The Fallacy of Participation in Behaviour Change Programming: The Case of Gweru Women AIDS Prevention Association (GWAPA), Zimbabwe

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Gweru Women AIDS Prevention Association (GWAPA) is an organization that works with commercial sex-workers in the Midlands Province to try and stymie the tide of HIV/AIDS. The organization premises its activities upon the belief that sex workers are forced into prostitution by poverty and thus offers them alternative livelihood strategies such as piggery projects, chicken rearing, and vegetable vending projects as well as seed money with which to start flea market projects. The organization also runs a condom promotion project, a legal literacy project, and an advocacy project, all in a bid to empower the sex workers cognitively. The study was carried out between April and October 2008, using bar-based observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary evidence. The study found participation to have been more of a fallacy in as far as programming depended more on the whims of donor funders than the actual needs of programme beneficiaries. In the top-down manner that is typical of development communication, the organization would engage donors and secure funding for certain projects which they would then try to convince the sex workers to take up, with mixed results. The research also found limited evidence of real empowerment of beneficiaries in the long run, with the sex workers themselves insisting that the "piece-meal" efforts of the organization were not sustainable enough to induce them to abandon sex work altogether. The study did, however, find that the organization and its programming had actually managed to score notable success in promoting safer sex within the context of prostitution, albeit without eradicating sex work altogether.

Keywords: participation, commercial sex work, empowerment

Introduction

Freire (2000), in his seminal work *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, while conceding that education is inherently directive and must always be transformative, argued vehemently that the pedagogy of the oppressed must be forged *with*, not *for* the oppressed, in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity. Freire (2000) considered how the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings can participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation, a struggle in which *to be* is *to be like*, and *to be like* is *to be like the oppressor*, the contribution is virtually impossible (p. 48).

In line with Freire's thinking, this paper interrogates the viability of participatory approaches in behavior change communication, particularly in the Third World, using the case study of a Zimbabwean organization

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called Gweru Women AIDS Prevention Association (GWAPA) which deals with commercial sex workers in the Midlands province.

Organizational Background

GWAPA is a pioneering membership-based organization that has scored notable success in achieving credibility with and capacity to catalyze different constituencies of women engaged in commercial sex work around the issues of HIV/AIDS and other concerns. Their mission statement is

> To work towards the promotion of practices, policies, institutions and capacities that strengthen the voice and participation of marginalized women especially commercial sex workers, in improving their socio-economic standing and reducing the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS. This is done through the provision of tools and information that enable commercial sex workers and other marginalized groups to enjoy full citizenship by having choices and options, living without stigma, and avoiding exposure to HIV and AIDS. (GWAPA, n.d.)

The organization started in 1992 as a project by Gweru City Council Health Department to curb the spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) amongst commercial sex workers. The project started as four anti-AIDS clubs that have since risen to 16 and extended beyond Gweru alone to encompass chapters in the nearby mining towns of Zvishavane, Shurugwi, and Chachacha with a membership in excess of 600 commercial sex workers, former sex workers, single mothers and widows. GWAPA's activities centre around a peer education project that involves women aged between the ages of 16 and 40 who mobilize and educate their peers, distributing condoms amongst fellow sex workers whilst promoting safer sex behaviors.

The organization runs an advocacy project premised on the female condom and sexual and reproductive health rights for sex workers. The project specifically targets sex workers due to the nature of their work which puts them at the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and STIs and spreading it to their multiple partners who would in turn affect their wives and other partners. The organization owns a farm, GWAPA McFadden Farm, which the City Council donated to them which is located on the outskirts of town and which forms the hub of the organization's operations. Organizational meetings are conducted at the seven-hectare farm as well as a number of other farming activities for the members' benefit, such as maize production, tomato growing, vegetable growing and so forth. There is also a poultry production project that enables spin-off egg sales, chicken, manure and so forth. They also have a herbal nutrition garden for the treatment of various ailments that is conducted with input from an organization known as "the Centre" which is based in Harare. It should also be noted that the location of the farm is advantageous in terms of its proximity to the areas of Mambo, Mutapa, and Ascot, where the majority of the membership reside, arguably the "red light" zone of Gweru.

It should be noted at the onset that all these efforts on the part of the organization are done as a way trying to discourage sex workers, widows, single mothers, and other "marginalized women" from taking up sex work by offering them alternative livelihood strategies. The organization firmly believes that most women enter into commercial sex work not by choice but because of poverty—circumstances force them to eke out their living that way, so the organization thus takes it upon itself to teach them other skills that they can use to survive.

Regarding the funding mechanism, the organization's HIV/AIDS programme is funded by the Combined Oxfam Gender and HIV/AIDS programme (COGENHA) which is funded by Oxfam Ireland, Oxfam Germany, and Oxfam Australia, but solely managed by Oxfam Australia in Zimbabwe. COGENHA cites its objective as

the promotion of cultural and social norms and practices that foster gender equity and decrease women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. Heifer Project International funds GWAPA's Livelihoods project known as "Pass the Gift" whereby members are given small livestock like rabbits on condition that they pass the original two on to other members and keep the offspring. Depending on availability of funds, GWAPA also engages in micro-finance lending whereby they give their members loans to start small businesses like vegetable and fruit vending, as well as buying wares to sell at flea markets. At the height of the hyper-inflationary environment in 2008, the organization abandoned the micro-lending scheme but would still assist needy members with money with which to pay school fees for orphans and buy groceries when capacity permitted.

The organization owns a mobile laboratory gynaecological ambulance known as the LABAM which they received as a donation from the Czech Republic. The LABAM is fully equipped to enable the diagnosis and treatment of STIs and for HIV testing and counseling. The legal literacy project is supported by organizations like Women & Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) who assist with legal literacy in issues to do with wills and inheritance, providing sub-grants to support programmes of their interest. Organizations like Msasa Project step in on issues to do with gender-based violence whilst the organizations like the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (ZNFPC) and Population Services International (PSI) provide consignments of condoms for the condom promotion project.

National AIDS Council (NAC), a statutory body, is the coordinating authority which provides funding for Behaviour Change programming directly from its coffers and from international donors such as UNFPA, Global Fund[1] and ESP[2]. ESP and UNFPA fund the behavior change programme whilst Global Fund sponsors the programme on opportunistic infections (OI) and anti-retroviral therapy (ART) which accompany the behaviour change programme. NAC secures the funding and distributes to organizations such that the organizations account themselves to NAC whilst NAC is accountable to the international financiers. The funding also takes the form of material inputs like generic drugs, vehicles, and equipment.

The Rationale for Participation

Mohan (2002) argued that to judge how successful a participatory development programme is, one has to be clear about what others mean by "participation" as well as what one personally understands it to be, since there are no universal definitions of participatory definitions. To that end, therefore, Feeney (1998, pp. 7-8) assembled some of the major views of what "participation" is, of which, the most relevant ones were as follows:

> World Bank: Participation is the process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them.

> UNDP: Participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural, and political processes that affect their lives.

> Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA): Participation is a process whereby individuals and community are actively involved in all phases of development. It therefore involves greater equity and political power.

> IDB: Participation in development is both a way of doing development—a process—and an end in itself. As a process, it is based on the notion that individuals and communities must be involved in decisions and programmes that affect their

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[1] The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.
[2] Expanded Support Programme which is a consortium of donors from Canada, Australia, and Switzerland.

lives. As an end, participation in development means the empowerment of individuals and communities. It means increased self-reliance and sustainability.

Department for International Development (DFID): Participatory approaches take into account the views and needs of the poor, and tackle disparities between men and women throughout society.

Oxfam: Participation is a fundamental right. It is a means of engaging poor people in joint analysis and the development of priorities. Its ultimate goal should be to foster the existing capacities of local, poor women and men and to increase their self-reliance in ways that outlast specific projects. The purpose of participation is to give a permanent voice to poor or marginalized people and integrate them into the decision-making structures and processes that shape their lives.

Mohan summarizes the major schools of thought in participatory development as either instrumentalist or transformative. The former school regards participation as increasing the efficiency of "formal" development programmes (Mayo & Craig, 1995, as cited in Mohan, 2002), in other words, programmes are better improved by involving the beneficiaries. The latter school of thought, on the other hand, regards "development" as flawed (Mohan, 2002) and argues that only by valorizing other voices can meaningful social change occur. Freire (2000), the key proponent in this area, added his weight to the rationale for participatory approaches saying,

The pedagogy of the oppressed, which is the pedagogy of people engaged in the fight for their own liberation, has its roots here. And those who recognize, or begin to recognize, themselves as oppressed must be among the developers of this pedagogy. No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption. (pp. 53-54)

Chasi is of the view that participation involves those who are considered to be capable or competent being granted a share in the common welfare. Chasi (2011, p. 138) further held that people who are uprooted from their own concerns and denied the means to act with agency in the world come to be unpredictably and radically moved by the winds of time. According to him:

… participation is more than a mere set of tools by which development experts establish grounds for their work to succeed. It speaks of a set of values on the basis of which a new form of society is made possible… Thus, participatory communication seeks holistically to support people's search for self-determination. (p. 145)

Rahnema (1992) cited in Mohan (2002) argued that participatory development involves the elements of *cognition* in generating a "different mode of understanding the realities to be addressed"; *politics* in "empowering the voiceless" and *instrumentality* in order to "propose new alternatives" (1992, p. 121).

Chasi and Tomaselli (2011, pp. 343-344) pointed that in comparison to modernization approaches, participatory approaches do not hold the view that those considered to be underdeveloped can be treated as merely deserving to be controlled. Rather, "Participatory approaches argue that each individual is knowledgeable and can be trusted to know what matters, and to know what is needed in the lived situations in which he or she acts". They also postulate that participatory approaches are founded on principles of democratic participation and are premised on valuing and dignifying each individual life. Melkote and Steeves (2001, p. 339) argued that the goal of participation efforts should be to facilitate conscientization of marginalized people globally of unequal social, political, and spatial structures in their societies in order to facilitate collective action to address their needs and overcome problems. They also noted that attempts to operationalize participation range from those that reflect the dominant paradigm, which they term the participation-as-a-means approach, to those that genuinely represent the case for a context-based paradigm,

which they classify as the participation-as-an-end approach, following on Ascroft and Masilela (1989), as cited in Melkote and Steeves (2001, p. 337). The participation-as-an-end approach holds it that participation is a basic human right that should be accepted and supported as an end in itself and not for its results. The scholars thus advocate participation as a process of empowerment whereby individuals are active in development programs and processes, contributing ideas, taking initiative, articulating their needs and problems and asserting their autonomy (Melkote & Steeves, 2001, p. 337).

Development Communication Paradigms

Development communication started off in the 1950s associated with the Systems model of communication and functioning as "a science to produce effective messages" in top-down development programs like agricultural extension programs (Waisbord, 2005). It has since broadened to refer to a number of approaches and interventions to include communication for social change; communication for development; information, education and communication (IEC); behavior change communication; social mobilization; media advocacy; strategic communication; social marketing; participatory communication; strategic participatory communication, and so forth (Waisbord, 2005). Tomaselli (2011, p. 8) come up with a table to distinguish between the various paradigms of development communication and categorize them into the four classes of those that follow the modernization theory, dependency/dissociation theory, development support communication, and those that follow the participatory/multiplicity/Another development paradigm. They argued that the modernization theory paradigm originated in the US foreign aid policies of the 1950s and 1960s with top-down communication methods and based on the stimulus-response theory meaning that the message had to elicit response in the form of "informed" behavior replacing customary "ignorant" behavior. The scholars also point out this particular paradigm heavily relies on foreign or native expert voices. New information replaces old knowledge with the development agency being the sole bearer of the truth. Chasi et al. (2011) noted that this particular paradigm has failed throughout Africa but major donor organizations continue to apply it, albeit with a participatory slant.

The development communication paradigm that is informed by the dependency/dissociation theory is a critique of modernization by mostly South and Central American social movements. The paradigm is about fostering resistance to imposed structures and systems that were brought in by modernization policies and it uses top-down statist communication particularly in communist countries. Chasi et al. (2011) categorized the paradigm's discursive styles as rhetorical, solidaristic and often mobilizing communities to resist outside agencies. Thus, the paradigm relies mainly on information that is already in the individual/collective consciousness to define social and individual behavior. Therefore, any new information has to conform with this knowledge rather than contradict it. The paradigm has been proved to be effective when used by unions, NGOs and community-based organizations in contexts of resistance, particularly during the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.

The paradigm of development support communication is best typified by entertainment education, and was an attempt to bridge between modernization and dependency trajectories. The communication methods are semi-participatory and make use of local message formation to encourage donor-defined projects. The

paradigm makes use of more diverse voices, local images and native experts. Even though it uses subject voices, Chasi et al. caution it is still aimed at outside agencies agendas. In this paradigm, no new information can be imported unless the community decides that it meshes with local knowledge, such that existing ways of doing things are used to achieve new ends. Regarding its effectiveness, the scholars note that this particular paradigm tends to obscure the agendas of donors but it has been effective in bringing innovations to beneficiary communities.

The fourth and final development communication paradigm is the participatory, multiplicity or "Another Development" paradigm which makes use of local knowledge and Freire's critical pedagogy. Dyll-Myklebust (2011) pointed out that "Another Development' was articulated by the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation in the 1970s and that although there was no mention of the word "participation", the ideas of Another Development became an influential part of the theories of communication for development. Another Development paradigm is structured around meeting human needs, material and non-material. It is endogenous and self-reliant and in harmony with the environment. More to that, the theory is based on the premise that Another Development requires structural transformations of the social system, given that domination bases on class, gender or ethnicity.

The participatory paradigm uses the circuit communication model, is bottom up and focuses on the grassroots as Chasi et al. (2011) put it, "Development (is) supposedly defined and driven by beneficiary communities" (p. 9). The messages of this paradigm are subject-generated supposedly using participatory and action-research based production and writing with a view to make beneficiaries' needs to be known. The paradigm is premised on the belief that necessary information for development arises from knowledge produced by conversation between community and development agents. Regarding its effectiveness, the scholars note that it is very good at making specific communities' needs known but tends to create information overload for donors whilst fragmenting funding to micro-projects at the expense broader infrastructural development.

The Five Key Ideas of Development Communication

Waisbord (2005) identified five key ideas in development communication on which there seems to be consensus. These are: the centrality of power; the integration top-down and bottom-up approaches; the need to use a communication "tool-kit" approach; the articulation of interpersonal and mass communication; and the incorporation of personal and contextual factors. Regarding the centrality of power, Waisbord (2005) argued that when it comes to programs based on informational and diffusion premises, the current thinking is that power should be at the forefront. Community empowerment should be the main goal of interventions—ideally, individuals and communities are empowered by gaining knowledge on specific issues, communicating about issues of common concern, making decisions for themselves, and negotiating power relations.

> Such thinking reflects the influence of participatory communication thinking that emerged in response to the failure of traditional development approaches in the 1970s… The agendas of major donors and agencies… shows that community participation is the watchword of the day. (Waisbord, 2005, p. 78)

The purpose of development initiatives, Waisbord says, is to contribute to processes by which

communities gain more control over their lives, though there is less agreement on how empowerment is defined and measured or which strategies need to be implemented.

The second idea that Waisbord identifies is the idea of integrating "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches. The top-down model of the 1950s that posits governments and Western experts at the top of development programs has been discredited whilst the "bottom-up" approach gained support as a remedy of some of the problems of top-down development. "It was concluded that Northern concerns and policies drove development initiatives, and that Southern expectations and needs were relegated" (ibid). Community-based approaches thus gained eminence in the 1970s and 1980s prompting a realization that there was a need to integrate top-down and bottom-up approaches because the role of governments for instance could not be underestimated.

The third key idea is the need to have a "tool-kit" approach to communication which underscores the need to have a multiplicity of communication strategies to improve the quality of life in communities. Different contexts call for different techniques in dealing with specific problems and priorities. Waisbord (2005) pointed out how conventional education and media interventions would be useful in critical situations like epidemics when there is need to reach large number of people in a short period of time. Social marketing has managed to address certain issues like raising immunization rates but is inadequate in promoting community participation and addressing underlying, long-term problems. Social mobilization offers a way to deal with the multiple dimensions of issues such as education, sanitation, family planning, nutrition, AIDS and so on whilst media advocacy is advisable in contexts where a significant proportion of the population receives their information from a variety of media programming. Popular media such as community radio, drama and singing groups, on the other hand, have proven to be effective in generating dialogue in small communities.

The fourth key idea is the need to combine interpersonal communication and multimedia activities. The media are extremely fundamental in raising awareness and knowledge on a given problem in as far as they are able to expose a large number of people to a message whilst generating conversation among the audience and others who were not exposed. Social learning and decision-making do not rely only on media messages but also involve sharing opinions and listening to a number of sources and therefore interventions cannot rely only on mass media. Waisbord (2005) noted Rogers and Kincaid's (1981) point that though television, radio and other media are important in disseminating messages, social networks are ultimately responsible for the diffusion of new ideas. Waisbord, thus, put forward that entertainment education is one way of activating social networks and peer communication in the diffusion of information and that nothing replaces community involvement and education in the effective dissemination of information. Furthermore, media-centered models are insufficient in achieving behavior change.

The last key idea that Waisbord identifies is the incorporation of approaches that focus on individual and environmental factors in understanding the role of behavior change communication. A number of scholars are agreed that changes in behavior and social conditions cannot be addressed only by targeting personal or contextual factors but need to be sensitive to both in order to understand problems and design suitable solutions (Hornik, 1990; Smith & Elder, 1998; Waisbord, 2005, p. 81). Behavior change programs in particular, have moved away from individually-centered approaches to a multi-pronged approached that considers environmental factors that affect individual behavior in as far as environmental factors affect behavior, both in terms of initiation and maintenance.

Despite the consensus highlighted above and despite the enthusiasm regarding participatory approaches and its centrality to development, Waisbord (2005) argued that participatory approaches have not devoted sufficient time to considering a number of questions such as the ones which ensue:

> Under what conditions is participation possible? What happens when participatory ideals run counter to community norms or are rejected by local authoritarian practices? How is participation possible at different stages of development programs (e.g., funding, planning, instrumentation, evaluation, sustainability)? How is community empowerment and participation measured? (p. 84)

The Concept of Empowerment

Melkote and Steeves (2001) considered how Foucault postulates that power is only meaningful in social relationships and they argue that real change may not be possible unless power inequities between marginalized individuals/groups at the grassroots and those who make policy and aid decisions are addressed. Melkote and Steeves also considered how Rowlands (1998) divides empowerment literature into the three dimensions of personal empowerment (developing individual consciousness and confidence to confront oppression), relational empowerment (an increased ability to negotiate and influence relational decisions) and collective empowerment (collective action at the local or higher level to change oppressive social structures). Following Rappaport (1991), they defined empowerment as the process by which individuals, organizations, and communities gain control and mastery over social and economic conditions; over democratic participation in their communities (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988) and over their stories. Melkote and Steeves (2001, p. 348) argued that real change is not possible unless we directly address power inequities among individuals and groups. They said that the construct of empowerment identifies the underlying constraints in Third World development and helps M to articulate a more appropriate and useful role for development support communications (DSC) and DSC personnel. Development support communication indicates a shift in viewing communication as an input toward greater economic growth to visualizing communication more holistically and as a support for people's self-determination, especially those at the grassroots (Ascroft & Masilela, 1994; Melkote & Steeves, p. 349). Melkote and Steeves (2001), thus, argued vociferously in support of the view that the focus on empowerment is the role of development support communication and dismiss participatory approaches without empowerment as mere clichés.

The Sociology of Prostitution

Kendall (1998, p. 135) defined prostitution as the sale of sexual services (of oneself or another) for money or goods and without emotional attachment. Kingsley (1937), in his seminal work, *The Sociology of Prostitution*, argued from a functionalist perspective that prostitution exists because in situations where men need sexual release and women need money, prostitution may appear preferable to the rigors of the seduction process and in instances where people feel unable to satisfy their sexual needs within the family structure, for whatever reason. Davis (1937) denied the assumption that prostitution is caused by economic causes saying:

> Prostitution… is naturally connected with the entire system of economic forces…But to jump from this truism to the conclusion that prostitution can be abolished by eliminating economic causes alone is erroneous. Economic causes seldom act alone, and hence their removal is seldom a panacea. (p. 749)

Conflict perspectives from a Marxist feminist and radical feminist framework suggest that women become prostitutes because of structural factors such as economic inequality between women and men as well as the

system of patriarchy that gives men control over women's bodies (Jolin, 1994, as cited in Kendall, 1998) such that women's bodies simply become commodities under patriarchy and capitalism (Pateman, 1994, as cited in Kendall, 1998). Radical feminists thus believe that the only way to eradicate prostitution is to reduce disparities income levels between women and men and to eliminate poverty, but note before patriarchy itself is eliminated.

Research Methodology

The research utilized a case study approach due to the relatively small size of the organization and the pertinence of its targeted area of intervention—commercial sex workers to overall HIV/AIDS prevention efforts. The research surveyed GWAPA members in Gweru and Zvishavane using a questionnaire, key informant interviews and focus group discussions to determine the members' own perceptions on their levels of participation in the organization's programmes. To distribute the questionnaire, the researcher used snowball sampling by enlisting the services of the District AIDS Coordinator for the Zvishavane chapter who was personally acquainted with the respondents due to the nature of her job. The researcher also interviewed the GWAPA Programs Officer as a way of cross-checking the findings from the survey with sex workers. The researcher was also invited to attend a few organizational activities like workshops, farm activities and theatre performances by members who gave her the opportunity to interact with GWAPA members. Furthermore, the researcher was also given access to a documentary, *The GWAPA Story* which is a summation of all the positive attributes of the organization and its programmes. The researcher also did carry out bar-based observations in the company of male colleagues albeit without fraternizing with the sex workers themselves. The idea behind the observations was to observe soliciting in progress as well as to check on the prevalence levels of solicitation juxtaposed against the organization's mandate of eradicating commercial sex work.

Research Findings

The Organization Has Managed to Destigmatize Sex Work and Single Motherhood

The research found out that the organization had actually succeeded in pushing for the recognition of sex workers as human beings by emphasizing on how sex work is a result of circumstance, a result of the feminization of poverty, rather than choice per se. This idea is illustrated by the insistence on referring to the marginalized women as "commercial sex workers" rather than the much harsher term "prostitute". The distinction in nomenclature is best captured in this article by the Barbados Free Press entitled "Words Matter":

> The term "sex worker" tends to legitimize the, er, "profession", while the term "prostitute" conjures up the dirty, shameful and illegal aspects of a young girl selling her body to old men who are unfaithful to their wives. "Sex workers" are legitimate professionals. "Prostitutes" are diseased women – perhaps of low morality, or enslaved by circumstance or threatened violence. "Sex Workers" need no rescue. "Prostitutes" need help, saving, grace, education, prayer and escape while they can. The reality of "sex workers" is more properly described by the word "prostitute". (Retrieved from http://barbadosfreepress.wordpress.com/2006/07/18barbados-sex-workers-or-prostitutes-words-matter/)

Calling it "sex work" is an attempt to sanitize the profession and gives impressions of a task that adds some value to society, however marginal, thereby making it functional deviance, such that someone simply has to do it! The moment it becomes a job just like any other is the moment that the person who does it becomes as human as the next person and therefore, acceptable enough, as fallible as they are. Whilst mainstream society would prefer to ostracize them as home-wreckers and harbingers of disease, GWAPA and its strategic partners are trying to depict them as victims of circumstances, who would not opt for that kind of existence, given the

choice. It is logical to assume then that it is not by coincidence that the organization is aptly named GWAPA and not Gweru Commercial Sex Workers association because they recognize that before these marginals are sex workers, they are women first and thus can be harnessed in the fight against AIDS.

To that end, therefore, the organization even furnishes them with uniforms of white blouses and navy blue skirts that they wear when coming for meetings and organizes social activities for the women to consort while learning new things. Worthy of note is the fact that the organization has managed to bring together not only sex workers, former sex workers but also single mothers and widows whom they perceive as vulnerable and therefore liable to fall into the trap of sex work if not offered alternatives. Interestingly enough, the organization has managed to create a relatively stigma-free environment that makes even the single mothers and widows want to belong without fear of being labeled sex workers. A cross-section of responses by the members to the question, "What made you join GWAPA/ZWAPA?" showed responses like, "*Zvinodadisa zvinoita vasikana vacho*" (The way the ladies carry themselves is really commendable). This response gave the impression that the respondent was inspired to join the organization because they saw something worth emulating in the way that the members went about their business. One respondent indicated that they were actually attracted by the smart blue and white uniform that the peer educators wore when moving around distributing condoms, demonstrating correct condom use and giving talks on behavior change in public. Several respondents indicated that they joined the organization so that they could benefit from the funding for the various projects that the organization runs so as to fend for themselves and their dependents.

The organization has also done a lot to economically empower the marginalized women in a bid to reduce their vulnerability. The organization has in place a revolving loan facility to finance startup capital for flea market projects, vegetable vending, food vending and so forth. They have taught them how to knit, make soap and candles and best practices in poultry production. The organization has introduced the Heifer Project—funded "pass the gift" scheme to encourage the women to rear small livestock like rabbits all in a bid to indicate to the members that there are other ways of making a living even when one is widowed or a single mother, apart from entering the "flesh market". Empowering the marginalized women in this way goes a long way in relieving them of societal pressures in a patriarchy. The marginalization comes in as far as married women view single women with distrust whilst men regard them with interest as potential prey. The marginalized women may end up taking up sex work as a way of relieving loneliness but the situation is further exacerbated if the woman is poor and cannot find ways of fending for herself, such that GWAPA's livelihoods interventions become critical at this particular stage.

Most of the members surveyed were generally appreciative of the efforts of the organization and did attribute to their membership of the organization to be a desire to benefit from such programmes. One member said, "Chakaita kuti ndijoine ZWAPA kwaiva kuda kuti ndidzidze kurarama ndisingaiti zvechihure" (What made me join ZWAPA (the Zvishavane chapter of GWAPA) was a desire to learn how to survive without recourse to prostitution). It should be noted that in the vernacular Shona language and Karanga dialect, the researcher could not find a close equivalent of the more politically correct term "commercial sex worker" and so interpreted the responses of the sex workers themselves to mean "prostitution" in as far as their word of choice was "zvechihure" which was derived from the word "whore" so in order to capture the way the subject peoples perceive themselves and their line of work, the researcher interpreted their responses in that way. Another one said, "Kuti tiwane mari dzemabusiness" which literally translates into, "So that I could access business loans". In response to the question "What have you benefitted from being a GWAPA member", most members cited the alternative

livelihood strategies whilst some cited the ability to use condoms correctly and consistently.

How Successful Has the Organization Been in Getting Members to Change Their Behavior?

While it is common knowledge that behavior change is difficult to measure since it occurs in the realm of the private, all the members interviewed indicated that they had indeed changed their behavior and that since they now had other ways of eking a living, they had reduced the number of sexual partners that they had. The documentary *The GWAPA Story* even carries a testimonial of one former sex-worker who had settled down and married a guy in the community and she appears telling her story accompanied by her husband and baby. In the survey carried out by the researcher, all the respondents were adamant that they use condoms all the time. Challenges in the usage of condoms were identified as clients refusing to use condoms, clients tearing condoms, clients complaining they are allergic to condoms, clients offering more money for unprotected sex, excessive drunkenness, and fear of rejection. These findings were gathered using a questionnaire survey and so the researcher could not reconcile these challenges to the fact that all of them claimed to use condoms all the time, so had the researcher anticipated this inconsistency, it certainly would have been interesting to find out how they circumvent these challenges of clients that refuse outright or offer more money for unprotected sex.

An interview with a key respondent from Gweru indicated that most clients were no longer as keen on unprotected sex as before and estimated the rate of such occurrences at 2%. The researcher prodded and asked what for her reaction if someone offers her more money for unprotected sex and she answered, "That is when I ask myself what it is that I value more, the money or my life!" She further insisted that having undergone Behavior Change training, they now know that sex work is not the only alternative available to them and maintained they had reduced their sex work significantly to the point of some now having steady "boyfriends". She also said they are no longer under pressure to go to public drinking places every day and no longer as pursuant of "short-time sessions" as before, which are normally done for revenue-maximization, since they now understand the risks that they will be running. She then went on to convincingly explain to the researcher the relationship that exists between continual STI contractions due to lack of condom use and eventual contraction of HIV. It is a success indeed if members are able to perceive their own susceptibility, the severity of effects and benefits of acting. To that end, therefore, it can be argued that GWAPA has succeeded in increasing the acceptability of condom use within the scope of sex work albeit without eradicating the sex work itself.

To illustrate this point, in response to the question: Why did you take up commercial sex work, most responses indicated that they do it for the money. When asked whether the livelihood strategies posited by the organization are viable alternatives to commercial sex work, only four respondents out of 14 felt they were sufficient enough to induce them to leave sex work altogether. The rest gave varied responses which all boiled down to the fact that if the organization gave them more money, perhaps they would consider stopping sex work, since they were presently doing it to supplement their income. One respondent was quite brief "Tinoda mari yakawanda" (We want more money). It is then logical to assume that the inability of the loans to fund meaningful projects may induce relapses and that there is a danger of cultivating a dependency syndrome amongst the membership if the organization gives them loans for groceries, paying school fees and so forth. So in as far as these women would rather subsist on handouts and in so far as they would want to be "bribed" by more money in order to stop sex work, then the goal of behavior change is still far off. It shows that they are not yet sufficiently empowered enough or that they lack the self-esteem to rise above their circumstances in order to transform themselves from being the "wretched of the earth" to "beings for themselves" rather than

"beings for others".

Just How Participatory Are GWAPA's Programmes?

Members claimed they are not consulted in the decision making process and are only expected to embrace projects whose origins they would not be aware of. The then Gweru Chapter Chairperson gave the example of a bee-keeping project which was imminent at the time of carrying out the research saying they had never been consulted to say whether they would be interested in keeping bees. She said, "Vachadzichengeta vega nyuchi idzodzo! Handiti vanhu vanouya voti munoda kuti tikutsvakirei maproject api?" (They shall look after those bees on their own, I tell you! Isn't it, people ought to come and ask us what sort of projects we are interested in and act on that?). Intrinsic in these accusations is a belief that the organization has turned arrogant in neglecting consultation with its constituency and choosing instead to listen to the prescriptions of donor agendas. The researcher approached the organization for clarification regarding this matter and the Programmes Officer dismissed the allegations saying that the bee-keeping project was not even meant for the Gweru members but was rather being targeted at the Chachacha chapter in addition to a mushroom growing project, so the Gweru members were misdirected in protesting about it. What this misunderstanding illustrated was the fact that there is insufficient communication between the organization and its members and the relationship is characterized by mutual suspicion. The Gweru members that the researcher had an opportunity to interview lamented the days when they got due recognition for their efforts, when there were awards and tokens of appreciation for the peer educators that managed to mobilize the most members. The members at that point in time felt more and more that the organization was taking them for granted.

Furthermore, Behavior Change Communication messages in Zimbabwe are centralized at a national level and no single organization creates its own messages. The National AIDS Council as the coordinating authority is in charge of approving the messages that go on to be used through its Working Group on Behavior Change from whence the messages cascade to individual organizations. This implies a top-down approach that implies an active/knowledgeable source and passive audience, a view that has long been discredited as being too linear and mechanistic (Windahl, Signitzer, & Oslon, 1992) as well as its overemphasis on the sender of the message, leaving out the participatory angle. It needs to be noted that centralization of messages limits the effectiveness of IEC material in as far as no single message is suitable for each and every situation.

There Is a Risk of "Overplaying" the Hand of Marginalization

The organization should guard against constantly depicting these women as victims, because they will cotton onto the idea and use it against the organization. Freire (2000) dismissed the idea of constantly identifying the oppressed as:

> … paternalistic social action apparatus, within which the oppressed receive the euphemistic title of "welfare recipients". They are treated as… marginal persons who deviate from the general configuration of a "good, organized and just" society…The truth is however, that the oppressed are not "marginals", are not people living "outside" society. They have always been "inside"—inside the structure, which made them "beings for others". (p. 74)

According to Freire (2000), dialogic education affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming. Problem-posing education aims at eradicating fatalism by illustrating how circumstances are not immutable but merely limiting and therefore challenging and thus giving rise to a drive for transformation and enquiry, over which men feel themselves to be in control (p. 85). Focus needs to be placed on their strengths and not on their weaknesses. The researcher was particularly impressed by one WLSA (Women and Law in

Southern Africa) facilitator at an evaluation workshop with the Gweru Chapter of GWAPA who said, "Let's not call them 'victims' of domestic violence, let's call them survivors". Whereas "survivor" conveys the silent strength of a person that was able to rise above some oppression, a "victim" is couched in weakness, the depiction being that they are at the mercy of the victimizer.

Similarly, a "marginal" is made into thus by a marginalizer while the marginal remains helpless. The question that then arises is this: When will the "marginalized" stop being "marginal"? How will they determine that? When can they stand on their own? In this case, the rewards of sex work may always outweigh those of ordinary work because of the extra reward for losing social standing and as this study found out, the sex workers will only consider leaving sex work if they are given more money, but just how much money is enough? Implicit in calling someone marginalized is implying the existence of a marginalizer who is not openly identified. Poverty cannot be the sole reason why people venture into sex work because so many women are poor but do not resort to sex work. Rather, these women believe the organization is in it to milk their plight which is why they insist upon GWAPA giving them handouts, they also want their share of the spoils of their exploitation. One member told this researcher how they were made to act in a film that showed how they picked up clients at night, a film that the organization used to market themselves and resulted in the donation of LABAM, the mobile laboratory ambulance, yet today, the vehicle does not seem to be benefitting them much. She noted how staff members were abusing the vehicle, using the vehicle surreptitiously to make shopping trips to Botswana and not inviting members along even though the vehicle came about as the result of their effort. Another one noted how at the time of the interview, in October 2008, the administration was paying themselves salaries in US dollars but would take up to three months to pay peer educators their allowances in the worthless Zimbabwean dollar. The allowances were irregularly reviewed and she questioned why as owners of the project, the members could not be paid in foreign currency as well. The member who was aggrieved by the issue of the LABAM had this to say, "LABAM iya yakauya taekita mufirimu paMupambadzire paya tichibatwa nechando usiku isu takapfeka mini. VeGWAPA ava vanochiziva chihure chinounza madonor? GWAPA iyi takabva nayo kure isu!" (LABAM came about as a result of our efforts after we acted out scenes of prostitution, scantily-clad, braving the cold night at Mupambadzire nightclub. Does the GWAPA administration know the kind of prostitution that attracts donors to the organisation (if we weren't there)? We have certainly come a long way with GWAPA!). This exchange proves that the members are aware that the organization has commercialized their sex work into a saleable commodity that they use to attract donors and thus they demand their share of the takings as protagonists.

Conclusions

The findings indicate that the organization managed to increase the adoption of safer sexual behavior among commercial sex workers in the Midlands without necessarily eradicating commercial sex work. The organization appears to be practicing development communication rather than development support communication as evidenced by the top-down approach and externally-directed social change. The levels of participation of the beneficiaries in programming turned out to be questionable with the organization bringing in programmes that would have been instigated by donors rather than the beneficiaries. Waisbord's (2005) ideas prove instructive in this regard when he questions the conditions and extend to which participation in developmental projects is possible, how community interventions can be strengthened to lose their dependence on donor agendas and how funding patterns can be altered to generate community ownership rather than

intensifying a sense that projects "belong to donors". It needs to be noted that alienating people from determining their own destiny in the top-down modernization paradigm can only serve to marginalize them further, rather than integrating them into mainstream society. It may even lead them to mutiny in as far as this study yielded that there is growing member resentment and disillusionment amongst the ranks.

Recommendations

Development support communication is indeed preferable to development communication and the organization should tap into more participatory approaches to increase the acceptability of their programmes. NAC needs to understand that centralization of behavior change communication messages limits their effectiveness and should allow organizations to come up with their own IEC material that is tailor-made for their own unique situations and target markets, with NAC only coming in as a technical partner.

A gender studies component needs to be introduced in schools particularly to teach the girl-child self-worth so that she can hold on to her pride and dignity come what may. It is the belief of this researcher that giving way to sex work may be indicative of a low sense of self-worth that could be combated by instilling early a resilient sense of self-esteem through motivational talks and positive role-modeling.

There is need to revitalize the concept of vocational training centers by re-equipping them and broadening their curricula to meet the changing needs of the new millennium. That way, even if a youngster drops out of school or fails their Ordinary Levels, there would be no need for them to feel despondent as they could always learn useful skills at vocational training centers.

The experiences of the "marginals" can be harnessed for the good of society. Rather than merely regarding them as "victims of circumstance" and as "program beneficiaries", society could learn lessons from how sex workers survive the hazards of their profession, which often pits them against hardened criminals. Criminals may form part of the clientele base of the sex workers, yet the sex workers still manage to get them to pay for their services somehow, without falling victim themselves, so it should be possible for society to learn a few tricks for the betterment of society. Further, former sex workers can be engaged to advise married women at churches and other social gatherings on ways of ensuring their husbands do not stray in so far as they are better positioned to tell what it is that makes a man go out to seek the services of a sex worker, despite having a respectable wife waiting for him at home.

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