteworthy that they are not pessimistic here as they encourage one another to fend for themselves. This is portrayed in the advice they give fellow teenagers where they advise them to ‘take care’, ‘do not allow’, ‘do not be taken up’, ‘stay away from’, ‘take advice’, ‘watch out’, ‘do not loose hope’, ‘save coming generation’ and ‘great future’. This hope is also seen in their short story titled ‘Hope after rape’ that advocates support for HIV positive people.

I know a friend who was raped by an HIV positive person. Since then she has hated men and even failed to communicate with her own brother. She never had any one to advise her or to comfort her but when I came to know about it I was forced to give her a word of encouragement. We should not leave people with HIV/AIDS to stand on their own. After encouraging her she was okay so please try to come and comfort people with HIV/AIDS.

In contrast to the advantaged schools, the teenagers in the economically disadvantaged Kaine Private School reproduce fewer of the *Straight Talk* key messages. From the key ABC *Straight Talk* messages and the HIV transmission category, *This life* newspaper included only three pictures and *The Youth Talk* used none. In comparison the two focus groups in the advantaged boys’ school selected a total of seven pictures and the girls’ school used nine pictures from both categories. This needs to be probed more and could relate to many factors.

#### **School 4: Kanemu Co-education School**

Kanemu Co-education School was the second co-educational school<sup>11</sup>. The teenagers in this focus group produced two newspapers, *Speaking Facts* newspaper and *The Youth Daily News*.

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<sup>11</sup> This school was included in the study after the recordings in the first co-educational school were found to be poor.

Speaking Facts newspaper echoed Straight Talk both in content and structure. They used headlines accompanied with text broken down in simple sentences of facts, causes, and solutions, either below or above the pictures just like Straight Talk does. Their pictures are evenly distributed over the page but unlike Straight Talk they do not caption their pictures and their masthead is spread out at the top of the page rather than centred. They used six pictures, four of them from category A of the ABC Straight Talk messages, one each from the alternative activities and risky behaviour categories and none from the HIV transmission and risky behaviour categories. Typical of *Straight Talk*, which does not use scare tactics or sensational images, this is the only group that did not use the picture of the elderly woman with eleven young children besides two graves.

From the ABC *Straight Talk* messages category A, *Speaking Facts* used the picture of a social worker displaying a female condom (7) and they anchored it with the advantages of using condoms which they list as “prevents unwanted pregnancies, and prevents the HIV/AIDS virus from penetrating into uninfected person”. The other picture selected from this category was a church wedding picture (1) with the caption broken down to define and give reasons for marriage. It reads “Marriage: This is the union of man and woman to form one person. Marriage is between mature people only.” The group then lists the reasons for marriage as, “Get children, enjoy sex and unite families”. The other two pictures selected from this category depict two adult male-female couples (2 and 3) with the title, “E.g. of a good marriage” and the following advice to accompany it, “Sex and Relationship: Girls and boys can be friends or in love but must abstain from sex or use condoms. Wait for the right time to have sex”.

From the alternative lifestyle / activities category of pictures (C), they selected a picture of teenagers jogging (16). The accompanying caption lists the advantages of sports as, “Keep them healthy, physical fit, it also reduces the weight, it also keeps youth healthy.”

From the HIV/AIDS effects category of pictures (E), they select a picture of street children’ (32) captioned “This is caused by lack of parental care due to early pregnancies in school by young parents; lack of proper feeding; gambling; lack of educational

services. Solutions: NGOs should support these children; should avoid bad peer pressure”. *The Youth Daily News*, the second newspaper produced in Kanemu Co-education School, lays out their pictures in two rows each with four pictures and plenty of white space in between the rows. Some of their pictures have lengthy titles and all of them bear lengthy captions written as advice. Their masthead is placed at the top right hand of the page. This group used eight pictures, three of them from category A of the ABC *Straight Talk* messages, two each from the alternative lifestyle/activities and HIV/AIDS effects categories, and one from the HIV transmission category. They did not include any from the risky behaviour category.

From category A, of the ABC *Straight Talk* messages, they selected two condom pictures (5 and 7). The male condom picture was titled, “Condoms: campaign for the use of condoms among the youth” and captioned, “The youth are encouraged to use condoms to avoid unwanted pregnancies and STD’s and this can be done by promotions sensitising the youth, for instance distributing condoms free”. The female condom picture was titled, “Proper condom use: A lady demonstrating how a female condom looks like” and captioned “We encourage fellow youth who can’t control their sexual feeling to use condoms to prevent early pregnancies, HIV/STD’s infection”. This group was very vocal in advocating that proper condom use be demonstrated during their school assembly. A church wedding picture (1) was the other picture used in this category. It was titled, “Virginity Power: It’s respect if you are a virgin on your wedding day” and captioned, “It is respect if you are a virgin on your wedding day because you aren’t scared of being infected with HIV/AIDS”. This was a direct reproduction of the ‘abstain’ *Straight Talk* message. This focus group was held in a counselling room decorated with *Straight Talk* calendars with the words ‘Virginity Power’ on them.

From category B ‘HIV transmission’ a picture of children in a campaign for safe blood (12) was titled, “We encourage the fellow youth to stay safe and donate blood to the needy out there” and captioned “stay safe to help the needy who like your blood. To day it is me tomorrow some one else”.

Then, from category C 'health activities/relationships', they selected two pictures, the first was one of teenage girls jogging (16) with a title, "Sports: Sexual feelings can be controlled by sporting" and caption, "Get involved in activities like racing in case you can't control your feelings other than engaging yourself in sex". The second was a picture of teenagers in smart school uniforms (20) titled, "Interact: The youth who have problems can talk to the opposite sex freely for advice" and captioned "Fellow youth talk to the people of the opposite sex in case you have problems with your feelings and you shouldn't be afraid of them because they are your brothers and sisters. It is normal to have them".

From the 'HIV/AIDS effects' category, two pictures (30 & 32) featured. The graveyard picture was titled "Disastrous AIDS is killing our nation and especially the youth" and caption "Fellow youth beware of the deadly disease that is taking away our beloved ones leaving us sad and homeless at that tender age. It's better you abstain or use condoms to protect our generation." While the Bongole picture was titled, "Advise the youth: Elders we encourage you to talk to the young ones about HIV/AIDS" and captioned: "If you find out you are HIV positive never blame your partner or yourself but help to save the future by educating the youth about the deadly HIV/AIDS through conferences having in mind the example that Lutaya set for us."

Both groups in Kanemu Co-education School reproduced more pictures from the ABC *Straight Talk* messages though they used only one picture from the HIV transmission category and they did not use any picture from the risky behaviour category. Though this group seemed to have sexually active teenagers as seen from the words they use to describe sex, they hardly use pictures in the risky behaviour category. For example, some boys in the group compared using condoms to eating sweets with their wrapping. They also talked of their peers having hurried sex in banana plantations with no time to consider condoms.

## Summary

The pictures that were altogether not featured by the teenagers in the study were Edgar Watson, former local football star (13), Magic Johnson (18) and Pastor Robert Kayanja (19). For the first two pictures it is possible that the teenagers did not know or did not identify with the stars because they are rarely featured in the Ugandan press.

From the descriptions of the newspapers the following can be noted. Of a total of sixty-nine pictures used, the teenagers selected twenty-two pictures from the 'HIV/AIDS effects' category E, twenty-one from the ABC *Straight Talk* messages category A, ten each from the alternative lifestyle/ activities and risky behaviour categories respectively and six from the HIV transmission category B.

The HIV/AIDS effects category E, in addition to being the most popular, produced the single most frequently used picture, the graveyard scene (33). Though *Straight Talk* does not employ scare tactics, this category struck a chord with the respondents, which might indicate their preference for hard-hitting and sensational images. This relates to the Ugandan context where HIV/AIDS has reached pandemic proportions. As discussed in Chapter Two, it might also show that lived reality has a strong bearing on negotiation of media messages.

The ABC *Straight Talk* messages category A, was the second most popular category. Twenty-one pictures were selected from this category. Kanasatu Boys College and Kanemu Co-education School featured seven pictures each from this category, Kanabiri Girls School five and the disadvantaged Kaine Private School only three. Apart from one group from Kaine Private School that did not select any picture from this category, and one group from Kanabiri Girls School that used the condom picture (5) reluctantly, there seemed to be no significant difference in the manner in which the other teenagers reproduced the ABC *Straight Talk* messages. On the whole, the ease with which the teenagers reproduced the key *Straight Talk* messages on abstinence, faithfulness and condom use could be an indication of the success of the campaign. Details of the discussions on condoms are given in the subsequent section.

Surprisingly, pictures from category B ‘HIV transmission’ were least featured by the different news game groups. Kanabiri Girls School group selected four pictures, the mid-income Kanemu Co-education School and the disadvantaged Kaine Private School one picture each, while Kanasatu Boys School used none. This could be an indication that either the HIV transmission messages do not appeal to these groups of teenagers or that over the years, the HIV/AIDS media campaigns have laid less emphasis on the HIV transmission messages. Specific content analysis research would, however, be necessary to ascertain this.

It is noteworthy that category D, ‘risky behaviour’ images and category C alternative, ‘lifestyle/activities’ were not foregrounded by the teenagers except by two groups from the disadvantaged Kaine Private School who together used six pictures. All together only ten pictures were used from this category as compared to twenty-two from the effects of HIV/AIDS category and twenty-one from the ABC *Straight Talk* messages. The two groups from the advantaged Kanasatu Boys College selected a total of only three pictures from this category while Kanabiri Girls’ School featured only one and Kanemu Co-education School none. This could imply that the teenagers are ignoring the fact that they are at risk or that because the ABC messages predominate, the risky behaviour images become redundant.

It is interesting to note that though the researcher had allocated the alternative lifestyle/activities category (C) nine pictures and the other categories had between five and seven pictures each, fewer pictures (ten) were featured from this category. The pictures in this category were one of a pastor (19), two of stylishly dressed teenagers (20 and 21) and six of local and international sports personalities (13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18). This could indicate the necessity for HIV/AIDS media messages to emphasise the link between lifestyle and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

An examination of the teenagers’ newspaper designs indicates that in some cases the teenagers reproduced certain structural elements of *Straight Talk*. For example, *The*

*Teens Against AIDS* produced in Kanabiri Girls School and *Speaking Facts* produced in Kanemu Co-education School presented the content broken down to include facts, causes and solutions just like *Straight Talk* does. The other six newspapers had a picture-based layout that could have been influenced by the fact that the teenagers were encouraged by the researcher to use as many pictures as they liked. Philo (1990) also had similar findings. Some of the stories produced in the news game in his miners' strike study reflected not only the thematic content of the news but also the structure of actual headlines. Kitzinger (1993) also found that in the news game a wide variety of people produced images about AIDS that were similar to the media accounts. However, while the news game produced interesting detail, the crucial issue for all these pieces of research is whether the participants believe what they reproduce. Consequently, the following section will investigate the teenagers' negotiations of the produced images.

### **Negotiation of key *Straight Talk* messages**

Having looked at the newspaper reports, this section now considers the structured discussion that accompanied the news game so as to better establish the meanings that the teenagers who read *Straight Talk* construct in relation to HIV/AIDS messages. In particular, emphasis is placed on how the teenagers negotiate the ABC and the 'HIV transmission' messages, which are the key *Straight Talk* messages.

### **Abstain, Be faithful or use a Condom (ABC)**

This section discusses the teenagers' negotiation of the ABC messages, beginning with the 'A' message that advocates abstinence from sexual contact. In relation to this message, it is striking that picture 1 of Natasha Museveni and her husband drinking a toast on their wedding day was featured five times, making it one of the most popular pictures in the whole news game. In the captions that accompanied this picture, the wedding day was constructed as a very important occasion, one to look forward to. In relation to this image the teenagers thus reproduced the *Straight Talk* message that it was desirable to abstain from sex till marriage though there was evidence that this negotiation was influenced by other campaigns as well. In both Kanabiri Girls School and Kanasatu Boy's College the words 'Not before marriage' were used in relation to picture (1), a

slogan deployed by the more conservative Family Network Campaign, a Christian group that advocates that teenagers abstain from sex until marriage. Some teenagers said that this group had conducted HIV/AIDS workshops in their school.

Further probing elicited a range of other responses. Many of the teenagers admitted that it was difficult to abstain from sex because of the pressures around them. This is what the focus group in Kanemu, the mid-income co-educational school had to say about abstaining from sex till marriage.

**R<sup>12</sup>**- Is it as easy as you say?

**M3**- It is not easy.

**F4**- It is not.

**M4**- I think it is easy.

**F4**- It is not easy.

**M2**- *Wama* [You see] it depends on how one can control the feelings, if you cannot...

Similarly, in Kanasatu Boys College the teenagers wanted government to curb the teenage exposure to pornography. The discussion is reproduced below.

**R**- Do you people have girl friends? I don't mean lovers, but friends?

**M6**- Yes.

**R**- How easy is it not to think about sex?

**M1**- It is easy.

**R**- For him it is easy. What do others think?

**M1**- It becomes easy. As you grow old, it becomes easy.

**R**- Why do you think it is easier as you grow older?

**M1**- OK, when you are young when you meet a girl or a girl meets a boy, you are shy so that thing is ...

**R**- How easy is it for other teenagers to abstain? Don't think about yourselves. How easy is it for teenagers to abstain?

**M1**- It is very easy so longer as you keep yourself busy or if you feel ...

**M2**- I think it is hard, because when you think about sex...pornography...

**M4**- Me, I think it is not easy because all the movies they watch...

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<sup>12</sup> **R**- Researcher's voice

**F**- Female voices (numbers indicate different individuals)

**M**- Male voice (numbers indicate different individuals)

**M?**- An unidentifiable voice

It is possible that many more teenagers are encountering pornography in *Red Pepper*<sup>13</sup> and on the Internet and HIV/AIDS media interventions might have to come out more boldly to address the issue. One teenager in Kanasatu Boys College said outright, “I think they (government) should also put restrictions on papers like *Red Pepper*”. In a youth HIV/AIDS sentinel site monitoring and evaluation project in South Africa, Kelly et al., 2000 found similar sentiments that popular media, and especially music videos on television and soap operas, have created a context for the acceptance of casual sexual relationships and unfaithfulness and that could be counteracting adoption of safe sex behaviour. They recommended that further studies be done on the issue.

Though the study participants had the factual information about the advantages of abstaining and reproduced them accurately in the news game, some aspects of their own life and circumstances like exposure to pornographic material appear to make it difficult, so some of them undertake a negotiated reading. They understand and acknowledge what is dominantly defined in *Straight Talk* about abstinence but operate by making a more negotiated reading to suit their own individual conditions.

Two girls in Kanabiri Girls School insisted that it was possible to abstain from sex until marriage. They said their mothers had waited to have sex and these girls in particular said they believed the *Straight Talk* message that it was possible to wait until marriage. One of these girls later said her father talked to her about the pressures of adolescence from a Christian perspective and she could openly discuss issues to do with her sexuality with him. In this case these girls’ family experiences and relationships were strengthening their acceptance of the *Straight Talk* dominant message that it was possible to abstain from sex until marriage even if many of their age mates around them rejected this message. As proposed by Hall (1980), audiences interpret what they hear and see in the context of what they already know or think.

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<sup>13</sup> *Red Pepper* is a pornographic publication sold openly on the streets because the pornography laws are not enforced.

The B (be faithful) *Straight Talk* message did not generate much discussion among the teenagers. Possibly it is understood as a message directed at adults. Also a glance at the *Straight Talk* content over 2003, the year of this study, shows that it has not been emphasised as much as the other two messages, Abstain (from sex) or (use a) Condom. The possibility of being faithful in a teenage love relationship outside marriage was contested. For example this was the discussion in Kanasatu Boys College.

**R-** Are there teenagers who are being faithful? They are not using condoms and not abstaining?

**M2-** Yeah.

**M5-** I don't think so.

**R-** You think it is not possible?

**M?** It is not.

**M2-** It is.

Interestingly, when the Kanabiri Girls School group discussed the issue of faithfulness they identified men as the cause of the problem.

**F4-** Basically we are encouraging the youth to wait until they are married and when they are in relationships they should trust one another.

**F6-** Mutual trust, sticking to one another.

**R-** Is that an achievable goal?

**F7-** Aah, aah I don't think ...

**F4-** It is not achievable.

**F3-** It is, but not easy.

**F8-** In the world today it is not.

**F1-** No.

**F9-** Yeah it is but not easy, unless you have these other God-fearing husbands.

**F2-** By the way all men are the same.

**F1-** No you cannot say that all husbands are the same.

**F7-** Mariah?

**F2-** What?

**F6-** You cannot say that all the men are the same.

**F2-** For the women they are okay but the husbands...

**F3-** All are the same.

That the message that advocates faithfulness is questioned relates also to the social-cultural realities of these teenagers. Uganda is both a polygamous and patriarchal society where men often marry many women, have concubines and extra-marital affairs. Women, on the other hand are expected to be monogamous and any deviation by a woman is judged harshly by the society. Thus, the 'Be faithful' message is negotiated in this

context. Hall (1980) recognised that certain symbols can be so widely distributed in sections of society and learned at such an early age that they appear not to be constructed. However, such naturalised symbols are specific and may be decoded differently depending on the cultural, social or political context of the reader. In this case most of the girls within this social / cultural context are making a negotiated reading of the 'Be faithful' *Straight Talk* message.

The C (use a condom) part of the *Straight Talk* messages produced heated discussions in all the focus groups. Pictures of social workers displaying condoms were among the most widely used pictures. Every newspaper, except one group from Kaine, the economically disadvantaged school, used a picture in this category. In most of the captions the teenagers reproduced the dominant *Straight Talk* message "If you can't abstain, always use condoms and use them correctly". Some groups like *Speaking Facts* (Kanemu Co-education School) and *The Teens Against AIDS* (Kanabiri Girls School) even reproduced captions with similar wordings but the subsequent discussions revealed that many of them were uncertain and confused about the absolute safety of the condoms.

Interestingly, the group of younger girls from Kanabiri Girls School rejected the condom message completely and even produced an oppositional caption which echoed this dilemma: "Condoms are not 100% safe, Condoms are not a guarantee that you will not get affected so it is best to abstain". Below the participants from Kanabiri Girls School discuss this issue:

**R-**You have said that for the majority of people it is impossible to be faithful, how come your group was reluctant to use the condom pictures?

**F1-** Aah.

**F3-** Generally it is better to abstain than to use a condom because they may be 90, 90% safe. Then you, the good girl, the best in the class and everything, you say, just once, and that one-day you get pregnant and AIDS as well.

**F4-** One day we attended a Tarzan AIDS<sup>14</sup> workshop, so, someone said that it would have made sense if we didn't come up with things like condoms, masturbation, so that people had to abstain. If you don't you die, but now people

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<sup>14</sup> Tarzan AIDS workshops was a one-off outreach to schools organised by some Ugandan Musician.

have condoms and think they are safe, whereby men will put holes in them, those funny things.

**F2-** People don't practise what they preach. The same men you find screaming about abstinence, are the same you find with a 16-year girl.

**F4-** There is really confusion, you don't know what to pick.

**F7-** Yeah.

In all the focus groups there was talk of different visiting teams or alternative campaigns that presented different positions and their message was that condoms were porous and could let the virus through. The teenagers in this study have thus received contradictory information from anti-condom campaigners and this position competes with the *Straight Talk* messages, influencing their acceptance and negotiation of the message on the safety of the condom. Similarly, in Philo's study, one reason given for doubting the television news account on the miners' strikes was the comparison of it with other sources of information, such as local press or other current affairs programmes and radio (Philo, 1993).

In addition to the fear that the condoms were porous, there was considerable concern about expired condoms on the market. Some boys said they actually had seen expired condoms and that the shopkeeper had advised them that even if a condom was two years past the expiry date, it was safe to use it. The teenagers were also aware that sometimes condoms were not properly used and referred to *Straight Talk's* articles that condoms were only safe if used properly and consistently. This discussion reflects the August 2003 issue of *Straight Talk* two months before this study in which a section was dedicated to proper condom use. In Kanemu Co-education School which has a very active *Straight Talk* club this condom message was reproduced verbatim. In the same school teenagers pointed out that proper use included checking the expiry date, keeping condoms properly and using only one condom at a time. This was in reference to the malpractice of using two condoms simultaneously in the false hope that they are more protective than one condom because the virus will not seep through the 'porous' pores. The teenagers in Kanemu Co-education School said they had been told that the condoms offered protection against pregnancy but not against HIV. The following extract from that same

group that accurately reproduced the *Straight Talk* tips on condom safety shows the conflicting negotiation of the condom message:

**M2-** You have used a condom but somebody comes and says am pregnant. I wonder why this happens, and then I get convinced that these condoms break. Then I don't know how this one can be explained.

**F2-** It may be because of expiry date.

**M2-** I read some magazine...one was saying if you try to play sex and the girl is not willing...the condom would break. Maybe another thing is if the girl use cosmetics...then another thing is that if you use two condoms...one will slip off...

**M1-** Also another thing is rough sex.

**R-** Are there many expired condoms on the market?

**M2-** Yes, they are.

**R-** You have actually seen them and the dates are expired?

**F2-** Yeah or if not those condoms sold in shops, they are conditions under which are supposed to be kept the best place could be a clinic but...

**M2-** Some people don't take good care of condoms. You find a boy is outing a condom in a pocket expecting to meet a girl, you walk with ...then tomorrow you go back with the same condom...

In spite of having the knowledge about the safety of condoms and even being able to reproduce the message, some of these teenagers reject the information. They raise a number of issues on condom safety that are worth noting as they affect their negotiation of the message. They say that condoms are sometimes unreliable, expired, and poorly stored. They are also aware that some times condoms are abused and that some of their peers use two condoms at a time or use cosmetics for vaginal lubricants. Even those teenagers who produced more typical news statements sometimes made it clear that they personally had a different point of view. This is consistent with the findings of Kitzinger (1993) that people may reproduce a particular media message but that does not necessarily mean that they believe it.

It also emerged that some teenagers were sceptical about the safety of the condom because they did not know how to use it properly or because it was not readily available due to lack of finances or the stigma attached to buying it. In the focus group at Kanemu Co-education School, for instance, some teenagers insisted that most of their friends were either abstaining from sex or using condoms and they were therefore not at any risk of getting the HIV virus. However, one boy challenged the others to be frank and pointed

out that it was difficult buying condoms from shops and for that reason some of them were not using condoms when they could have been. Another participant pointed out that their sexual encounters took place in banana plantations and they were so rushed that there was hardly any time to put a condom on. In both the mid-income Kanemu Co-education School and the disadvantaged Kaine Private School some of the teenagers suggested that condoms be distributed free of charge. Below is an excerpt from the discussion:

**M2-** At our school [Kanemu Co-education School] there are friends who don't get chance to go to the teenager centres, so I would advise that the school start giving condoms because when you go to Naguru Teenage Centre<sup>15</sup> you are given condoms. There are youth teenagers who are in S1, they are told to abstain from sex or use condoms but then you are not giving them condoms and one will feel ashamed to go and buy himself a condom so, because he cannot...he ends up playing sex without a condom.

**M3-** As far as I'm concerned I'm part of the administration, we are not allowed to come open and give out condoms to the students. One time I attended a workshop...we were given a condom demonstration and told to do them at school. When I came...the patron is also a pastor, he told me you know am a pastor...sorry am not going to...our school is a day school, it has many problems...

**M3-** The school admin. Cannot allow, so we are advising the youth around school to visit teenager centres to get supply of condoms.

**M3-** Let me tell this when we speaking these things... but when you get in the hidden place with your boyfriend ... when you begin body touching you feel everything will be fine.

**F3-** But no if it is my health, everything won't be fine...with my...

**M2-** But you boys then there is another thing, you meet a girl you have the condom in the pocket then...you forget that you had a condom in your pocket.

**M3-** I personally have a problem with condoms...many people say it is like eating a sweet in a *Kavera*...the problem is when you put a condom you take long to ejaculate you know what am saying...when you are on without like some 5 or 10 minutes you can release and everything will be fine, so one will say...

(Murmurs of embarrassment)

**R-** It is okay for him to talk.

**M3-** So because of that people end up doing sex in banana fibres and will they use condoms while there.

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<sup>15</sup> Naguru Teenage Centre is one of the few teenage centres in the study area. Though it is located near Kampala City centre it is not easily accessible to all the teenagers in the study.

The teenagers also argue that condoms interfere with pleasure, so they may know and be able to reproduce the *Straight Talk* messages and still be reluctant to use condoms. This particular teenager was frank and very active throughout the discussion and was the same teenager who had earlier on said he was part of the school administration and that there was no way the school was going to distribute condoms. In a different instance, he quotes the *Straight Talk* message on condom safety and what proper condom use is and yet he argues that the condom delays ejaculation and it is like eating a sweet with its wrapping. This is a complex negotiation of the condom message. At one level, the teenager accepts the message and even quotes it to his peers and at another level rejects it. This links to Hall's explanation of the complexity in audience reception in his introduction to Morley's *Family Television*, Stuart Hall explains this: "We are not viewers with a single identity, a monolithic set of preferences and repetitive habits of viewing, all exposed to a single channel and type of "influence" and therefore behaving in predictably uniform ways. We are all in our heads, several different audiences at once, and can be constituted as such by different programmes" (in Morley, 1986: 10).

In summary, most of the focus groups except one group from the disadvantaged Kaine High School reproduced the ABC *Straight Talk* messages. However, on further probing some of the messages were either rejected or negotiated differently. Some teenagers in Kanasatu Boys College blamed the inability to abstain from sex on exposure to pornography. Other teenagers rejected the 'be faithful' message or undertook a negotiated reading of it due to the predominant polygamous relationships in the society. Similarly, the C (use a condom) part of the *Straight Talk* messages was rejected or negotiated differently by some teenagers because of the uncertainty and confusion about condom safety linked to contradictory and competing anti-condom campaign messages about the safety of condoms (fears that the condoms are porous or expired), knowledge that condoms may not be properly and consistently used and attitudes that condoms interfere with pleasure. They also experienced difficulties in finding condoms.

## **Knowledge about HIV/AIDS transmission**

This section considers the participants, negotiation of the more factual aspects of the messages intended by the *Straight Talk* publishers about HIV/AIDS transmission. During the focus group discussion, the teenagers were mostly aware of modes of HIV transmission but featured very few pictures from this category as illustrations for their newspapers. Except for the breastfeeding images, pictures in this category did not seem to appeal to them. Even then, only three out of the eight teenage newspapers selected pictures of mothers breastfeeding their babies in relation to HIV transmission.

Noteworthy, was *The Teens Against AIDS* at Kanabiri Girls School, the only group that selected three pictures from this category and in a caption beside one of the pictures of a breastfeeding mother, listed other modes of transmission as “Unprotected sex, blood transfusion (infected blood)”. This group was reproducing the facts on HIV transmission, as they would be in *Straight Talk*. They also used a picture of an arm filling a syringe with a caption: “Un sterilised needles used on infected people transmit AIDS. Beware”.

Despite media messages on HIV/AIDS transmission, certain misconceptions continue. One that emerged in the discussion relates to the appearance of people with AIDS. While the respondents echoed the *Straight Talk* message that if someone was infected you could not tell from their looks, certain contradictory statements were made to the contrary during the discussion. For instance, in response to picture (9) where a mother is breastfeeding a malnourished baby some teenagers interpreted the baby’s wasted looks as due to AIDS.

The image of a very ill and emaciated boy (27) featured in three newspapers in a manner that illustrates that the teenagers do not accept the message “You cannot tell who has AIDS” in a straight forward way. Most of the captions given by the groups identify the boy as having an AIDS related ailment. This boy was actually severely malnourished. It became evident that most of the teenagers were sure that what you could not tell from appearance was if somebody was HIV positive, but they were less convinced that it was not always possible to tell if somebody had AIDS. The fact that many people with AIDS waste away affected their negotiation of this HIV/AIDS message. In Ugandan media and

society, HIV/AIDS is often associated with emaciation. The local name for AIDS is *silimu* a corruption of the English word 'slim'. *Straight Talk* does not publish such images and therefore the respondents' negotiation in this case is influenced by their social environment and messages from different media and other sources. Interestingly, Kitzinger had similar findings in her British study. Many participants in her HIV/AIDS audience reception study agreed that you could not tell who is infected by HIV by just looking but many of them reported discriminating between potential partners by their looks. She explains this by saying:

People may 'know' something on one level but reject it on another, or they may know what they 'ought' to think but find it hard to act on. ... This 'mental image' seemed to be partly due to long-standing links between disease and dirt/poverty, but it was also reinforced by contradictions within the media campaigns themselves (Kitzinger, 1993: 293).

Another mode of HIV transmission that was discussed in both the up-market Kanabiri Girls School and Kanasatu Boys College was oral sex. This issue had not been included in the questionnaire but it came up in the boys only school after the other two focus groups had been conducted. Some teenagers in the boys only school expressed uncertainty about the safety of oral sex so the researcher decided to pursue it in the girls only focus group that was yet to be conducted. The discussion in the girls' school went as follows:

**R-** Can you get HIV through oral sex?

**F1-** Yes, yes you can if you have a sore in the mouth.

**F4-** Me what I understand by oral sex is sex without penetration. I'm I right?

**F2-** Yes.

**F8-** No.

**F9-** Me I'm getting confused by the definition of oral sex.

**R-** Yeah, maybe I should have asked what is oral sex?

**F3-** Oral means mouth, so I think it is sex using the mouth.

**F2-** It can be with your private parts but without penetrating.

**R-** Can you get HIV from un-penetrative sex?

**F4-** Yes, your fluids are mixing up.

**R-** Let us get back to our question. Can you get AIDS through oral sex?

**F7-** Yeah, but the percentage is very small.

**R-** Does *Straight Talk* cover such a topic for example?

**F5-** Yeah.

**F3-** No.

It is important to note that the health corner in the June 2003 issue of *Straight Talk* in answer to two teenagers' questions was dedicated to education on the dangers of oral sex but *Straight Talk* was on the defensive about tackling this issue. This is what they wrote, "*Straight Talk* does not usually talk about oral sex. Traditionally in Africa it has not been practiced much. But when we saw these letters we had to say something!"

In summary, the teenagers in this study have a general understanding of the modes of HIV transmission but they do not foreground these images. It was, however, also observed that it is not clear to the teenagers that oral sex is a mode of HIV transmission. Also, the participants were aware that people with HIV may look normal but they did not readily acknowledge that people with AIDS could look normal too. This is particularly relevant with the advent of HIV anti-retroviral drugs.

### **Perception of own vulnerability to HIV/AIDS**

In relation to HIV transmission one other issue that deserves special mention is these teenager's awareness of risky behaviour that could expose them to HIV/AIDS. The most popular pictures in the risky behaviour category (D) were girl-boy lovers out at night (22 and 23) and alcohol abuse (3). Out of a total of sixty-nine pictures featured in the whole study, only ten were featured from this category, six of them by the teenagers in the disadvantaged, Kaine Private School.

In Kanabiri Girls School some of the younger girls argued that the emaciated ill boy (picture 27), could have got HIV/AIDS from his parents and they did not think he could have got it through any other means such as sex with an infected partner because according to one of them "he is too young". When asked about whether they were at risk of getting HIV/AIDS the teenagers in most of the focus groups chorused 'no' and when asked about their friends' vulnerability their immediate reply was often negative though on further probing they admitted that some of their friends engaged in risky behaviour. This could imply that not all teenagers in this study were aware of risky situations that could expose them to HIV/AIDS or they are ignoring the fact that they are at risk. As

discussed in Chapter Two, Marcus (2002) in her study of white university students in South Africa had similar findings.

Though most of the teenagers in the *Straight Talk* study were aware that anybody could have HIV/AIDS, they often argued that adults were more at risk and responsible for infecting teenagers. One group in the first co-educational school captioned a picture of an intimate man and woman relaxing in the garden as: “Older men have been the people that have contributed to the high spread of HIV/AIDS”. This group argued that the man looked much older than the girl and was a ‘sugar daddy’<sup>16</sup> responsible for the spread of HIV. A boy from Kaine Private School commented that, “Sugar daddies have proved as the biggest problem that has brought HIV/AIDS to us. When girls see money they run like dogs”.

It is of concern that these teenagers imagine that their age group is safe from HIV/AIDS especially as from the discussions in this study and research done else where in Uganda (Nyanzi et al., 2000) there is evidence that many teenagers who are sexually active get involved with multiple partners sometimes with concurrent sexual affairs among themselves and with adults. In the focus group at Kanabiri Girls School one girl mentioned that after being in a relationship for some time teenagers stop using condoms on the assumption that they are safe. She said, “They tend to develop mutual trust and stop using condoms because they are using pills”. This is similar to what South African researchers (Kelly et al., 2000) found, namely that though the youth were aware of the value of condoms in preventing HIV infection, fifteen percent of all sexually active youth held the conviction that they and their partners are not HIV infected and therefore they did not need to use condoms. Also after being in a relationship for some time, some youth developed false confidence that if “there is love in a relationship, the risk of infection is lessened; and the assumption that risk decreases during the course of a relationship, with

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<sup>16</sup> In Uganda ‘sugar daddy’ is used to describe elderly lovers who lure teenage girls, in most cases school girls, into sex in exchange for money or other material favours like sugar, cell phones, cars, etc.

youth who begin safer sex practices deciding to forgo safe sex practices as the relationship becomes more established” (Kelly et al., 2000: 3).

The younger teenagers in Kanabiri Girls School argued that the emaciated ill boy (picture 27), could have got HIV/AIDS from his parents and they did not think he could have got it through sex with an infected partner because according to one of them “he is too young”. As noted in Chapter Two, researchers Greene et al. argue that most adolescents have the capacity to perceive risk, and engage in risky behaviour not because they lack knowledge but because they do not necessarily weigh the risks in their decision-making. Adolescents who think they are unique and invincible may easily “ignore warnings in health promotion messages regardless of source because they feel unique, not at risk, or believe health promotion messages do not apply to them” (Greene et al., 1996: 134). They recommend that highly abstract messages may not be appropriate for the adolescent who still functions at the level in concrete cognitive operations.

### **Variables- lived realities and teenager reception**

As established in Chapter Two, audiences interpret what they hear and see in the context of what they already know or think (Hall, 1980; Kitzinger, 1993; Radway, 1987). Thus, the teenagers’ reception of the HIV/AIDS media messages should be contextualised in relation to their lived realities. This section therefore considers three aspects of such lived realities, namely, the respondents’ proximity to HIV/AIDS, their gender and their economic disposition. It considers the influence these might have on the respondents’ negotiation of the HIV/AIDS meanings.

### **Media reception and proximity to HIV/AIDS**

As discussed in Chapter Two, experience is one single factor that influences audiences’ negotiation of media messages because knowing somebody with AIDS makes the disease more real (Philo, 1990; Kelly et al., 2000; Marcus, 2002). In this study the way in which the images from the HIV/AIDS effects category (E) are featured in the news game throws some light on the findings on the influence proximity to HIV/AIDS has on the teenagers’ negotiation of the HIV/AIDS messages. As established earlier, 22 pictures from this

category were used, the highest number in the whole study. One picture in this category that appealed to three of the groups was that of the very ill and emaciated boy (27). It is not a typical *Straight Talk* picture and *Speaking Facts Newspaper*, one of the two newspapers that echoed *Straight Talk* was one of the five groups that did not use this picture. The Kanabiri girls' group that used this ill boy's picture as their central piece included two in their group who had been affected by experiences of people with AIDS. In the discussion one girl gave a moving monologue on how she had nursed her mother who died after a long AIDS related illness, and how this has affected her outlook on people with HIV/AIDS and also affected her perception of media messages:

**F2-** it is really absurd [read sad] especially if the person is so close, and in my it was my mum... at times you get bad, you cry and you really want her to be strong, you don't want her to know she is going to die. She says I want you to (*voice falters*) me and she doesn't want you to know that you are going to lose your mother. She says don't cry am going to be okay that kind of thing. But at times you really see she is really badly off and you really need to be patient with her because you may not know what the future holds, what if it is you next. So you really have to be patient. But at times you would feel like am tired, you have just put juice there, she is like I want tea, that kind of thing.

**R-** Do you think that has changed the way you look at HIV patients?

**F2-** Yes, because I really got to know that it is real. There is a time when we were told that one of our friends had AIDS. I really got touched and I imagined the situation she was going through.

Also June & Maibach (1990) found that viewers with high AIDS involvement recalled more information from AIDS messages than viewers with low AIDS involvement. In this respect the publication of real-life images is argued to influence audience negotiation of media messages. Also Greene et al. (1996) caution that highly abstract messages may not be appropriate for the adolescent who still functions at a concrete cognitive level. It is therefore not surprising that pictures 29 and 30 of the late Philly Bongole Lutaya, a local musician and the first Ugandan celebrity to go public about being HIV positive were frequently selected. Bongole Lutaya gave HIV/AIDS a face and his legacy has lived on despite the fact that at the height of his anti-AIDS campaign in the late 1980s, these participant teenagers were only toddlers. His pictures were used for six of the eight news games. Only *Speaking Facts*, Kanemu Co-education School, and *Teens Speak Out*, Kanasatu Boys College did not feature Bongole Lutaya's picture.

During the discussions of this personality, many teenagers saluted his openness and said it was important to be open about HIV/AIDS. In Kanabiri Girls School, the Bongole Lutaya pictures were popular for giving AIDS a face. The teenagers commented that AIDS had seemed abstract and distant to them until Major Ruranga, a prominent Ugandan soldier who is living with AIDS, visited their school and talked to them. They advocated that *Straight Talk* include coverage of real life stories like those in their newspaper. This approach links to findings in studies elsewhere that respondents who know people who are HIV infected are more likely to avoid risky sexual behaviour (Kelly et.al, 2000; Steele and Brown 1995).

On the other hand, one of the boys at Kanasatu Boys College argued about the importance of the picture to scare their imaginary teenage audience into avoiding HIV/AIDS. It is important to note that though *Straight Talk* advocates openness in discussing HIV/AIDS, they do not run scare messages and in practice seldom use pictures of such heroes as Bongole Lutaya. The teenagers here were therefore not reproducing the HIV/AIDS message as it is in *Straight Talk* but were modifying the message to suit there imaginary audience of complacent teenagers.

The above fascination with images to instil fear is seen in the reproduction of the graveyard scene (33), as the single most used picture in the whole study. This picture was used in all but one of the eight newspapers. Again, *Speaking Facts Newspaper*, one of the two newspapers that echoed *Straight Talk* in both content and structure, was the only one that did not use this picture. The researcher was puzzled by this phenomenon and the Kanemu Co-education group that produced *The Youth Daily* newspaper discussed it as a way to scare and deter young people from unsafe sexual practices.

**F1-** As in this one, it is showing some family whose relatives were killed. I assume it is AIDS which killed them. So the message to the youth out there is that they should be aware of this disease, it still exists and has no cure. The best way to prevent it is by abstaining or use condoms if you cannot control your feelings.

**R-** Would you like to see such a picture in *Straight Talk*? By the way, do they use such pictures in *Straight Talk*?

**M2-** No.

**R-** Would you like to see them there?

**F1-** Yes ...

**M1-** Yes.

**R-** Explain.

**F1-** Because the youth will know that if I indulge in sex now, I'm getting infected ...there are more good things to come that God has prepared for me...

**M2-** It is to educate the youth that if you misbehave, you will go down so any time you want to have sex you should use a condom.

**R-** But there has been so many messages in *Straight Talk* saying that AIDS kills... do you think people believe them?

**M2-** You know not all people are literates.

**R-** No, I mean people as in teenagers who read these messages. Do you think they believe in the messages?

**F1-**Yes they do.

**M2-** Okay some of them might but as you know these youths if you give a youth a magazine and there are no pictures...he has no time to read the no sense.

These teenagers are aware that this is not a typical *Straight Talk* picture and they offer a number of reasons that attract them to the picture. First, it is a reminder that the repercussion of AIDS is death. Second, they argue that while their peers might not read much they would find pictures appealing. Kitzinger (1993) found a similar fascination with doom and gloom among the images reproduced by her research participants and though sensational and voyeuristic pictures are popular in tabloid press, she says that the ability to reproduce such portrayals does not necessarily show that such images have been extensively promoted in the media but reflects the manner in which the images are processed by the audience. She says:

These representations are recalled because they are 'shocking' or 'frightening' or, in the words of one research participant, 'they just looked so disgusting, they looked really horrible'. In addition such images can incite a voyeuristic fascination and they receive an exposure over and above that actually given to them in the media ... (Kitzinger, 1993: 286).

Other communication studies, for example, Cameron et al. (1998) warn that providing fear messages without follow up is worse than providing no message at all. In their study on commercial sex workers and long-distance truck drivers in Kenya they found that fear messages alone were ineffective in slowing the spread of HIV/AIDS. They recommend that health messages should include components of both threat and hope. It is, however, possible the participants in this *Straight Talk* study have not been exposed to scare messages because the national HIV/AIDS campaign in Uganda has for almost a decade now not emphasised scare messages. A more detailed study would, however, be

necessary to ascertain this. In step with Cameron's recommendation, it is noteworthy that *This life*, one of the newspapers produced by the participants in the disadvantaged Kaine Private School, captioned the graveside picture (33) with a message heralding both fear and hope. "Teenagers I advise you to take care of yourself and do not lose hope. If at all you have HIV/AIDS remember if you play sex you are likely to get other STDs which may kill you faster and care for the sick because they need our help and education too".

### **Gender and economic class**

This section reports the findings on the influence that gender and economic disposition might have on these teenagers' negotiations of HIV/AIDS media messages. Gendered differences emerged strongly in certain cases. In the discussions at Kaine, the co-educational low-income school, all five girls were unanimous that they feared getting pregnant more than the HIV virus. The boys, however, identified this attitude as unreasonable as pregnancy does not kill whereas AIDS does. The girls argued that if they fell pregnant they would have to drop out of school and face the wrath of their parents. If, however, they got HIV they would not have to leave school immediately nor would their parents reject them. The argument is reproduced below:

- R-** ... Pills don't protect you from HIV so what are they using to protect themselves from infection? According to teenagers what is the bigger problem, AIDS or pregnancy?
- F5-** Pregnancy.
- R-** Please explain.
- F5-** Some girls will say they will become old if they become pregnant.
- R-** You are very quiet. What do you think? You don't have to agree with the girls.
- F6-** Pregnancy is more feared because people will say after pregnant, you can't continue with school. But if it is AIDS, you can continue studying.

This attitude was echoed in Kanabiri Girls' School as well.

- R-** You say 85% are abstaining.
- R-** What is the other percentage doing?
- F3-** Use condoms, contraceptives... especially the girls fear pregnancy more than AIDS.
- R-** They are scared of pregnancy more than AIDS?
- F3-** Yeah.
- F4-** Let us not use a condom I am under a pill.
- F3-** They tend to develop mutual trust and stop using condoms because they are using pills.

Once again it is the lived reality, in this case a gendered one that these girls are responding to. To many sectors of Ugandan society girls are castigated for pregnancy while boys are not. Some parents deny their daughters shelter and provision once pregnant while at school. Yet, in spite of the challenges of handling AIDS related illnesses, most parents would not send a sick child from home. This could explain why the girls fear pregnancy more than HIV/AIDS. This links back to other researchers' identification of differences in reading messages along gender lines, not because of any biological essentialism, but in relation to the dominant patriarchal relations of power (Morley, 1986). Here, pregnancy holds different meaning for the girls and boys in this study. For girls it marks the possibility of homelessness and the end to education. In contrast, for boys nothing changes. Despite media messages to the contrary, the girl might therefore find it easier to depend upon contraceptive pills rather than the male condom over which she has no direct control. Some boys on the other hand spoke with more confidence about the condom in spite of the fact that they reject it for interfering with sexual pleasure. As discussed in the previous section on the teenagers' negotiation of ABC *Straight Talk* messages such was the case with the boys in the mid-income Kanemu Co-Educational School.

Another related gendered issue was the apparent concern for healthy relationships by the girls. As highlighted earlier on in this chapter, the 15-16 year-old girls' group in Kanabiri Girls School was the only one that used two similar pictures from the alternative lifestyle/activities category (C), a picture of smartly dressed teenagers in a co-education school (20) and a picture of stylish teenage boys posing for a photo (21). It is possible that girls are more preoccupied with relationships than the boys are since they are socialised to consider marriage important and there is stigma against women who do not marry.

Also in the focus group at Kanemu Co-education School there was a heated argument about whether it was possible for a girl and boy to be just friends without their relationship becoming sexual. The girls argued that it was possible while the boys thought it was not.

**R-** So what happens when girls and boys become friends?

**M3-** I think sex is the outcome. Even before I joined this school, I was like isolated I didn't have any girlfriends...when I got used to, I got to know that girls and boys can be friends. But there are some issues preventing us. Like how sure are you that when you get used to each other...in the process of love people want to prove that... do you really love me...the answer is sex.

**F3-** No...

**M3-** That is how they justify it.

**F3-** Being in a relationship doesn't mean sex, if you love someone you can't prove it through sex. You can prove that through sending gifts, or exchanging letters...or going for a picnic the two of you, I think that is also a kind of showing love than engaging in sex which might result in unwanted pregnancies, STDs and so...

**M3-** That is you personally, but what are the youth thinking out there. They are saying that only when they hear of girls and boys relationship, their mind is driven to sex.

Also gendered preference for certain pictures was noted. In the groups where the breast-feeding pictures were used the girls motivated the inclusion of these pictures. In Kanasatu Boys College none of the breast-feeding pictures were used. It is possible that the girls relate to breast-feeding as young women, since in Uganda girls are socialised to accept and expect the mothering role. Also the two girl-only newspapers did not use the picture of the two drunk teenage boys lying on a street at night, instead one of the newspapers used a picture from this category of a child, about ten years old drinking from a beer bottle while he held another beer can in the other hand and captioned it: "His parents died of AIDS, and now he is drinking". When the other groups used this picture the caption referred to the risks involved in drug abuse. As discussed in Chapter Two gender roles are largely internalised by adolescence and therefore gendered identity is seen to affect information processing. Andsager et al. (2002) argue that girls are pressured by society to be more caring and collectivist than boys and that the emotional components of serious messages are said to appeal to females more than to the males. However, reception analyst Hermes cautions that media consumption is not always a gendered practice, and even when it is, male and female relationships acquire different connotations depending on the different social context (Hermes, 1996). She clarifies that gender and media consumption should be studied in "terms of their articulations" in a "structured relational context" (Hermes, 1996: 123). It is noteworthy that the boys in this school sounded more

confident about their sexual experiences than those in the single-sex boys' school of Kanasatu. Since the focus group included both boys and girls this could have related to them wanting to impress the girls.

Having looked at the gender factor, findings on how economic disposition might influence negotiation of the HIV/AIDS media messages are now highlighted. One surprising discovery was that the two economically advantaged schools, Kanasatu Boys College and Kanabiri Girls School, were very critical of what they considered *Straight Talk's* exclusive coverage of the rural schools. They complained that the issues were repetitive and that *Straight Talk* did not cover their immediate concerns. Though they regularly got copies and admitted that it was educative, they read it only when they thought a new topic was being covered. This is how the discussion went in Kanabiri Girls School.

**R-** Looking at your papers, how different are they from *Straight Talk*?

**F2-** *Straight Talk* is different really different, it excludes the urban areas.

**F4-** It covers the rural areas those local areas.

**F3-** It is full of rural schools.

**R-** When you get *Straight Talk* do you really read those messages?

**F4-** Yeah.

**R-** Do you find them helpful?

**F4-** Yes, but you find this week they went to Kitgum, the same questions appeared again.

...

**R-** What do you think you would like to read in *Straight Talk*?

**F5-** I think we should talk to people infected with HIV as they share their experience with us.

Kanasatu Boys College was equally critical:

**R-** Why don't you write in with your views?

**M1-** Because there are rural teenagers writing.

**M3-** *Straight Talk* has forgotten about Kampala students, for example porn, no one educates us about pornography.

Though these teenagers admit that the messages are educative and more of their peers read *Straight Talk* when a new topic is covered, the difference in economic class could be influencing their perception of the publication and consequently their negotiation of the messages. There seems to be a sense of superiority or worldliness inherent in their

disdain for their letters or pictures appearing along side those of rural teenagers. This links to the researcher's observation that in the June, August, September 2003 issues, only five of the ninety-nine teenage letters published were from Kampala and none came from the economically advantaged schools in Kampala.

An issue that arose in the less economically advantaged school Kaine Private School and not in the up-market school was the issue of sex for money. Consider this discussion:

**R-** Why did you choose that picture?

**F5-** We chose it because those youth should be helped because they sleep everywhere. If this was a girl and a rich man asked for sex to give her money, I don't think she can refuse. The girl wants something to eat and she ends up getting AIDS?

As discussed earlier, the teenagers in this school felt very vulnerable and often both the boys and girls referred to rape and coercion. This concurs with Kelly and Parker's (2002) findings that despite audiences being knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS, socio-economic and cultural factors influenced behaviour in relation to risk of HIV infection and that lack of resources and poor environments limited personal empowerment and the ability to make safer sexual choices (Kelly et al., 2000; Kelly and Parker, 2002).

In addition, the researcher noted some preference for certain pictures in either the economically advantaged or disadvantaged schools. The wedding category pictures were popular in most of the schools except the economically disadvantaged school. Pictures in this category included that of Natasha Museveni in an elaborate wedding gown, sharing a drink with her husband on their wedding day (1), and a popular Kampala deejay slicing a cake at a cultural wedding ceremony (2). Neither of the newspapers produced in the economically disadvantaged Kaine Private School used these pictures. One can only conjecture as to the explanation for their absence, and whether it relates to affordability and attainability. It is possible that the less economically advantaged Kaine Private School teenagers did not identify with the celebrity couples because they are distant from their real world. A Ugandan church wedding implies both pomp and expense. The teenagers from richer backgrounds may therefore be more likely to see it as an attainable goal while their economically disadvantaged counterparts may consider it unnecessary

and unlikely. Hermes (1996) cautions, however, that though class plays a role in how audiences make sense of the text, researchers should be wary of foregone conclusions that such variables will definitely affect readings of texts. She advises that class be considered within the general social cultural context.

One significant issue that this study did not set out to explore but which the teenagers in all the focus groups introduced without pictures to prompt them was the issue of parenting in relation to their understandings of the HIV/AIDS messages. They criticised parents for being away from home from morning to night and leaving them unguided and un-parented. They complained about parents never talking to them about issues of sex. One group drew a cartoon encouraging parents to talk to their children about HIV/AIDS with the words “Darna Beware of HIV, if you really have to, use a condom”. The cartoon was captioned “Mothers (parents) talk to the children”. In the discussion later the girls who drew this cartoon insisted that they preferred that their parents tell them about HIV/AIDS rather others. They said their main source of information now was mostly their peers or the media. In most of Ugandan society respect for ones parents borders on fear and parents rarely discuss sex with their children. Traditionally, this role was played by a paternal aunt but with the breakdown of the extended family, many teenagers are left unguided. The group at Kanabiri Girls’ School discussed the issue as follows.

**F1-** My mum does not talk to me about such things, she can talk to you guys. She is open with other people.

**F1-** You can find your parents is a very good counsellor to other people and you wonder why doesn’t mum ever talk to me. When you find her talking to other people you think yeah she is the best counsellor.

**F3-** The only time they talk to you is when you have done something wrong.

**F8-** When you are like watching TV and something goes wrong, then the daddy will say you see what has happen, is that what you are doing?

**R-** Would you feel comfortable if your parents talked to you about sex?

**F3-** The better, I prefer that.

**F6-** You listen to your parents better than your teacher who lecture you from the beginning of the term to the end of the year, you get used to them.

**F3-** When it is from the parent, when you are about to do something, you will remember that mum told me no.

Kelly et al. (2000) also described a lack of intergenerational communication and argue that South African parents and children need to communicate more about sexual issues.

This issue is similarly an important concern for health and HIV/AIDS campaigns in Uganda and elsewhere.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the findings of the study in three sections. In the first section the newspapers produced by the teenagers were described, the second section gave an account of the teenagers' reproduction of the key *ABC Straight Talk* messages and the third section highlighted the findings on the influence that proximity to HIV/AIDS, gender and economic disposition might have on the teenagers' negotiation of the HIV/AIDS messages.

## Chapter Five

### Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents concluding reflections on the study. This study set out to investigate how Kampala teenagers who read *Straight Talk* negotiate HIV/AIDS messages. It sought to establish the extent to which the teenagers reproduce the more factual aspects of the messages intended by the *Straight Talk* publishers about HIV/AIDS, its process of transmission and prevention. The study further sought to establish how the lived realities of the teenagers affect their particular negotiations of the HIV/AIDS messages. It included a focus on how proximity to HIV/AIDS gender and family economic disposition might affect the teenager's negotiation of the HIV/AIDS meanings.

### Reflections on findings

In the news game the teenagers consistently reproduced the key *Straight Talk* HIV/AIDS messages 'Abstain, Be faithful or use a Condom'. Many of them also closely echoed language typical of *Straight Talk*. Pictures showing the condom were very popular and were used in all the groups except one group in the disadvantaged school. Most of the groups also reproduced the dominant *Straight Talk* message "If you can't abstain, always use condoms and use them correctly", but the subsequent discussions revealed that many of them were uncertain and confused about the absolute safety of the condom because of fears that they were either porous or expired. Also in all the schools there was talk of various anti-condom campaigns and many teenagers quoted these messages and argued that condoms were not absolutely safe because they were porous and could let the HIV virus through. These counter campaigns are certainly affecting the teenagers' negotiation of the message on the safety of the condom even when properly used. *Straight Talk* and other stakeholders may have to pay special attention to counteract such messages.

Though many of the teenagers in the study reproduced images that showed that they consider marriage as desirable and talked about their desire to abstain from sex until marriage, a considerable number think abstinence is not achievable due to competing values. They lay the responsibility for their behaviour with others, whether the media or the government. *Red Pepper* publication and the Internet were specifically cited as major

culprits in peddling pornography, a predisposing factor to premarital sex. The teenagers in Kanasatu Boys College suggested that government should clamp down on pornography because it impelled teenagers into unsafe sex.

On the whole these teenagers reproduced fewer images from the key facts on HIV and its modes of transmission. That only six pictures out of 69 were altogether selected from the transmission category could indicate that the HIV transmission messages are less appealing to these teenagers or the messages are either being ignored or not emphasised in media campaigns. In Uganda there have been contradictory messages about breast-feeding as a mode of HIV transmission and only three out of the eight teenage newspapers used pictures of mothers' breast-feeding in relation to HIV transmission.

Then, though most of the teenagers could differentiate between HIV and AIDS, many didn't realise that with the advent of HIV anti-retroviral drugs even people who have AIDS can look normal. In the light of new discoveries in the area, there is need for media interventions to once again focus their attention on basic facts about HIV/AIDS transmission.

Images from the risky behaviour category were not very popular with these teenagers apart from the two newspapers produced in the disadvantaged school, which used six out of the ten pictures selected from this category. It is possible that the other teenagers could be ignoring the fact that they are at risk. In spite of repeating the *Straight Talk* message that "no one was safe", the teenagers seem to think that their age cohort is safe from the HIV virus and it is the adults who are likely to infect them. This is in line with the 'personal fable' explanation identified by June & Maibach (1990) and Marcus (2002) that young adolescents who perceived their closed circle of white friends to be risk-free engaged in high-risk casual sex. Media interventions targeting economically advantaged teenagers may have to pay more attention to strategies for convincing them that they are at as much risk as anybody else.

The study findings indicate that the teenagers' lived experience may influence their negotiation of HIV/AIDS media messages. In the study the most popular picture was from HIV/AIDS effects category, a picture of a rural elderly woman with eleven children posing for a photograph besides two graves (33). The frequency with which this picture was reproduced coupled with the fact that more pictures from this category were used than from all the other categories could imply that these images catch the imagination of these teenagers and propose a clear story line that may influence their negotiation of HIV/AIDS messages. It is, however, not possible to predict exactly what form of influence any experience such as nursing a close relative with HIV/AIDS may have on negotiation of HIV/AIDS messages. In some cases the teenagers said that nursing a sick relative had made them more vigilant in believing the safe sex messages, but one teenager who had nursed her mother said that this had made her more laid back because she thinks that she already knows everything.

Though *Straight Talk* seldom uses pictures similar to those in the HIV/AIDS effects category, these pictures were the most popular in the whole study. A total of 22 pictures were selected from this category, the highest in the whole study. The image of the late Bongole Lutaya, a local musician and the first Ugandan to go public about being HIV positive, was popular with the teenagers and in all the focus groups the teenagers said they wanted to see more real-life stories in *Straight Talk*. As seen in Chapter Two, some researchers have approved of narratives or 'stories' more than polemic. Green et al. propose that highly abstract health messages may not be appropriate for the adolescent who is still in concrete operations. Also June & Maibach (1990) concur that emotional messages be used among audiences who consider HIV/AIDS divorced from them to induce higher levels of personal relevance before rational messages are introduced to create more lasting knowledge and attitudinal changes.

Economic status appears to have an influence on the teenagers' perception of *Straight Talk* and subsequently on teenagers' negotiations of the messages there in. The up-market schools were very critical of the fact that *Straight Talk* foregrounds rural schools and, in their opinion, does not cover issues that directly affect the urban teenagers. They,

however, admit that *Straight Talk* is educative and more of them read it when they think a new topic has been covered. Though in all the schools the teenagers said that many of their peers were getting complacent, at the two advantaged schools, Kanabiri Girls School and Kanasatu Boys School, the teenagers suggested that the *Straight Talk* needed a fresh outlook. They also wanted issues that they considered more challenging, like pornography and oral sex, addressed. *Straight Talk* might have to do more extensive focus group surveys to ascertain the varied and changing expectations of their teenage readers.

Gender appeared to influence the perception of media messages in certain instances. In line with gendered social roles, certain preferences for some pictures were noted. The group in Kanabiri Girls School used seven pictures of children as compared to the other three groups who used a total of six pictures altogether. There was also gender preference in the use of pictures of breast-feeding mothers. In the groups where the breast-feeding pictures were used the girls took the lead in advocating for the inclusion of these pictures. This highlights a nurturing and caring emphasis or interest in their choices for inclusion. In the boys-only school none of the breast-feeding pictures were used.

One surprising discovery was that even if condom pictures were included by both boy and girl groups, they negotiated the message differently along gendered lines. Some girls in the study feared getting pregnant more than getting HIV/AIDS, on the other hand, boys tended to resist the condom message because they argued that condoms interfere with sexual pleasure. Media initiatives targeting teenagers might consider further research on this phenomenon and address such concerns in their programmes.

Many teenagers said their main source of information on sex education was mostly their peers or the media but they preferred that their parents should talk to them about sex and their sexuality. As seen from the example of the two girls in Kanabiri Girls School who insisted it was possible to abstain from sex till marriage, strong family messages and examples strengthen individual teenagers' resolve to abstain from sex till marriage.

### **Suggestions for future initiatives**

Though the researcher never set out to establish the kind of media messages that may work for this age group, from the study of how Kampala teenagers who read *Straight Talk* negotiate HIV/AIDS messages, the following issues might inform future HIV/AIDS media initiatives:

1. HIV media initiatives need to continue emphasising all educational aspects related to HIV transmission. For example the teenagers needed information on breastfeeding and HIV transmission and the link between oral sex and HIV transmission.
2. The image of an emaciated AIDS patient was still very strong among the adolescents and yet with better care such as the introduction of anti-retroviral therapy it is important for anti-AIDS media messages to clarify that infected people may not necessarily look emaciated.
3. Real life stories rather than abstract messages might help the adolescents perceive risk and danger. Some girls in Kanabiri Girls School said they only believed AIDS was real when Major Ruranga, an activist living with AIDS, visited their school.
4. Since many girls in the study were more concerned about pregnancy than HIV/AIDS, it might be necessary for media messages to continuously address pregnancy related issues in relation to HIV/AIDS.
5. Media initiatives should involve parents since teenagers in this study indicated that they value parental guidance on sexual matters. This strengthens the view that sex education should begin at home.

### **Suggestions for further studies**

Originally the researcher had hoped to follow up the investigation of different patterns of decoding with supplementary interviews with individual respondents but because of scope of the study this dimension was not pursued. It would be valuable if future studies could include individual interviews with respondents to see how they negotiate HIV/AIDS messages away from a group.

Then, at Kanabiri Girls School during the news game the girls were accidentally split into two groups of 15-16 and 17-19. It was noted that the older girls were more balanced in their choice of pictures and used pictures from all categories while the younger girls used no picture from the risky behaviour category. It was also noted that the younger girls were less tolerant of messages advocating condom use than the older girls. This could imply that levels of cognitive development may influence the negotiation of HIV/AIDS messages. It is therefore proposed that future studies investigate the influence that cognitive development might have on the negotiation of HIV/AIDS media messages.

That the participant teenagers featured fewer of the HIV transmission messages may call for a more focused content analysis study to ascertain if over the years media campaigns have laid less emphasis on the HIV/AIDS transmission messages. Also, in the light of the teenagers' complaints about pornography in the *Red Pepper* and on the Internet, it is suggested that further studies be done on this phenomenon.

It was observed that some teenagers thought that it was possible to abstain from sex until marriage because their mothers had done it and this seemed to influence their acceptance of the 'Abstain' *Straight Talk* message. It is suggested that a more specific study be done to establish the effect that family relations may have on the negotiation of health messages.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, this qualitative study is argued to be of value in Uganda where there has been no such study to assess how teenagers who are *Straight Talk* readers negotiate HIV/AIDS media messages. As established in the study there is no single way of negotiating meaning. It is a complex and varied exercise determined by audience lived realities. This study set out to investigate how Kampala teenagers who read *Straight Talk* negotiate HIV/AIDS messages and it was established that on the whole the teenagers reproduce the major ABC (Abstain, Be faithful or use a Condom) messages of *Straight Talk* but rarely the messages on HIV/AIDS transmission. It was also established that to a great extent the lived realities of the teenagers, like proximity to HIV/AIDS, gender and

economic disposition, may have a bearing on the teenager's negotiation of the HIV/AIDS meanings and should therefore be considered in designing of health media messages.

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## Appendix

### Appendix i (pictures attached)

Wedding 1: Natasha Museveni and husband drink a toast on their wedding day.



**Wedding 2: Popular Radio D-Jay Alex Ndawula with wife cut a cake**



**Man -woman 3: Adult lovers out in a garden**



**Gaetano 4: M-Net Big brother housemate lovers, Gaetano and Abby share a drink**



**Condom 5: A group of people promoting the Protector Condom**



**Condom 6: Social worker displays packets of the male condom**



**Condom 7: Social worker displaying female condom**



**Breastfeed 8: Two mothers breastfeeding**



**Breastfeed 9: Mother breastfeeding malnourished child**



**Injection 10: Health worker prepares Injection**



**Injection 11: Child being immunised**



Safe blood 12: Children in safe blood campaign



Sport 13: Local football star, Edgar Watson



**Sport 14: International teenage athlete, Inzikuru, in action**



**Sport 15: International athlete Inzikuru displays medal**



**Sport 16: Teenage girls jogging**



**Sport 17: Local football star, Hassan Mubiru**



**Sport 18: Magic Johnson, celebrity living with HIV/AIDS**



**Pastor 19: Left to right, Pastor Kayanja with his wife Jessica and TV preacher Joyce Myers**



**Teenagers 20: Co-educational school teenagers in uniform**



Teenagers 21: Stylishly teenagers pose for a picture



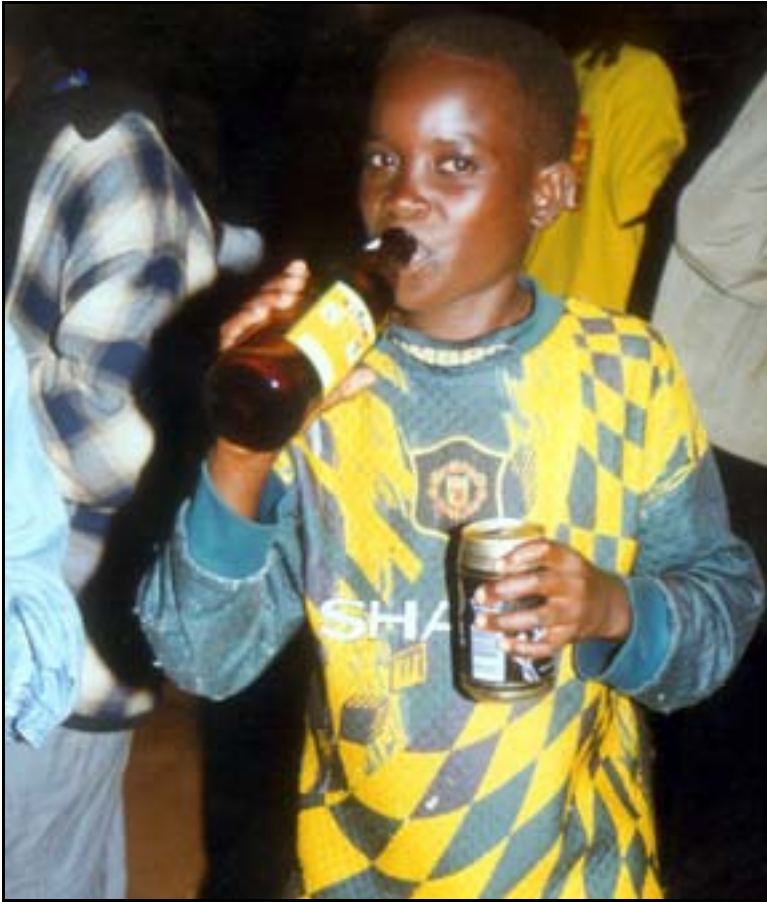
**Girl-Boy 22: Teenage lovers in risky situation**



**Girl-Boy 23: Teenage lovers out at night**



Alcohol-abuse 24: Child taking beer



**Alcohol-abuse 25: Two teenagers lie on a veranda, two bottles of beer besides them**



Drugs 26: Five men chew miraa, a psychotic drug



**Sick-boy 27: Hospitalised emaciated ill teenager**



Sick-child 28: Mother with emaciated ill child



**Bongole 29: Sickly Bongole Lutaya with mother**



**Bongole 30: Bongole Lutaya addresses audience**



Street-kids 31: Street children under a bridge



Street-kids 32: A group of street children rough-up another



Graves 33: elderly woman with many children standing besides two graves



## **Appendix ii (Focus group discussion guideline)**

### **Time allowed 1 1/2 hours**

The discussion will probe negotiated HIV/AIDS meanings in relation to the teenagers' lived worlds.

### **Aimed to answer the following questions:**

Who are these students?

What do they make of the HIV/AIDS messages in *Straight Talk*? Investigate reproduction of facts in the news game.

What are the experiences that influence their reading of HIV/AIDS?

How do their experiences (gender, economy, proximity to HIV/AIDS) affect their negotiations of HIV/AIDS messages?

### **(A) Probing teenagers' awareness of HIV/AIDS**

#### **Aim**

To find out what they make of the HIV/AIDS messages by assessing how different or similar the messages they develop in their own newspaper are from those in *Straight Talk*.

#### **Questions**

Step by step probe on why they used the pictures/captions they used in the news game.

What do you like about your newspaper?

What don't you like about your newspaper?

What key message did you want to bring across in your newspaper?

How different or similar are the messages you have produced to those in *Straight Talk*?

What important lessons do you learn from *Straight Talk*?

Do you think your friends believe the messages in *Straight Talk*? How do you know?

What messages do they believe?

What messages don't they believe?

What messages do you like in *Straight Talk*? Why?

What messages don't you like in *Straight Talk*? Why?

What do you remember most in *Straight Talk*?

(B) Lived experience

Aim

To find out how the teenagers' lived experiences (gender, economy, proximity to HIV/AIDS) influence their reading of HIV/AIDS.

### **Questions**

Do you think your friends are practicing safe sex? How do you know?

Do you think your friends are abstaining?

Do you think your friends use condoms?

Do you know anybody with HIV/AIDS?

Do you have a relative with HIV/AIDS?

Have you nursed any patient with HIV/AIDS?

Do you think your friends could get HIV/AIDS?

Do you think you could get HIV/AIDS?

### **Focus group check list**

What HIV/AIDS do messages do the teenagers' reproduce? How do they reproduce them?

Do they reproduce the *Straight Talk* preferred meaning? (**A**bstain from sex, **B**e faithful or use a **C**ondom?)

Do they negotiate a different meaning? Or do they produce an oppositional meaning?

Do the teenagers use language similar to *Straight Talk*?

What language do they use?

Do they find the information credible?

Do they find the sources credible?

Are the HIV/AIDS messages considered relevant?

Are *Straight Talk* messages considered humorous/emotional?

What messages and characters do they identify with?

How do they interpret the messages?

Do they see themselves/friends in the messages?

How do they perceive *Straight Talk* as penetrating their environment/space?

How and what do they identify with/evaluate/critique?

#### Gender

Would girls perceive the HIV/AIDS media messages differently from boys? How differently?

What is different? Note any difference in material selection or use.

What is more likely to appeal to boys/girls?

#### Family economic background

How does family economic background affect the teenagers reading of the HIV/AIDS messages?

How differently are the meanings negotiated?

What meanings do the economically disadvantaged make?

What meanings do the economically advantaged make?

Is there a difference in the way *Straight Talk* is considered/used by the socially advantaged/disadvantaged?

### **Appendix iii (News game guideline)**

In the news game teenagers will produce their own HIV/AIDS newspaper.

#### **Aim**

To gauge how much of the HIV/AIDS messages the teenagers recall.

To assess how different/similar the HIV/AIDS messages the teenagers reproduce are from those in *Straight Talk*.

To create an environment that facilitates the teenagers' discussion on HIV/AIDS with minimal embarrassment.

Instructions: To work in groups (Average of eight)

Time allowed for the activity is 40 minutes

1. Participants introduce themselves briefly: name, age, what would you like to be when you grow up, who is your role model? What are your major sources of information on HIV/AIDS?
2. Split into two groups of fours.
3. Share out roles and work together. Try to make sure that each group member is doing something. For example, as some people cut the pictures others could do the pasting.
4. Using the pictures provided plus any other pictures, cartoons or stories that you could have brought along, design a one-page newspaper aimed at educating your age-mates about HIV/AIDS.
5. There is no single right answer but it is important that the group agree on key elements of their newspaper and below are some aspects to consider:
  - Get a name for the newspaper.
  - What important topic(s) to include in the newspaper.
  - What headlines to use in your newspaper?
  - What stories to use (the stories should not be more than 100 words long).
  - What important pictures to use.

**NB:** Participants will be requested before hand to bring any material that they may wish to use in developing their own newspaper.

## Check-list

What HIV/AIDS messages are they reproducing?

How are they reproducing them?

How much of the safe sex messages do they remember and reproduce?

Do they reproduce them as they are in *Straight Talk*? (**A**bstain, **B**e faithfulness, Use Condoms)

How similar or different are their messages from *Straight Talk*? What is similar/different?

Do they accept or reject the key *Straight Talk* messages?

How do they modify the key HIV/AIDS messages in *Straight Talk*?

What key messages keep resurfacing in the news game?

What are the unique messages in the produced newspapers?

What are the unique features in the produced newspapers?

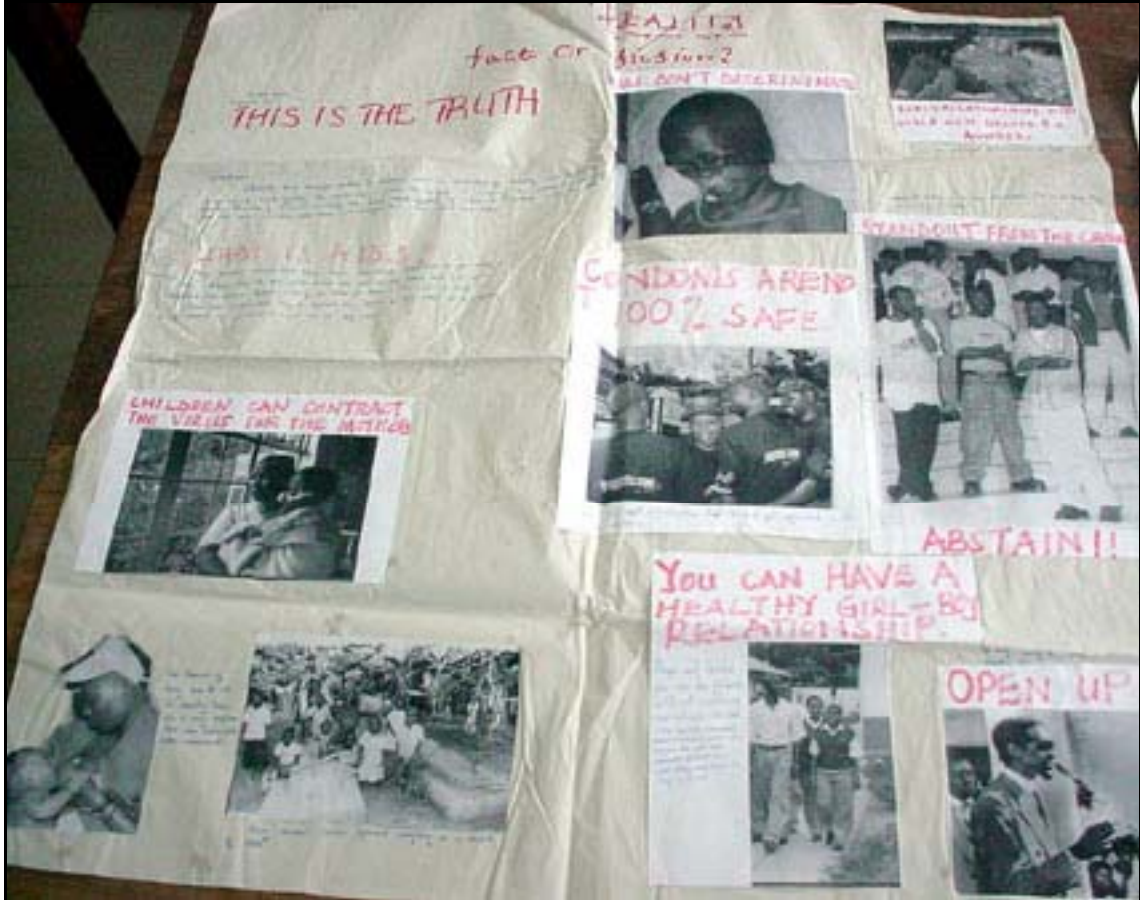
What messages do they find more appealing as seen in their production of concepts similar to *Straight Talk*?

Do they find the *Straight Talk* messages persuasive/trust worthy/memorable/funny?

Look at the language used, definitions, themes, choice of material, links made between these and conclusions drawn.


Appendix iv (Newspapers attached)

Reality Newspaper: Produced by Kanabiri 15-16 year-old girls




The TEENS AGAINST AIDS  
The struggle against HIV/AIDS.


Injected mothers can also infect their own babies.




Unsterilized needles used on infected people transmit AIDS. BEWARE!



Let us organize our efforts in co-ordinating activities.





Learn to say no.



Other causes could also be:

- Unprotected sex
- Peer Influence
- BLOOD TRANSFUSION (infected blood)



He died of AIDS and now they are all alone.




Infected partners should stop depending with the State.

Not Before MARRIAGE learn to wait.

Always use condoms.




Opponents often become their children.



Infected partners should stop depending with the State.


Not Before MARRIAGE learn to wait.

Always use condoms.




Young people should join.

WE NEED THE TEENS ALIVE.



His parents died of AIDS because he is drinking.



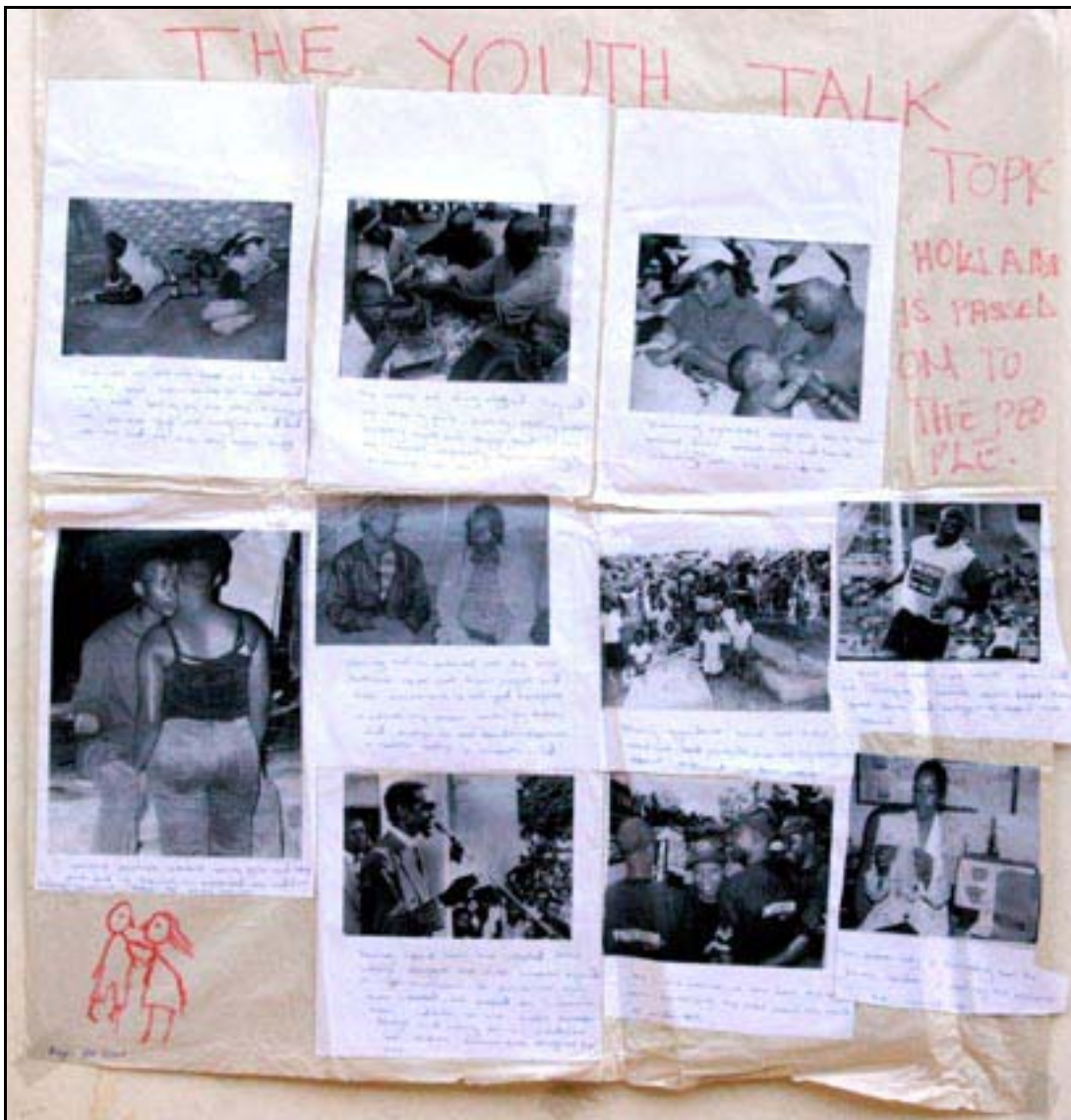
Mothers (parents) talk to the children.

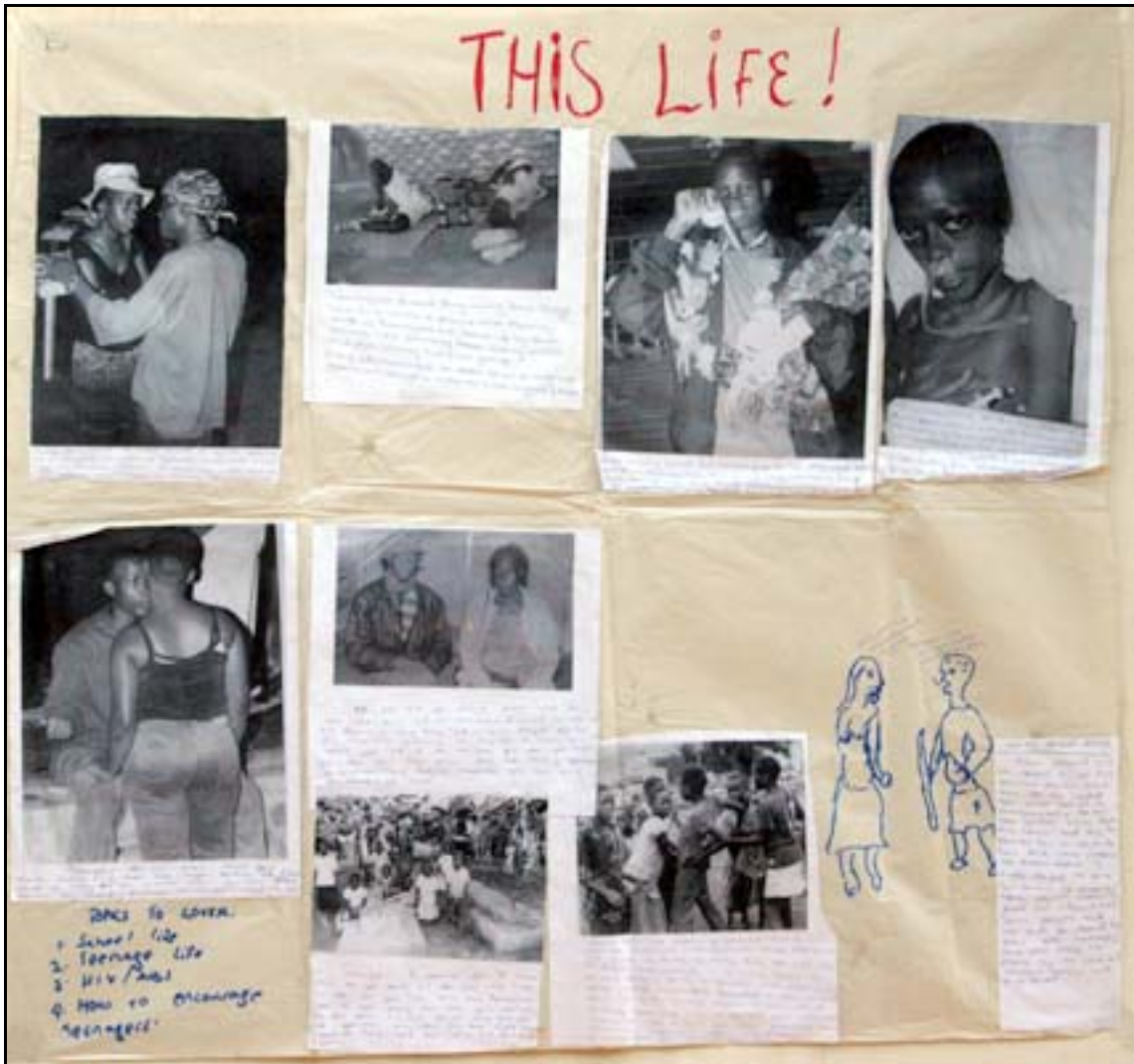
*Teens Speak Out* Newspaper: Produced by Kanastu 15-16 year-old boys



*The Eye Opener* Newspaper: Produced by Kanasatu 15-16 year-old boys








# SPEAKING FACTS NEWSPAPER.

## CONDOM.

USE:

- Prevent unwanted pregnancies
- Prevent the HIV/AIDS VIRUS from penetrating into Uninfected person.

We would like to Advise our fellow Youth to use condoms inorder to prevent Above.



## SPORTS & ACTIVITIES.


USE:

- Keep them healthy.
- Physical fit
- it also Reduces the weight
- it also keeps Youth healthy.

## STREET KIDS.


This is caused by:

- Lack of parental care due to early pregnancies in school by the young parents.
- Lack of proper feeding.
- Gambling.
- Lack of Educational Services.



## ACTIVITIES:

- Rugby
- Basketball
- Baseball
- Tennis



## SOLUTIONS

- Support children
- Also should come and Support the children
- Should Avoid Bad Peer Pressure (by children)



## SEX AND RELATIONSHIP.

GIRLS & BOYS CAN be friend or in Love BUT:

They ~~can~~ <sup>should</sup> also Obtain from sex or Use condoms

Wait for the right time to play sex.

E.g of good Relationships

## MARRIAGE.

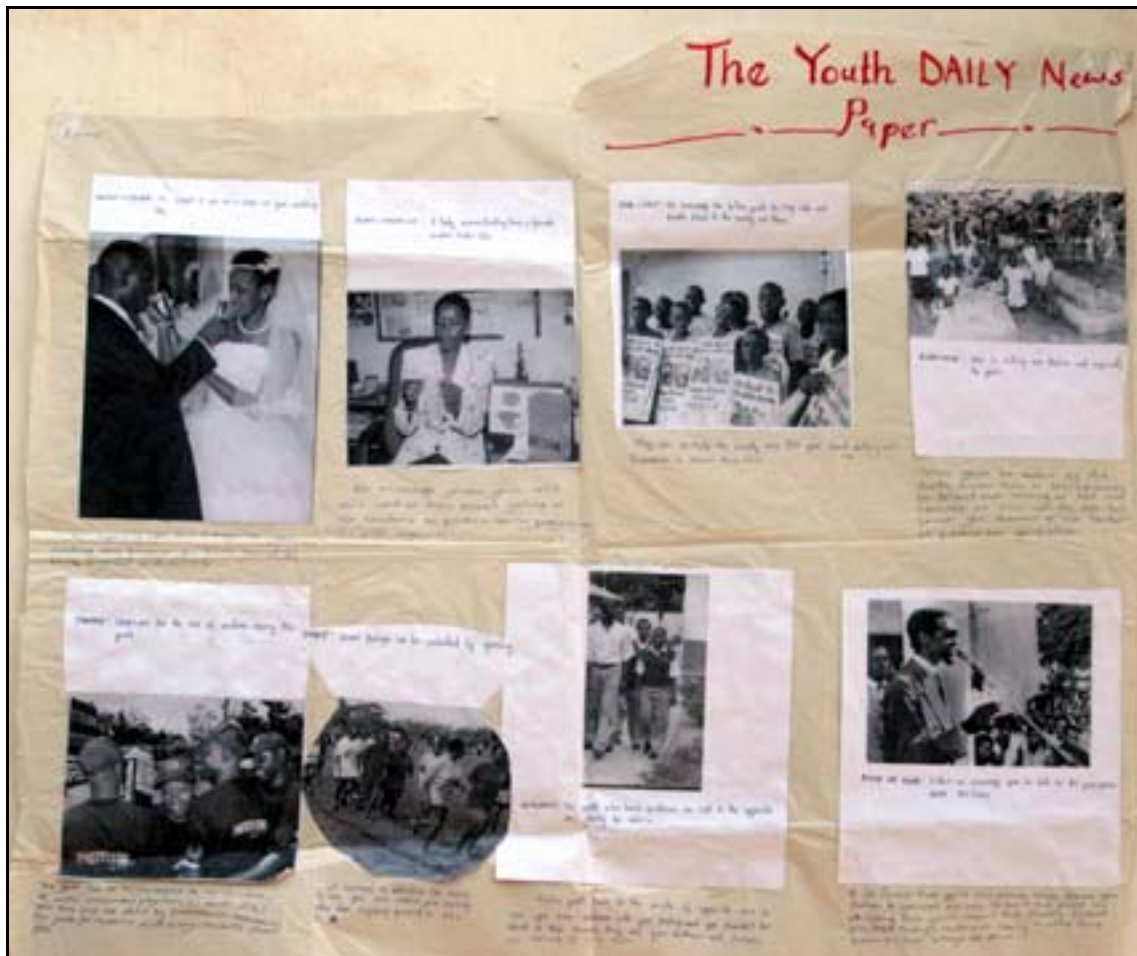
This is the Union of man and woman to form one person

Marriage is is put before people only

### REASONS

- Get children after delivery
- Enjoy Sex.
- Unite the families

**The Youth Daily Newspaper: Produced by group B of Kanemu Co-education School**



## Appendix v (Discussion transcripts)

### KEY

<p><b>R-</b> Researcher's voice <b>M-</b> Male voice, numbered as per different individual <b>M?-</b> An unidentifiable male voice <b>F-</b> Female voice, numbered as per different individual <b>F?-</b> An unidentifiable female voice</p>
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### Kanasatu Boys College

**R-** Pretend you are journalists and editors and you are going to produce a one-page newspaper. Convince your group members about your choice for a picture. Don't take things for granted, let people explain why they are using a particular picture. After you have made your newspapers we shall have a short discussion. Don't worry about the tape recorder, I have visited five schools... I cannot remember everything so I need to record our discussions. I will not disclose your names when I am doing my report. For purposes of this exercise, you will decide on the name of the newspaper, the themes you are to include. I am giving you many pictures but you need to choose a few to use, after you have chosen the pictures, you need to cut them out paste them on your newspaper and explain what the picture is about. That's what we call a caption. Remember to work in a group and the exercise should not take more than 30 minutes because the headmaster has given me only one hour. You may write short stories and draw cartoons.

**M3-** Do we use a maker?

**R-** Those makers are weak they will run out before we complete the exercise. You may use them for the headings. Make sure you begin by giving your newspaper a name. It will help you choose your other material.

**R-** There is no wrong picture, any can work. Have you agreed on the pictures already?

**M1-** Something like this.

**R-** Do you want another pen?

**M1-** In relation to this one.

**M3-** What do you think about this one?

**M1-** Yes.

**M2-** First of all about AIDS ... then teenagers.

**M1-** Parents are old enough to know

...not clear

**R-** Have you agreed on the name of your newspaper?

**M5-** No not yet.

**M1-** How can we put this such that...

**R-** In journalism, if you don't meet the deadline, the printing press runs without your page, so you need to work faster.

**M4-** The name of the newspaper, the head story...

**M1-** The causes, prevention...

**M5-** Guys be short.

**M1-** Anything about AIDS?

**M2-** Condoms, abstinence, what else, are there others?

**M4-** The heading should be eye catching.

**M3-** E eh guys the name of our newspaper?

**M1-** Guys think, think, think.

**M2-** This is among the last.

**M5-** Remember you have to leave a space here.

**M6-** So we have this space for the name of our newspaper and lead story.

**M1-** Let us reduce this, can't we reduce this?

**R-** We need to get together, you can use a marker to write there.

**R-** Guys come over please. Each group will take us through their major pictures, your themes, the name of your paper and why you chose those pictures. Don't read what you wrote but explain why you chose those pictures. I imagine you have selected one person to do that by now. If you are not seeing the newspaper, stand up or bend over.

### **Discussion**

**M1-** First of all, we have this picture about a boy and a girl meeting somewhere. We have chosen it because it shows teenagers outside there, that first of all we know what these people are doing especially when it comes to this trying moment of when they should choose either to have sex or not to. Like in this case...then this one shows in case the boy and the girl choose not to have sex they can easily have good life.

Also among the pictures we have about misbehaviour. It shows in life there are many things that keep tempting us trying to convince us to have sex at an early age. But if we could avoid such facts of life, perhaps we could get a better life. Then we also have this picture.

**R-** Do you want to explain?

**M3-** Yeah.

**R-** Ooh fine, fine.

**M3-** When you look at sex, in our paper it is something of the mind. They are in a group their minds...

**M5-** I want to explain this.

**M5-** We chose this because as teenagers we all love each other, but when we love let us mean it ...

**M1-** This picture shows...if they cannot do away with sex, they should use condoms.

This one shows the consequences of AIDS. AIDS has many consequences...

**R-** I have a question for you, ...can you show me the caption?

**M6-** Okay as you have already seen, we have called our newspaper *The Eye Opener* because it reveals to us the evil things in society so, the reason I chosen this pictures of Philly Lutaya during his final stages of AIDS. It is because am trying to show that despite of your wealthy or your money or talent, AIDS will sweep you away. You cannot defeat AIDS unless you fight ignorance. Then here we are showing the causes of AIDS.

Permissiveness in society, teenagers think they are good enough to start relationships but they end up falling in love when they are not emotionally strong and then get AIDS and other results like early pregnancies. Then here there is a fundamental cause of ignorance...alcoholism, it causes people to get ignorant as I have already said and might find you involving in sexual activities. Then this is another cause of AIDS, you see there

is a victim of AIDS probably this one must have got at a tender age. And then here is another result of death. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce...

**M1-** However, all this can be prevented through the use of condoms, for example here is a woman showing the use of condoms, although it is not efficient but it can help to reduce the number, but the best way is keep abstaining until you are married, because when you are married you should be faithful to each other. You can see Natasha, the daughter of the president.

**R-** He is saying he thinks condoms are not effective or not as effective, and he thinks you should abstain till marriage. Now think about yourself and your friends. Are we abstaining, are we being faithful? Let us sit down and discuss.

**M-** We abstain.

**M2-** We are using condoms.

**M?-** We are abstaining.

**R-** And the rest?

**M3-** The point is that we are using condoms and condoms are not helping to fight AIDS they are helping us to just enjoy sex... so condoms just help to prevent pregnancies because as my colleague has already said condoms are not 100% efficient they may have pores in them as some advertisers have mentioned. So, condoms are not supposed to be AIDS preventers and therefore condoms should be put to zero tolerance in society.

**R-** Okay what do the others say? React to him, you don't have to agree with him you can disagree with him.

**M2-** For me I just agree with the last person that we abstain.

**R-** About how many boys are you in this school?

**M1-** 900

**R-** Ooh let us assume you are 900. Out of 900 how many are abstaining, give a percentage?

**M-** 95%

**R-** What do the others think?

**M3-** I think I disagree with that because really.....

**M1-** But in some cases some famous people have had sex without a condom, most probably but is getting all the money he needs, achievements, for example Gaetano.

**R-** You have had an interesting discussion about Gaetano. What do you think about Gaetano and Abby?

**M2-** Now there is saying that a man's happiest moment is also his weakness, this means when you are sexually aroused you become happy, ignorant about the evil in society, so you are saying Gaetano is the happiest man and is making money, he is going to become excited and have sex ...Abby knowing that Gae was a man of potential she wanted to share the money with him...but I think you see the negative results Abby is no longer as excited so whether you rich, happy, you will still get AIDS.

**M4-** Me I don't blame Gaetano for two things. One where he was, they were forcing him, it was there where...another is what he did was not shown they were under blankets.

**R-** Ok. Do you people read *Straight Talk*?

**M-** Yes

**R-** How often, do you get a *Straight Talk*?

**M-** Yes.....(not audible).

**R-** You already know what is there?

**M...** (not audible).

**R-** Okay if you already know what is there, what are the messages you know?

**M1-** Abstinence.

**M4-** Using condoms.

**M3-** But another thing I have realised is that some people read *Straight Talk* when may be there are funny things or certain pictures, may be they were trying to show how to use a condom.

**R-** That one they will see because it is new information okay.

**M3-** But to them they don't take real information.

**M2-** Some stories are forged.

**M3-** Some ask just for the sake.

**R-** Where do you people get AIDS messages from?

**M1-** From newspapers, friends.

**M4-** Parents.

**R-** How many of your parents talk to you about AIDS?

**M4-** Me.

**R-** What do they say? Give a typical conversation. Would they tell you how to use a condom?

**M4-** No no!

**M5-** Me yes...yeah my daddy told me.

**M6-** Me, he told me you can relate to girls but don't have sex with them.

**R-** And does he tell you how to keep the girls without engaging in sex?

**M6-** Yes.

**R-** Tell us what he tells you. The tip he has given you.

**M6-** You may have a girlfriend but visit during the day.

**M3-** Okay you may take her serious but when she is not, so you have to do, you have to take her like a sister and may find forgetting the rest.

**M3-** The only thing to do when choosing a friend, you can tell that...but make sure you cannot involve in conversation about sex.

**M2-** For me when I bring friends at home, my father is on my case but my mother is easy. So that is the reason why I don't.

**R-** Do you people have girl friends? I don't mean lovers, but friends?

**M6-** Yes

**R-** How easy is it not to think about sex?

**M1-** It is easy.

**R-** It is easy for you, what do others think?

**M1-** It becomes easier as you grow old, it becomes easy.

**R-** Why do you think it is easier as you grow older?

**M1-** Ok. When you are young when you meet a girl or a girl meets a boy, you are shy so that thing is ...

**R-** How easy is it for other teenagers to abstain. Don't think about yourselves. How easy is it for teenagers to abstain?

**M1-** It is very easy so longer as you keep yourself busy or if you feel ...

**M2-** I think it is hard, because when you think about sex...pornography

**M4-** Me I think it is not easy because all the movies they watch...

**R-** Are those problems tackled in *Straight Talk*. Does *Straight Talk* show you how to abstain?

**M5-** Yes.

**M4-** No.

**M1-** Yes

(Recording not audible for a while).

**R-** What are other messages that you would like to see in *Straight Talk*?

**M2-** They just look at the title and say let me read this paper.

**M4-** I think those people in *Straight Talk* just think and write.

**M3-** I think these people should get serious with what they write.

**R-** Do any of you guys write to *Straight Talk*?

**M1-** No

**R-** Why don't you write-in with your views?

**M1-** Because they are rural teenagers writing.

**M3-** *Straight Talk* has forgotten about Kampala students for example porn, no one educates us about pornography. They only tell us about early pregnancies, but what are the causes of all this?

**M2-** I think they should also put restrictions on papers like *Red Pepper*.

**M-** I think they also talk about ways of abstinence.

**M3-** If some one can avoid movies and again abstain, I think there can be a difference.

**R-** You all seem to know the key messages about condom use ... but what is influencing your attitude about them?

**M6-** Like in catholic religion they don't allow condoms...

**M4-** Another thing is that parents are not open. They should tell us what is happening out there.

**R-** What do mean out there? What do you expect?

**M4-** Tell the child about life generally.

**M5-** Talk about sex, but not wait for the problems to happen.

**R-** Would you understand if your parent told you that I didn't manage I had sex when I was young? Wouldn't you feel let down?

**M1-** Yes we would.

**M2-** I think parents over restrict children...

**M1-** I think just like the *Straight Talk* has started talking to the teachers, they should put a newspaper for our parents.

**R-** Something like *Parents Talk*?

**M2-** Yeah.

**M6-** One...but if they tell us that am doing this not that I hate but for the good of your future.

**R-** Now we have to rush through. Have any of you nursed a person with AIDS?

**M1-** Yes.

**R-** Did it affect you, the way you look at using condoms, abstinence, do you think it has?

**M1-** Yes it has.

**M2-** My attitude is like I hated condoms...I saw a condom useless. What I saw important was to wait.

**R-** I don't think condoms not being 100% is a *Straight Talk* message. Is it?

**M2-** No.

R- So am just wondering where do you people get such messages from?

M3- From primary school.

M4- Even a doctor came here and said a condom has pores, but...a virus may not pass through.

R- Do you think any of your friends could get AIDS?

M1- Yes.

M2- No.

R- They could. How about you, do you think you could get AIDS?

M1- No I can't because...only through an injection.

M?- (inaudible murmurs)...

R- You had something to say.

M2- (inaudible murmurs)...

R- Are there teenagers who are being faithful. They are not using condoms and not abstaining?

M2- Yeah.

M5- I don't think so.

R- You think it is not possible?

M? It is not.

M2- It is.

R- Do you think you can get AIDS through un-penetrative sex like kissing, romance?

M5- If fluids are exchanged yes.

M3- When you have oral sex you take in fluids and in this case...

R- What happens to the AIDS virus when it gets to your digestive system?

M2- When the white blood cells come around...

R- From what we have said, it looks you will have to talk about oral sex more, because it is very easy for teenagers to think that they cannot get infected that way.

R- If some has a burning question I will take it.

M2- What am also saying is that these *Straight Talk* guys should be 50-50.

R- 50-50 as in rural urban.

M2- Yes.

## **Kaine Private School**

### **News Game Group A**

F1- If you look at the structure of these people, it gives you courage not to go loving men... your body, your health...

M1- We put condoms...

R- Remember you are targeting the youth on AIDS and also remember you have limited time. Some of you want to become journalists and editors, we work under strict deadlines.

M1-Abstinence, people to always use condoms.

M2- Drug abuse.

F2- Defiling young girls, hence leading to exposure to AIDS.

**M2-** Then alcohol, abuse of alcohol has led the youth to lose their sense of control, falling on the, at the end of the day they are...  
**M1-** Family members dying to AIDS.  
**F2-** Dear Ugandans we have lost many important people.  
**M1-** About AIDS and condom use.  
**F1-** Breast-feeding mothers tend to pass AIDS to their young ones.  
**F3-** Engaging in sports activities will make the young forget about the love affairs.  
**R-** Have you agreed on a name for your newspaper?  
**M1-** To pass advice to the young.  
**F3-** You think about men.  
**F2-** Joining clubs.  
**R-**You've used more than 30 minutes, so try to hurry. Okay the printing press has begun running.

### **News game Group B**

**F4-**Teenagers there is also...  
**F5-** Remember to...  
**F4-** Teenagers don't allow smoking.  
**F5-** Put an exclamation mark.  
**F4-** Courtship.  
**F5-** I have tested HIV.  
**F6-** After that put this.  
**F5-** This means that those infected need care.  
**R-** You can cut off the picture if you don't need to use the whole of it.  
**F4-** Okay.  
**F6-** What else do we have to add?  
**R-** Choose one of you to explain your newspaper.

### **Discussion**

**F5-** We are giving them advice to take care...because of peer influence one may end up... Then we have one, is sportsman strong and an example to the young people. If you don't involve in sports then you are likely to indulge in sex. This one is of young people; they have AIDS because of their parents. Some of these teenagers were born with AIDS ...I feel sorry for these teenagers, they might die because of thinking, if this boy has care, I think he can be okay.  
**R-** I think you have not explained to us the cartoon.  
**F5-** Okay this is said to be a mother and this one daughter. She is saying sorry you are not the one responsible for this.  
**M4-** Besides suffering in the above pictures...you still have a chance to say no to somebody of the opposite sex and if you have one, go for HIV testing...because you may end up having unprotected sex.  
**R-** How do you know that he may end up having unprotected sex?  
**M3-** Because the conversation they are in, I don't think...  
**R-** What time do you think that picture was taken?  
**M3-** It was night-time. And you see they are young people and if one is infected...  
**R-** Why did you choose that picture?

**F5-** We chose it because those youth should be helped because they sleep everywhere. If this was a girl and a rich man asked for sex to give her money, I don't think she can refuse. The girl wants something to eat and she ends up getting AIDS.

**R-** Do you think your newspapers are similar to *Straight Talk*?

**F6-** Yes.

**R-** What is similar?

**F5-** How condoms are used, how to prevent AIDS.

**R-** Do you people read *Straight Talk*?

**M1-** Yeah.

**R-** Does the whole school read *Straight Talk*?

**M3-** No...but many read.

**R-** Do you think those people believe these messages?

**F5-** Some do.

**R-** What are the messages that *Straight Talk* gives?

**M4-** Abstinence, use of condoms.

**R-** Let us imagine you are 500 in the school, according to your estimate are your friends abstaining or using condoms?

**M4-** Use condoms.

**R-** Most are using condoms? What percentage?

**F5-** 30%.

**F6-** 50% are abstaining.

**R-** In your small group of friends, are people abstaining or using condoms?

**F5-** Pills.

**R-** Pills don't protect you from HIV so what are they using to protect themselves from infection? According to teenagers what is the bigger problem, AIDS or pregnancy?

**F5-** Pregnancy.

**R-** Please explain.

**F5-** Some girls will say they will become old if they become pregnant.

**R-** You are very quiet, what do you think? You don't have to agree with the girls.

**F6-** Pregnancy is more feared because people will say after pregnant, you can't continue with school. But if it is AIDS, you can continue studying.

**R-** I have another question. From the bottom of your hearts do you think your friends are using condoms?

**M3-** No.

**F5-** Because some people fear them ...

**R-** Do you think some people fear condoms?

**F6-** Yeah.

**R-** What do they say?

**F5-** They say condoms are not 100% correct.

**R-** Who are those people saying condoms are not 100% safe?

**F5-** Condoms don't work they only prevent pregnancies.

**R-** Okay choose someone from your group, tell us the name of your newspaper.

**F2-** The youth programme, alcohol make...youth... senses, fall on the road, you may be jobless...may rape women. When the youth take drugs they may rape women and get infected. Here we are seeing parenting breast-feeding and infect their babies. Here people are in hurry, they even forget to use condoms. As a result of having unprotected

sex...they have lost weight, the appearance is not good. Therefore I advise the youth to always use condoms. This one is happening in Uganda because of ignorance of AIDS and condom use. Some misuse condoms and end up dying. Here we are saying that at least go out debating, you will forget all about love affairs and you stay protected. Having heard from the late Lutaya... people are in T-shirts. The youth are sensitising fellow youth about the use of condoms.

**R-** Do you know those two people, can you identify them?

**F2-** This one is Philly Lutaya and the mother.

**R-** Okay can you tell from the pictures who is sick?

**F2-** Of course it is Lutaya who is sick?

**R-** But you said those two people are sick?

**F2-** Yeah the mother also looks sick.

**R-** Yeah she looks sick, do you think that means she has AIDS?

**F2-** No.

**R-** Can you tell from someone's appearance that they have AIDS?

**F2-** Some times you can tell, but some times not. People with HIV are healthy but people with AIDS are sick.

**R-** Is it true that balers [football stars] have many girlfriends?

**F5-**No.

**M2-** Get a girl once a week....

**R-** Asiiimwe if you get a girl once a week, does it prevent one from getting AIDS?

**M2-** It sometimes protects.

**R-** Explain.

**M2-** Because you might go to a girl for sex but just talking to her in the usual talking as your girl... for me I think if you get involved in activities that makes you busy, you might even forget.

**F5-** You enjoy for one minute but you suffer for years.

**R-** Have your parents talked to you about AIDS?

**F5-** No the blame is on them.

**R-** Do you have any questions?

## **Kanemu Co-education School**

### **Introductions**

**R-** Okay those are great visions I wish you luck and I know you will achieve the dreams. Now we shall split in groups and do an activity.

News game-Group A

**M1-** Do you have a good handwriting?

**M2-** Let us choose the pictures.

**R-** I was just saying that if you write a story...keep it short. Don't waste time on long stories. You can even draw a cartoon.

**M2-** There is football.

**M1-** I guess this one will help on blood...

**R-** Remember your newspaper is not *Straight Talk*, you have to begin by giving your newspaper a name.

**F1-** Our newspaper...

**R-** Yes get a name for your newspaper. May be it is better to start by getting a name so that you know what you want.

**F2-** You guys, the name of our newspaper?

**F2-** We have this one also.

**M1-** The boys deceive girls.

**M2-** It is not only boys who deceive girls.

**M1-** Isn't this the guy who died of AIDS, this Philly?

**F2-** Yeah.

**M1-** How about the other of the wedding ceremony?

**M2-** This is the front page.

**M1-** The name of the newspaper?

**M2-** Call it...

**M1-** Let us the Youth Daily leading paper.

**F2-** No.

**M1-** Yeah.

**R-** Now the others could be cutting out the pictures as others write the captions, so that you save time.

**M2-** Writing what?

**R-** Captions ... words explaining what the picture is about.

**M1-** May you people cut, I will write.

**F1-** May be put that up.

**R-** It is interesting why are you choosing that picture?

**M1-** This one.

**F2-** As when you are in school and you keep a virgin it looks good and in future when you marry...

**M1-** O oh! Write virginity power.

**F2-** We write virginity is power.

**F1-** We encourage the youth to donate blood.

**F2-** We emphasise proper condom use.

**M2-** You said proper condom use.

**M1-** Madam, are we allowed to...

R- Yeah but be mindful of time.  
M1- We say a woman demonstrating proper condom use.  
M2- Guys time.  
F2- HIV can be transferred from mother to child.  
R- Guys you are remaining with 10 minutes so work hard.  
M1- What do you say about Gaetano?  
M2- I would say advise the youth.  
F2- About what, abstinence.  
M2- What does tomorrow mean?  
F1- Tomorrow means future time.  
F2- About the deadly disease.  
M2- What else?  
F1- What did we say about Gaetano?  
F2- We said to put him there?  
R- You can cut him and put him there.  
F2- What we saying about Gaetano.  
R- Okay can get back to the group... End this activity.

### **News Game Group B**

F3- You have to see how to change this.  
M3- What are the causes of HIV/AIDS?  
F4- They are very many.  
F3- We are discussing.  
F4- Not using condoms.  
M4- What do you mean not using condoms?  
F3- Defilement.  
M3- Lack of parental care.  
F4- Then sugar daddies.  
M3- Let me just find some...  
F4- Hurry, hurry.  
M4- What else can we do?  
R- Oh, you have ten minutes to go.  
F4- Ten minutes to go?  
M3- Get me paper.  
M4- Let us begin with causes.  
M3- Then problems.  
F4- Yeah. We have tried.  
M3- Keep reminding me.  
M3- You do that.  
F3- Eh eh?  
M3- Where is yours?  
M4- Lack of personal control, then we also peer pressure, gambling.  
F4- Okay. Eh.  
F4- Us we knew.  
R- Meanwhile you can move on to something else.  
F3- What about the solutions?

**M4-** What do you mean?  
**M3-** Solutions are talents.  
**M3-** Parents should support the teenagers.  
**F4-** *Kale, Kale.* Fine.  
**M4-** Or, this is good.  
**M4-** Then also the NGOs can support children in school.  
**M4-** Okay. Then we can also encourage sports.  
**M3-** What are the uses of sports?  
**M4-** Sports.  
**F4-** What is the next solution?  
**M4-** Next solutions?  
**M3-** Next solution, students should avoid early sex.  
**F3-** Keep them happy.  
**M4-** I go by this.  
**F4-** What is the next?  
**M4-** Sports.  
**F4-** What other activities?  
**M4-** Ok. Netball, basketball.  
**M3-** What about Gaetano and Abby?  
**F4-** Ah ah! For what?  
**M3-** Lets use them.  
**F3-** The next is this one.  
**M4-** They went very far.  
**F4-** The relationship.  
**M3-** Its okay.  
**M3-** That's why we are saying abstain from sex. No you can use condoms if you have failed to control yourself.  
**M3-** Abstinence is the best way to protect yourself from sex. Condoms are not even 100 percent correct. You never know. You can even get AIDS.  
**F4-** Yes.  
**M4-** condoms.  
**F3-** That one ah ah.  
**M4-** You should write that.  
**M3-** Do the right thing at the right time.  
**F3-** You may not be in charge of yourself.  
**M3-** That's why am saying do the right thing at the right time.  
**F3-**You can't know.  
**M3-** If it is the right time to play sex.  
**F4-** You can take this and that.  
**F3-** Abby.  
**M3-** Ah ah.  
**F3-** Abby is young.  
**M4-** Abby is old.  
**M3-** Abby is 27 and Gaetano is 31.  
**F3-** This is an example of a good relationship.  
**F4-** Ah hah!

**F3-** Well lets agree.  
**M4-** This one is better.  
**M3-** Okay also Abby and Gae.  
**M4-** We can cut this one also.  
**F4-** We can even use another if you have.  
**F3-** Do I have to write these things?  
**F4-** We can use a pen.  
**F3-** We have made another ...but it doesn't matter.  
**M3-** They are married. Man and woman before marriage.  
**M4-** That one seems.  
**M3-** Lets see one...  
**F4-** You can put it.  
**F4-** Eh, the next two minutes to go.  
**M3-** To form protection.  
**F3-** Protection?  
**M3-** Marriage is only for mature people like...  
**F3-** Above 18.  
**M4-** Ah ah. Those ones are still young.  
**F3-** Eh eh? You go to the villages.  
**M3-** Why do people get married?  
**M4-** It is not that physical.  
**F3-** Use that picture.  
**F4-** Who is that one?  
**F3-** I'm sure you have the facts.  
**M4-** They should have continued buying.

### **Discussions**

**R-** Okay each group will get someone to take us through their paper, tell us what it is about, tell us why you chose the pictures that you chose. Don't just to read to us. We want you to tell us what it is about, what you are trying to do.  
**M3-** We begun by...  
**R-** First tell us what your newspaper is called.  
**M3-** The name of our newspaper is youth ...now we chose this one because we want to tell the youth out there about life aspects.  
**R-** Just before you go to the pictures, what did you intend to do as a newspaper?  
**M3-** First we want to speak to the teenagers out there about the things, the life aspects. Under that one we chose this picture because the life style condom use is one of the things we want the youth... Abstain, Be faithful to their partners or use Condoms. Because we wouldn't like to see the youth or teenagers dying. So we are telling the importance of condoms and also how to use those condoms. Because condoms if not used properly...so the youth should ensure they use properly.  
**R-** What do you mean properly used?  
**M3-** Properly used, this one is when you put on a condom, you have to first check the expiry date, you also have to read that manual inside...under that we are also telling them the use of condoms, they also stop pregnancy, they also stop AIDS and at the same time, they can be a birth control measure.

**R-** You don't have to explain alone, another person in the group can help.

**F4-** Street kids, the causes of street kids are that some kids are harassed by their parents and so they decide to run away from home just to stay...and another thing is that some youth have friends, negative peer groups, this can lead them in problems and they end up getting discouraged.

**R-** Our newspaper was about AIDS. How do you link up that idea...the street kids?

**M3-** It was not...

**R-** So your paper didn't stick to AIDS only?

**M3-** Yeah.

**F4-** Some kids get out of their homes because of negative peer pressure from their friends. Another thing is lack of educational support. Some parents intend to keep their kids at home yet they have the facilities to take them to school.

**R-** I can see the other group also used the picture of a condom, do you believe condoms are effective?

**M3-** Yeah. **F3-** Yes

**R-** Explain, anybody can explain.

**F4-** They are effective in that if you use, wear them correctly during sex, they prevent unwanted pregnancies and STDs as in the picture, the lady was demonstrating how a female condom looks like. Most of us don't know how it looks like but here you can see it looks like some cylindrical thing.

**R-** In a school like Kanemu, how many are you by the way

**F2-** 2000 **M2-**2500 **R-**2500? Ooh my

**R-** what do you think of 2500, how many are using condoms?

**M3-** We don't know.

**R-** I know you don't know, but I just want an estimate.

**M2-** Me I would say, you some of them tend to be saved and are abstaining, so I would say half of it.

**R-** So you think half are using condoms and half abstaining. Do you really think they are using condoms or they are just saying we are using condoms?

**M2-** Yeah because they are youths and are getting involved in sex and they haven't got any pregnancies, so I think they are using them and I believe condoms are so effective

**R-** Okay you can go on explaining your newspaper.

**F4-** The solutions for the above problems, parents should support their children, the NGOs should support children-like street kids, like those ones, then they get them. After talking to them they can may be get people's snaps then get them sponsors, they keep sending money, then children go to school.

**R-** Okay, let us get somebody to talk us about this...of...I don't I know, they are connecting, you can talk about them.

**M4-** I understand marriage is a union of a man and a woman to form one person. Let us... this man is Mr Ssekyanzi Nelson and the woman is called... when you get married, the reason why we get married are, to produce children, since a woman cannot produce alone, after studying she should...in my tribe if you marry...if you don't, you don't get respect. Another thing is that they enjoy sex. We are in school we are told to abstain in order to prevent STDs and AIDS, so when we marry we can enjoy sex.

**R-** I am just wondering how many believe it is possible to abstain till marriage?

**F3-** Me I believe.

**R-** Is it possible? Please explain.

**M4-** Well it because when we...these three aspects of life styles you either...you can either be in relationship but should not engage in sex, you wait for the right time.

**R-** Is it as easy as you say it?

**M3-** It is not easy.

**F4-** it is not.

**M4-** I think it is easy.

**F4-** it is not easy.

**M2-** *Wama* it depends on how one can control the feelings, if you cannot...

**R-** Let me ask you another question. Do you think girls and boys can be friends, I mean not have sex, do you think they can be friends?

**M3-** Yes.

**R-** So what happens when girls and boys become friends?

**M3-** I think sex is the outcome. Even before I joined this school, I was like isolated I didn't have any girlfriends...when I got used I got to know that girls and boys can be friends. But there are some issues preventing us. Like how sure are you that when you get used to each other...in the process of love people want to prove that... do you really love me...the answer is sex.

**F3-** No... **M3-** That is how they justify it.

**F3-** Being in a relationship doesn't mean sex, if you love someone you can't prove it through sex. You can prove that through sending gifts, or exchanging letters...or going for a picnic the two of you, I think that is also a kind of showing love than engaging in sex which might result in unwanted pregnancies, STDs and so.

**M3-** That is you personally, but what are the youth thinking out there. They are saying that only when they hear of girls and boys relationship, their mind is driven to sex.

**R-** If that is what happens, what do you think the majority of the teenagers in Kanemu Co-Education School think. Do you think they think you can stop at a relationship and not have sex?

**F3-** Yes... **F2-** Yes... **M4-** Yes...

**R-** Is that what you are doing?

**M2-** Yeah... **M1-** No... **M3-** Not all of them.

**M2-** If you can handle that, most people are like that, because every day you see a good girl you develop interest. I don't know how you can control those feelings?

**R-** So how do you advise the youth?

**M2-** Yeah I would advise them to use condoms because that is the only solution.

**F1-** May be go sporting to kill those sexual feelings.

**F3-** You be friends but wait for the right time.

**F1-** Everything has time.

**R-** Do you think... the way the relations are, is there time to look for condoms, where do they get these condoms?

**F4-** Friends.

**F5-** Teenager centres.

**M2-** At our school there are friends who don't get chance to go to the teenager centres, so I would advise that the school start giving condoms because when you go to Naguru teenage centre you are given condoms. There are youth teenagers who are in S1, they are told to abstain from sex or use condoms but then you are not giving them condoms and

one will feel ashamed to go and buy himself a condoms so, because he cannot....he ends up playing sex without a condom.

**M3-** As far as am concerned am part of the administration, we are not allowed to come open and give out condoms to the students. One time I attended a workshop...we were given a condom demonstration and told to do them at school. When I came...the patron is also a pastor, he told me you know am a pastor...sorry am not going to...our school is a day school, it has many problems...

**M3-** The school admin. Cannot allow, so we are advising the youth around school to visit teenager centres to get supply of condoms.

**M2-** People are given condoms to prepare for the rainy season.

**M3-** You are right but life is very important, we are telling them...Naguru centre is there.

**F3-** But also if you love your partner and you say I will protect you, then I will spare that 300 and buy a condom.

**M1-** Women don't care about condoms.

**M2-** You are saying you will protect me but there will come a time whereby I will go out and find a girl... the girl will force me into sex minus a condom...

**F3-** When you come to I will tell let us use a condom.

**M2-** But I will come after playing sex.

**F3-** Yes, you have got AIDS, we shall use a condom and I will not get HIV then after we will test.

**M2-** Now yes I would have got AIDS, but since we are lovers, time will come when we are going to get married. Now you cannot tell those married people to use condoms...

**M3-** Let me tell this when we speaking these things... but when you get in the hidden place with your boyfriend, when you begin body touching you feel everything will be fine.

**F3-** But no if it is my health, everything won't be fine...with my...

**M2-** But you boys then there is another thing, you meet a girl you have the condom in the pocket then...you forget that you had a condom in your pocket.

**M3-** I personally have a problem with condoms...many people say it is like eating a sweet in a *kavera*...the problem is when you put a condom you take long to ejaculate you know what am saying...when you are on without like some 5 or 10 minutes you can release and everything will be fine, so one will say...

(Murmurs of embarrassment)

**R-** It is okay for him to talk.

**M3-** So because of that people end up doing sex in banana fibres and will they use condoms while there.

**R-** Okay I want to ask you another question. In *Straight Talk*, they write that you abstain or use a condom, but how practical is it because there is what he had started to answer that the situations you are in you are in a hurry.

**R-** You were going to say something.

**M4-** Me... **R-** Yeah...**M4-** May be I have forgotten.

**R-** It was this one.

**M3-** Okay I was on that issue of condoms...in our school we have tried to come up ...

**R-** Okay very interesting, can we get another explanation.

**M2-** You have used a condom but somebody comes and says am pregnant, I wonder why this happens, and then I get convinced that these condoms break. Then don't know how this one can explained.

**F2-** It may be because of expiry date.

**M2-** I read some magazine...one was saying if you try to play sex and the girl is not willing...the condom would break, may be another thing is if the girl use cosmetics...then another thing is that if you use two condoms...one will slip off...

**M1-** Also another thing is rough sex.

**R-** Are there many expired condoms on the market?

**M2-** Yes they are

**R-** You have actually seen them and the dates are expired?

**F2-** Yeah or if not those condoms sold in shops, they are conditions under which are supposed to be kept the best place could be a clinic but...

**M2-** Some people don't take good care of condoms. You find a boy is outing a condom in a pocket expecting to meet a girl, you walk with ...then tomorrow you go back with the same condom...

**R-** Okay I have this suggestion, when we finish I should give these numbers if by any chance you get an expired condom ...you should call him... we may write about it and people will stop selling them.

**R-** Explain this to us, you explain how you used the picture.

**F2-** This Abby and Gaetano in their room, refreshing themselves...

**R-** So why did you use this picture? Anybody to explain?

**M3-** In Uganda the born again...you remember when it was big brother there was a pastor who was praying for ...so we are telling people that in relationships if the two parties can agree with each other...but our advice to them is to use condoms or abstain.

**R-** Okay we have spent quite some time on this group, let us move to the other...thank you so much. First tell us the name of your newspaper. Explain to us the choice of your name.

**M2-** The name of our newspaper is the *Youth Daily* newspaper. Here we are trying to tell the youth to abstain, well it is hard but at the end you may enjoy it...at the end there is always hope. This one is about, it is not only the responsibility of a man to buy condoms...it is like the choice is in the hands of the boy, so they should also learn to use condoms, female condoms.

**R-** Have you people seen female condoms?

**F1-** Yes.

**R-** On the market?

**F1-** Yeah.

**M1-** Me I have never seen them.

**R-** Are they distributed among the free condoms at the teenager centre?

**M2-**No.

**F2-** No.

**F1-** They rarely give them out.

**R-** Okay let us talk more about the male condom. Girls would you buy condoms for your boyfriends?

**F1-** Yes.

**F2-** Yes.

**M2-** Girls can pretend to be sincere but when they go to their banana plantations, they turn the other side of them.

**M1-** Then this one.

**R-** You don't need to explain everything.

**F1-** As in this one, it is showing some family whose relatives were killed. I assume it is AIDS which killed them. So the message to the youth out there is that they should be aware of this disease, it still exists and has no cure. The best way to prevent it is by abstaining or use condoms if you cannot control your feelings.

**R-** Would you like to see such a picture in *Straight Talk*? By the way, do they use such pictures in *Straight Talk*?

**M2-**No.

**R-** Would you like to see them there.

**F1-** Yes.

**M1-** Yes.

**R-** Can you explain.

**F1-** Because the youth will know that if I indulge in sex now, am getting infected ...there are more good things to come that God has prepared for me...

**M2-** It is to educate the youth that if you misbehave, you will go down so any time you want to have sex you should use a condom.

**R-** But there have been so many messages in *Straight Talk* saying that AIDS kills... do you think people believe them?

**M2-** You know not all people are literates.

**R-** No I mean people as in teenagers who read these messages, do you think they believe in the messages?

**F1-** Yes they do.

**M2-** Okay some of them might but as you know these youths if you give a youth a magazine and there are no pictures...he has no time to read the no sense.

**R-** It is okay you can go a head explaining. I have also discovered that most of the other teenagers have used that picture, I wonder why?

**M1-** What I would say is that they know that death comes and if somebody has AIDS the repercussions is death...so...

**F1-** And also some of the youth are victims, may be they have got it from their parents, have seen how their parents have suffered...so they will abstain not to under go the same

**R-** She wanted to explain.

**F2-** Okay my name is ...Sarah. I would to ...and it is about Philly Lutaya the late...Philly is a role model of all the people in Uganda...because for him he never blamed the woman whom he had sex with him...you shouldn't blame the person or if yourself but rather seek counselling.

**R-** Does *Straight Talk* use such pictures like that of Lutaya?

**F2-** Yeah.

**R-** Okay we have a few pictures to explain there...

**M1-** May about this one, it can encourage stakeholders like the parents, the elders to campaign for use of condoms.

**R-** What do you think are the important messages in *Straight Talk*?

**F1-** There is abstinence.

**M2-** Condom use.

**F3-** Being faithful and ways of controlling sexual problems.

**R-** Do you people write to *Straight Talk*?

**F1-** Yeah.

**M3-** Yes.

**R-** What do you remember most about *Straight Talk* messages, you as an individual?

**M3-** One is about how to handle relationships, in *Straight Talk* I learnt about relationships, feelings for one another.

**R-** What do you think is happening in your school, do you think they abstain, are they using condoms or are they being faithful, what are the majority doing?

**M1-** All the categories but I think the majority are using condoms.

**R-** What about you as an individual what are you doing?

**F1-** Abstaining.

**M2-** Using condoms.

**R-** Do you keep the condoms all the time?

**M2-** Yeah.

**R-** I hope they don't go beyond expiry date.

**R-** Do your parents talk to you about AIDS?

**F4-** They don't.

**R-** Okay it has been nice...

## **Kanabiri Girls School**

### **News Game Group A**

(Beginning not audible)

**F1-**This is good.

**R-** And you?

**F2-** The youth should use condoms.

**R-** And you?

**F3-** Marriage.

**F1-**That one is supposed to be there.

**F2-**We already have that one.

**R-**And you?

**F5-** Achieving you dreams.

**F2-**This one is a good example keep it.

**F1-**We should speak against what they did.

**F3-** No.

**F4-** Yeah, yeah.

**F3-** Condoms.

**F2-** AIDS mother.

**F4-** We choose that one.

**F1-** So what do we say in our newspaper?

**F2-** The reality.

**F4-** Realities.

**F1-** Our newspaper?

F2- The reality.  
F4- Let us have something as an introduction.  
F5- Yeah.  
F4- That this paper is intended.  
F3- We shall be simple.  
F1- Newspaper written by teenagers.  
F5- Of ...  
F2- No, no names!  
F5- With an intention of throwing more light on some topics.  
R- Just go ahead just ignore me.  
F5- On our world today.  
F5- Involving young generation.  
F2- You know when I talk to you, you click me more than you click your mother.  
F1- Ok we have finished that.  
R- I was telling the other group that there is no right or wrong answers, it is your newspaper so you put it the way you want it.  
F3- What is this?  
F4- Are you going to talk about the spread, or cure, the history of it, how it came about  
F5- You first read the history to come to the present.  
F3- What is AIDS, we are to discuss what is AIDS?  
F2- You know all people claim they know AIDS – it is caused by HIV bla bla.  
F3- Do they really know everything?  
F5- Should I say that many people assume they know all about AIDS, but you as our read do you real know the reality, the truth.  
F1- What do we start with?  
F2- We should start with the spread.  
F5- Sharing needles.  
F3- Should we cut this?  
F5- Look at the other man.  
F1- Youth should stop relationships with older men.  
F4- So we put the caption here.  
F5- We should have written AIDS does not discriminate.  
F2- There you can even read this one-the rich the poor anyone.  
F4- It is too big.  
F5- Secondary boy.  
F3- Quencher boy.  
F2- Not quencher girl.  
F1- Use that street boy.  
F4- Drug abuse.  
F5- Should I put sharing needles.  
F3- Drug abusers share needles.  
F3- Peer pressure.  
F2- Do not do what your friend does.  
F3- Should we use condoms?  
R- Yes you can use that picture.  
F1- Wait abstain.

F3- Early motherhood, because she is really young.  
 F1- Let them use abstinence.  
 F3- Because you use condoms they will betray you.  
 R- You can say anything.  
 F3- Being open.  
 F4- Speak out.  
 R- Finish up otherwise the press will begin running without your page in the next 15 minutes. The press is running.  
 F2- AIDS is a fact, feel free talk about it.  
 F3- Open up, open up, open up!  
 F1- Even though there are condoms try to run away.  
 F5- Stay out.  
 F2- Everyone can abstain.  
 F?- If you have to abstain be firm.  
 F2- Use the other *ka* boy.  
 F3- You can chop him up.  
 F2- No the bigger the better.  
 F4- No Gaetano.  
 F5- National disgrace.  
 F3- Do not do what I do but what I say.  
 F5- May be we use Abby.  
 F1- No let us use this little boy.  
 F5- Do you mind life alone because am planning to get AIDS.  
 F3- Does anyone plan?  
 F5- But do not worry am the best girl.  
 F1- But the sugar daddy.  
 F4- Then this one, you can have a healthy boy-girl relationship.  
 F2- Do not copy all you watch on the TV.  
 R- You an interesting name for your paper, why do you call it reality?  
 F2- Because AIDS is real.  
 R- Do you know who these are?  
 F3- No.  
 R1- Identify them.  
 F2- Something else to do with sugar daddies.  
 F3- We will come up with the best.  
 R- Ooh editors you are in problems, what will you tell your bosses? The press is about to run.  
 F4- You put something that will catch the eye.  
 F3- You have to write something big.  
 F2- This is the truth.  
 F5- How about the results of AIDS?  
 F4- Put the rewards here.  
 F1- The rewards, the rewards of abstinence.  
 F2- Early motherhood is dangerous.  
 F1- The new practice, practise what you preach.  
 R- Time up.

R- Ok you are allowed only 2 minutes.  
F1- Then we put, learn to stand up to you age group.  
F2- Open up, try to talk about it.  
R- Ladies time up.  
F5- Learn to be contented with the little you have.  
R- What did you call them, I have forgotten?  
F3- Schoobies or the quencher boys.  
R- Ok let us get together now.  
R- Do not worry about it, apart from me no one else is going to listen to it.  
R- Let us get together please.

### **Discussion**

R- One of you in the group has to tell us.  
F2- Yeah, ours is called *Reality*.  
R- One person takes us through the paper, tell us why you are doing what you have done.  
F2- Because it is telling the truth about the truth, so the pictures depict what is the surrounding, like AIDS does not discriminate, anyone can get it.  
F1- Stand up for yourself, abstain, don't have relationships with older men, you can have a healthy boy-girl relationship, you open up, that when you get AIDS you die.  
R- *Reality* could you tell us more about your name, why you chose it?  
F2- Because it is telling things that are real, it is not a story AIDS has surrounded us, it affects everyone.  
R- Take us through you paper, what is the name of your paper?  
F6- *The Teens Against AIDS*.  
F7- Basically we have, the causes, the effects and the solutions.  
F6- The causes, whereby babies get it from their mothers, the use of unsterilised instruments like the needles.  
We have other causes like unprotected sex, peer pressure, blood transfusion.  
Solutions are; Learn to say no and stand by it. Develop co-curricular activities. Then the infected should share their experiences with others. The youth should learn to wait until proper marriage.  
R- And your caption?  
F6 – It shows that some people are ignorant about AIDS.  
R- Ok, thanks for the good work, let us sit and have a chat.  
R- What would you have loved to put in your newspapers if I had not brought my materials?  
F5- Poems.  
F2- Experiences.  
F4- Interviews.  
F1- Teachers, some students.  
F4- People living with AIDS.  
R- How would you have interviewed that somebody wouldn't it scare you?  
F2- No we have people who came and talked to us, like major Rubaramira.  
R- Did he talk to the whole school?  
F2- To S.4, S.5, and S.6.  
R- Why did he talk to the higher classes.

F3- Because we are the victims.

R- Really, you think Senior One are not at risk?

F3- They are, but for us we are leaving. Going to the world.

F4- They normally talk to the candidates who are going to the field and campus.

R- Looking at your papers, how different are they from *Straight Talk*?

F2- *Straight Talk* is different really different, it excludes the urban areas.

F4- It covers the rural areas those local areas.

F3- It is full of rural schools.

R- When you get *Straight Talk* do you really read those messages?

F4- Yeah.

R- Do you find them helpful?

F4- Yes, but you find this week they went to Kitgum, the same questions appeared again

F2- So, someone will say how do I appear in *Straight Talk* after all I know every thing

R- what are the questions usually asked?

F2- My boy friend told me that if I don't have sex my breasts will not grow...

F4- If I don't have sex....

F7- I have been with my boy friend and we are both...

R- How do you think you friends say in Kanasatu and here in lower classes are getting information on HIV/AIDS then?

F1- Through radio, TV.

F3- Friends.

F8- Parents.

F4- Some information is wrong.

F4- Some information is shunned.

R- Why don't you tell us something, what do you think you would like to read in *Straight Talk*?

F5- I think we should talk to people infected with HIV as they share their experience with us.

R- OK, what are the similarities between your newspapers and *Straight Talk*?

F2- OK, the main thing is AIDS.

F7- The solutions are the same.

R- I am just wondering when this group was discussing you had a big debate whether to include Gaetano and you eventually decided not to. Could you talk about that?

F- We saw it as a matter of opinion, some people look at him as having made Uganda proud and others think he was a shame.

F8- And also we wanted to keep it simple.

R- Would you expect *Straight Talk* to use a Gaetano picture?

F9- It depends on what is written down.

F8- If we know the story for example that people get tested for HIV before they go to the house, it could work as an example that people should test for HIV.

F9- Then we look at from the teenager's eye, not every thing that is said is right.

F4- But they are adults.

R- When talking to our teenagers do they believe that AIDS is a reality?

F2- They believe because most of them are treating relatives with AIDS.

R- Tell me some of the key messages in *Straight Talk*.

F9- Abstinence.

F3- Ways of protecting one from AIDS.

F5- Information about STDs.

R- What do you think is happening, do you think people are abstaining or using condoms?

F1- Abstaining.

R- You think most of you friends are abstaining?

F1- Definitely.

F3- 85%

R- You say 85% are abstaining.

R- What is the other percentage doing?

F3- Use condoms, contraceptives especially the girls fear pregnancy more than AIDS.

R- They are scared of pregnancy more than AIDS?

F3- Yeah.

F4- Let us not use a condom I am under a pill.

F3- They tend to develop mutual trust and stop using condoms because they are using pills.

R- Do you get copies of *Straight Talk*?

F2- Yeah.

R- What do you do with them when you get them?

F2- We read them.

R- Can you get HIV through oral sex?

F1- Yes, yes you can if you a sore in the mouth.

F4- Me what I understand by oral sex is sex without penetration am I right.

F2- Yes.

F8- No.

F9- Me am getting confused by the definition of oral sex.

R- Yeah, may be I should have asked what is oral sex?

F3- Oral means mouth, so I think it is sex using the mouth

F2- It can be with your private parts but without penetrating.

R- Can you get HIV from un-penetrative sex?

F4- Yes your fluids are mixing up.

R- Let us get back to our question. Can you get AIDS through oral sex?

F7- Yeah, but the percentage is very small.

R- Does *Straight Talk* cover such a topic for example...

F5- Yeah,

F3- No

F8- Yeah, it is boring.

R- From what am gathering, the big issue is not really that the *Straight Talk* messages given are wrong or anything, but the AIDS issue is...

R- Let me tell you my experience with *Straight Talk*. When *Straight Talk* started I was there but I have never edited it. Right from the word go the up-market students never wrote to *Straight Talk*, I wonder why?

F- But they don't come to us.

F3- They have never come to us.

F2- If they used mixed snaps say from Kanabiri or Kanasatu, it would be OK

**R-** Would you love to see your picture there, from the way I'm understanding you, I don't think you would love it.

**F2-** May be we would be the people to start it.

**F4-** We begin writing as Kanabiri, we send pictures, the other people will say if Kanabiri can, why not us?

**R-** What do you think is happening to other teenagers, because you are certainly above the rest in that you sit and discuss about sex without fear, but what about the others?

**F2-** Ooh, they do talk about sex.

**F4-** Some have a problem they don't want to bring it in the open.

**F1-** Even the teachers when they are teaching, you will see them trying to dodge questions and go to another thing.

**R-** Another question, do your parents talk to you about sex?

**F4-** They buy us books, they put there.

**F1-** My mum does not talk to me about such things, she can talk to you guys. She is open with other people.

**F1-** You can find your parent is a very good counsellor to other people and you wonder why doesn't mum ever talk to me. When you find her talking to other people you think yeah she is the best counsellor.

**F3-** The only time they talk to you is when you have done something wrong.

**F8-** When you are like watching TV and something goes wrong, then the daddy will say you see what has happen, is that what you are doing?

**R-** Would you feel comfortable if your parents talked to you about sex?

**F3-** The better, I prefer that.

**F6-** You listen to your parents better than your teacher who lecture you from the beginning of the term to the end of the year, you get used to them.

**F3-** When it is from the parent, when you are about to do something, you will remember that mum told me no.

**R-** Have you ever had to nurse anybody with AIDS?

**F1-**No.

**F2-** Yes.

**R-** Do you want to talk about it?

**F2-** It is really absurd [read sad] especially if the person is so close, and in my it was my mum... at times you get bad, you cry and you really want her to be strong, you don't want her to know she is going to die. She says I want you to me and she doesn't want you to know that you are going to lose your mother. She says don't cry am going to be okay that kind of thing. But at time you really see she is really badly off and you really need to be patient with her because you may not know what the future holds, what if it is you next. So you really have to be patient. But at times you would feel like am tired, you have just put juice there, she is like I want tea, that kind of thing.

**R-** Do you think that has changed the way you look at HIV patients?

**F2-** Yes, because I really got to know that it is real. There is a time when we were told that one of our friends had AIDS. I really got touched and I imagined the situation she was going through.

**R-** Do you think it has affected the way you look at newspapers?

**F2-** At times am like I already know that, I knew that.

**R-** Thank you for sharing with us. That was quite intimate. But I want you to know that I have nursed a close brother, and it is so touching, I remember the last few days before he died he couldn't help himself to the toilet. We had to help him and the day I didn't go to see him because it was my mum with him in the hospital, he was asking for me the whole day and at night I didn't go and the next day... something haunted me, it was long and it was like he died thinking that I had deserted him.

**F3-** I am always asking myself why do women die first?

**F2-** Even men die first.

**F1-** No its men first.

**F7-** No.

**R-** I really don't think I can answer that question, I have never thought about it.

**F4-** Even STDs they can hide in a woman for five years but a man even six months are...

**R-** I think because women are made differently and because by nature women secrete lots of fluids, so you may not notice when the secretions are due to an illness. But naturally men don't secrete much, so when they get secretions due to STDs they notice immediately. About HIV/AIDS, I think the time one takes to die is so individual. It depends on what other diseases you are suffering from.

**F8-** Many women get it from the men.

**F2-** Many men lose their lives basically because, because you find most men are involved in drinking and smoking.

**F9-** They work hard.

**R-** Thank you very much. I will take a feed back to *Straight Talk*, I don't work for them but hopefully after giving them some of these things they will see what to do. ....

**F?** - Experience.

**F4-** Yeah, true.

**R-** True-life experience?

**F?** - Yeah.

**F2-** These things are made up.

**F4-** Magic.

**F9-** Let see.

**R-** This picture (Wedding picture) has reminded me of something. Your group fixed this picture and the other group wanted Alex Ndawula's. To me that is the same thing.

**F6-** Did we have this?

**F3-** We had.

**R-** Okay to me it is almost the same, marriage and AIDS. Do you have anything to say about that?

**F4-** Basically we are encouraging the youth to wait until they are married and when they are in relationships they should trust one another.

**F6-** Mutual trust, ticking to one another.

**R-** Is that an achievable goal?

**F7-** Ah ah, I don't think.

**F4-** It is not achievable.

**F3-** It is but not easy.

**F8-** In the world today it is not.

**F1-** No.

**F9-** Yeah it is but not easy, unless you have these other God-fearing husbands.

**F2-** By the way all men are the same.

**F1-** No you cannot say that all husbands are the same.

**F7-** Mariah.

**F2-** What?

**F6-** You cannot say that all the men are the same.

**F2-** For the women they are okay but the husbands.

**F3-** All are the same.

**R-** The majority of you have said it is impossible. Don't you people think it is possible for men to be faithful, I personally think it is possible?

**F4-** Me too.

**F1-** Me I don't.

**R-** You have said that for the majority of people it is impossible to be faithful, how come your group was reluctant to use the condom pictures?

**F1-** Ah ah no.

**F3-** Generally it is better to abstain than a condom because they may be 90, 90% safe then you the good girl the best in the class and everything, you say just once and that one-day you get pregnant and AIDS as well.

**F4-** One day we attended a Tarzan AIDS workshop, so, someone said that it would have made sense if we didn't come up with things like condoms, masturbation, so that people had to abstain. If you don't you die, but now people have condoms and think they are safe, whereby men will put holes in them, those funny things.

**F2-** People don't practise what they preach. The same men you find screaming about abstinence, are the same you find with a 16-year girl.

**F4-** There is really confusion, you don't know what to pick.

**F7-** Yeah.

**R-** You said your parents talk to you, do they include...what do they say?

**F5-** You don't take care you die.

**F6-** Let me tell you something when you start talking to you mother about such a thing she will think may be you have gone.... that is one thing that is going to hit her mind as she is going to start worrying.

**F3-** But the daddies take things simple, may be she has asked to know but the mums get so worried.

**R-** She is reminding us that we are time-bad, okay thanks ... you have been an active group. I loved being with you.