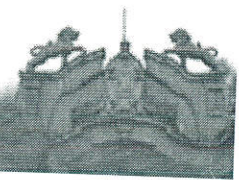
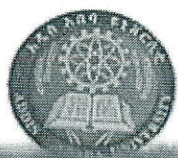


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**Faculty of Journalism and Communications**

**INTERACTIVE USE OF RADIO IN PROMOTING PREVENTION ACTIVITIES ON  
HIV/AIDS AND HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES: THE CASE OF  
"YECHALAL" RADIO PROGRAM IN GONDAR EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CENTER**

*By*

**TIGIST MEKONNEN**



**June 2010**

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**By**

**TIGIST MEKONNEN**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Journalism and Communications in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in  
Journalism and Communications**

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School of Graduate Studies**

**June 2010  
Addis Ababa**



Interactive use of Radio: The case of Yichalal radio program Gonder Educational Center.

By

Tigist Mekonnen Abeje

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## ABSTRACT

Gondar Educational Media Center (GEMC) is one of the four educational media centers in Amhara Regional State. This study conducted on one of the programs in the station, named '*Yechalal*'; literary means 'everything is possible' which targets students to create awareness and strengthen prevention activities towards HIV/AIDs and harmful traditional practices. The study aimed to examine the type of communication strategies implementing in the program and more specifically to analyze the appropriateness of communication strategies and to identify factors that could probably promote or/and hinder the communication process.

The study adopted qualitative methodology. Data was gathered from focus group discussions involving listeners of the radio program and from interviews administered to producers, teachers/coordinator of target listeners and the head of the station. Documents; implementation strategies of the program and manual of the radio program was consulted as well. Convenience sampling technique was used to select the places, and purposive sampling technique to select the participants. Theme analysis technique was used to analyze the data.

It was found that '*Yechalal*' radio program is utilizing an implementation strategy adopted from participatory communication approach by empowering students. The results implied also the designing stage of those communication strategies did not involve listeners; this in turn caused a problem on exploiting the communication strategies properly and effectively. Another result showed the participation of listeners is controlled by preconceived criterion and there was a problem of accessibility in using the media.

The principal conclusion was that '*Yechalal*' radio program applied participatory communication approach to pursue its objectives. Despite the fact that the communication strategies have an impact on the process of communication in terms of achieving the program's objectives, the practice implied by the data showed the domination of planner's idea in deciding target listeners' participation in the program.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

- SCNE** Save the Children Norway Ethiopia
- GEMC** Gondar Educational Media Center
- ABECs** Alternative Basic Education for Children out of school
- KAP** Knowledge, Attitude and Practices
- HIV** Human Immune Virus
- AIDS** Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
- HTP's** Harmful Traditional Practices
- OVC** Orphans and Vulnerable Children

## Definition of terms

**Appropriateness:** the extent of aptness of communication strategies to the communication needs of target listeners and to the socio cultural context of the target area.

**Communication strategies:** is a well designed series of actions aimed at achieving certain objectives through the use of communication methods, techniques and approaches. (Mefalopulos and Kamlongera, 2004)

**Interactivity:** The capacity for reciprocal, two way communication attributable to a communication medium or relationship which allows for mutual adjustment, co-orientation, finer control and greater efficiency in most communication relationships and process. (Rogers 2003).

**Participatory communication:** “a type of communication in which all the interlocutors are free and have equal access to the means to express their viewpoints, feelings, and experiences.” (White et al., 1994, p. 42).

**Producers:** Young freelance amateurs who trained to write the script and present ‘Yechalal’ radio program.

**Targeting:** “The process of accustoming the design and the delivery of communication program on the basis of the characteristics of an intended audience segment.” (Rogers 2003, p. 476).

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## CHAPTER ONE: Background of the study

Nearly everyone is aware of the AIDS epidemic, but in developed world, the number of people living with the disease is comparatively smaller than in developing countries. For people living in Africa, HIV/AIDS is often considered as “death sentence.”

HIV/AIDS was such a strong taboo in many cultures, which is not discussed. This lack of discussion leads to lack of proper knowledge about the disease, hence becoming one of the factors that only serve to increase its spread.

According to Kalipeni, Craddock, Oppong & Chosh (2004), the transmission of the disease becomes astronomical in sub-Saharan Africa with only a few exceptions in countries such as Uganda and Senegal.

They documented that AIDS is embedded within social, economical, cultural, political and ideological contexts. According to UNAIDS latest report:

*In 2008, an estimated 2.2 million people living in sub-Saharan Africa became newly infected with HIV, bringing the total number of people living with HIV to 22.4 million. In the same year, more than 14.1 million children in sub-Saharan Africa were estimated to have lost one or both parents to AIDS, continuing disproportionate impact on women and girls.*

Media's role is indispensable in influencing the behavior of community. However, as Campbell (2003) stated giving information about health risks is unlikely to change the behavior of more than one in four people even among more affluent social groups.

When we come to Ethiopia's situation especially in areas, which have a problem of education, lack of alternative mass media and other deep-rooted socio cultural, and economical problems, changing the behavior of the society by giving information will be a tremendous struggle. One of such places noted with the aforementioned is Amhara National Regional State (Amhara Region).

According to the figure shown in Amhara HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Secretariat, 2009 report, the situation of HIV/AIDS in the Amhara Region is one of the worst in the country; with persistently high prevalence particularly in the urban centers. According to the report:

*There are currently estimated 673,488 people living with HIV/AIDS in the region there are some speculations like high rate of poverty, drought and famine, illiteracy, unemployment, rural to urban migration, silence about HIV/AIDS among family members, harmful traditional practices like early marriage and female genital mutilation, and societal practices like polygamy that are highly prevalent in the region to be the possible causes.*

Without doubt building local, regional and national capacity through media communication can be used to develop integrated, comprehensive behavior change which leads members of the community to positive action by stimulating discussions, increasing perception and self development/skill.

In this regard, Rennie (2006) mentioned radio as a medium which plays a great role to convey information on health, and to play important cultural role through local music, stories, and opinions all of which reinforce community memory and history (p. 4).

## ***Statement of the Problem***

Creating links between the HIV/AIDS communication through the mass media and community based initiatives help to deliver far greater impact (McKee, Bertrand & Benton, 2004).

Gondar Educational Media Center (GEMC) in partnership with Save the Children Norway started Primary School children focused awareness and HIV prevention radio program entitled '*Yechalal*' that covers three districts (woredas) in North Gondar zone since 2003.

'*Yechalal*' literally means, '*everything is possible*', a slogan attributed to the famous Ethiopian athlete Haile G/Selassie. With regards to the program, it implies that the misconceptions about HTPs, HIV/AIDS can be alleviated through the radio program.

The program focuses on HIV/AIDS and related issues, harmful traditional practices, children's rights, the care of the elderly and the environment. The project has the intention of making communities the agents of their own change (GEMC, 2007).

The implementation strategies and activities employed in the program is one of the inputs which contribute to achieving the objectives of the program. However, it is not as such easy to implement the strategies as planned.

According to Campbell (2003), it is a challenge for health promoters to develop policies and interventions, which could be implemented effectively in enhancing behaviors within a specific community context.

Previous studies conducted on '*Yechalal*' radio program mainly focus on the impact of the radio program at changing the target listeners' behavior and conceptions on the objective mentioned above.

For instance, a study by Focas Lich, M. (2006) was 'to assess whether '*Yechalal*' is successful in delivering appropriate and relevant HIV/AIDS information to the audience and to what degree this leads to behavioral change', shows that '*Yechalal*' is the only hope to being the one positive force of change in a complex context of competing cultural and socio-economic factors.

However, according to Campbell (2003), giving information by itself could not be a cause for behavior change; "health related behaviors are determined not only by conscious rational choice by individuals on the basis of good information but also by the extent to which broader contextual factors support the performance of such behavior." (p. 10).

What makes '*Yichalal*', the only hope for the change in behavior with regards to HIV/AIDS and HTPs, as Focas Lich stated is what triggered me to researching into the type of communication strategies and its application by the program.

Further, since I grew up in the area where the target listeners are located, I knew that the culture does not encourage children discussing sexual and other intimate issues with their parents and other grownups, even general culture of discussion are not encouraged. Therefore, my curiosity to know whether the communication approaches employed are appropriate to the socio cultural context since the program targets children as 'Agents' of behavioral change in the society.

Since there are no previous studies on the program from the perspective of communication Strategies/Approaches, I decided to pursue my investigation on the type of Communication Strategies in use by the program.

Moreover, as Mckee, et al., (2004) mentioned identifying communication barriers is needed to develop an effective HIV/AIDS advocacy program or campaign. Hence, I felt the factors that could probably militate against the process of communication should be studied.

## ***Objectives of the study***

### **General objective**

The main objective of this study is to analyze the communication strategies/approaches implemented on 'Yichalal' radio program.

### **Specific objectives**

More specifically this study attempts:

- To assess the kind of communication strategies adopted in the program.
- To appraise the appropriateness of the strategies to the socio cultural context of the target audience adopted in the program.
- To examine how this strategies are implemented.
- To identify factors those hinder or promote the process of communication to achieve the program's objectives.

## ***Research Questions***

1. What type of communication strategies are implemented on the program?
2. Are the communication strategies appropriate to the socio cultural context of the target audience?
3. How is the communication strategies implemented?
4. What are the factors likely to promote or/and hinder the communication process?

## ***Application of results***

The study will help as an input for development agents, policy makers, media owners who want to work on a similar project. The study has the significance of helping the target group audiences understand better ways of using the media's appropriate model of communication. Besides, the study may serve as a springboard for people who want to conduct related researches.

### ***Scope and limitation of the study***

This research is confined in analyzing the communication approach in 'Yechalal' radio program. The program targeted four districts with a total of 99 schools which were in far remote areas that are inaccessible by road. Hence, it was too difficult for the researcher to access all the places because of logistics and time constraint. The researcher visited two of the schools which were relatively close to Gondar Zonal Education Administration. Hence, it is hard to generalize the result which is one of the drawbacks of most qualitative research.

Further to this, taking advantage of a stakeholders' representative meeting where coordinators (Teachers and Student groups) were invited to the Radio Station office in Gondar, a cluster of the overall population of the listeners and coordinators was established.

### ***Organization of the Paper***

This paper contains five chapters. The first chapter treats background of the study, the problem statement, research questions, and objectives, application of results, methodology and scope and limitation of the study. The second chapter reviews literatures that are pertinent to the subject. The review of literature covers theories and approaches of diffusion and participatory. It also treats health communication strategies, such as social mobilization and strategic communication on HIV/AIDs epidemic.

Chapter three presents the detail account of research methodology, data gatherings tools and sampling procedure.

The results of the discussions part of the thesis are found in chapter four. In this chapter the ways the radio program communicates with target listeners are described and analyzed. The listeners' level of participation in the radio program; the appropriateness of the communication strategies; and factors that could hinder or/and promote the communication process are also discussed. . Besides the description of the project and topographic characteristics of the study area are included in this chapter. Finally, chapter five concludes the major findings and the major remarks.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### ***Introduction***

Above all, I have looked into previous studies conducted on the project in order to build my own theme and to fill the gaps. Those previous studies are mainly monitoring and assessment results and researches by university students. When I went through their contents, the emphases were on the effects of the program in changing behavior about HIV/AIDS and related issues.

It is clear that the communication approach used in the program is responsible for the failure or success of the program. So identifying a type of communication approach is important to finding out the problems that could arise and how communication approaches can lead to better successes. My concerns are finding out whether the communication approaches used for sharing and/or exchanging messages, is top-down, participatory, or the integration of both and analyzing the process of communication used in the program, these issues are total distinct as against previous studies on the subject matter.

The study by Shitaye and Yohanis (2003), which is the basis for the implementation of the program, shows that misconception concerning the way of HIV transmitted is generally high

among the respondents and the need to rectify/alleviate such by giving the correct information.

However, on the positive side, other studies indicated that the radio program plays a key role in alleviating these misconceptions and changing the behavior of listeners about HIV/AIDS and HTPs. To this end, the study by Yidnekachew and Eyerusalem (2008) focuses on the evaluation of Yechalal radio program to assess its impact on the target groups in line with the project's objectives.

According to Yidnekachew and Eyerusalem (2008) '*Yechalal*' is successful in terms of enabling target listeners to have accurate and relevant information about HIV/AIDS, HTPs and other issues like, children's right as well as in creating a forum for discussion among listeners. (p. 27).

Going through the Researches/Studies previously conducted on this project, I found a study by Focas Lich (2006) more comprehensive. She tried to analyze the program's role from the prospective of culture, gender role and other socio economical aspects. According to her result there are key elements that enable '*Yichalal*' empower its listeners some of which includes; "the introduction of children's rights as a basis for empowerment, the listening group structure and the emphasis on community service." (p. 29).

The focus of this research is analyzing communication strategies and explaining the application and implementation. Since there is an assumption that the radio program is interactive, enabling target listeners to participate in the program. As a result, the researcher selected the participatory model working as a theoretical perspective by which to analyze the process of communication. Similarly, diffusion theory is relevant as the program emphasizes change through diffusing new idea about HIV/AIDS and related issues. Further, health related communication strategies; social mobilization and strategic communication for HIV/AIDS were also reviewed.

## ***Participatory Model***

The participatory model incorporates the concepts in the emerging frame work of multiplicity/another development. It stresses the importance of the cultural identity of local communities and of democratization and participation of all levels- international, national, local and individual (Servaes, 1999).

*The emphasis of this model is on information exchange rather than persuasion as in diffusion model. It stresses the importance of the cultural identity of local communities and of democratization and participation at all levels. In order to share information, knowledge, trust, commitment, and a right attitude in development projects, participation is very important in any decision making process for development. (Servaes,1999, p. 88).*

## **Participatory communication for social change**

Participation may not always be welcomed by all communities and cultural groups, at least to the same extent and with the same implications which it is conceived in the Western World. Many scholars argued that there is no universally accepted single definition of participatory communication.

According to Rennie (2006), Participatory communication (third World) projects are defined by their high level of community involvement and organization and are considered successful when they have been “appropriated” by the community.

Similarly, White, Nair & Ascroft (1994) defined ‘participatory communication as a type of communication in which all the interlocutors are free and have equal access to the means to express their points of view, feelings, and experiences. Collective action aimed at promoting their interests, solving their problems, and transforming their society is the means to the end.’(p. 43). They also stated that the ‘word participation is kaleidoscopic’: it changes its color and shape at the will of the hands in which it is held.

Moreover, White et al. (1994) categorized participation as pseudo and genuine participation.

In genuine participation, the development bureaucracy, the local elite, and the people are empowered to control the action to be taken. If peoples' participation and making power rests with planners, administrators, and the communities' elite, it is pseudo participation (p.17).

Similarly, Birhanu quoted Jacobson as cited in Okigbo (2004), participatory communication approach gave considerable attention not for the exogenous technology and knowledge transfer, but rather it promoted 'self-reliance' in terms of 'local knowledge' and local capability.

Schools are among tools to build participatory society White et al. (1994) emphasized. He also listed the following three preconditions in a school to make students a participative society:

1. Be participative itself in its internal administration, assigning responsibilities to the students;
2. Participate in the school environment of the community around the school; and
3. Adopt a participative methodology.

In relation to the value of participation, social cognitive theory asserted that; sense of people collective efficacy help them to solve problems and improve their lives through unified effort (Bandura, 2000).

According to Bandura (2000);

*Efforts at change must address socio cultural norms and practices at the social system level. People's shared belief in their collective power to realize the futures they seek is a key ingredient of collective agency. Because of the centrality of perceived efficacy in people's lives, media programs help to raise people's beliefs that they can have a hand in bringing about changes in their lives. (p. 81).*

Concerning the concept of participation Oakley (1999) suggested two school of thought; one school makes the assumption that the past development process failure is because it neglect

human element and people do not want to involve themselves due to lack of information; the other school argues that it is not the failure to take the human factor in to account that is at fault rather the unreflecting way in which people left out of the development education and treated as passive recipients rather than active participants.

Oakley (1999) also revealed the following key elements in strategy of participation:

*Participation is a continuing process, for which it is difficult to establish fixed, quantifiable criteria.*

- I. Communities should be broken down into groups some thing in common.*
- II. Socio economic groups' considered as the basic unit of development.*
- III. Stress is laid on spontaneous initiatives from below, leaving aside all preconceived ideas or standard models.*
- IV. Development should be based on self-reliance; development based on dependence must be eschewed*
- V. It is essential that development activities should be controlled by the groups they concern.*
- VI. The groups must learn how to act collectively in their attempts to solve the problems confronting them. (p. 52).*

## **Diffusion of Innovation**

According to Windahl, Signitzer & Olson (1992), diffusion theory is founded largely on empirical observations of various forms of planned communication. Since the early 1980s many of the public health investigations have dealt with the diffusion of HIV/AIDS prevention (Singhal & Rogers, 2003). The diffusion model is certainly involved both spontaneous diffusion and planned interventions for health improvements.

Diffusion of innovation is one of the known methods in which several scholars suggest a method in bringing about change at the community level. It describes how new ideas and opinions are disseminated in order to change attitudes and behaviors of people in a

community. In the case of this research, students are chosen as an agent to disseminate information about the danger and prevention mechanisms of HIV/AIDS and related issues, which is new for the society. Rogers (2003) stated diffusion is a kind of social change, defined as the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system.

Rogers distinguishes four crucial steps in the process of diffusion and adoption: the knowledge of the innovation itself (information), the communication of the innovation (persuasion), the decision to adopt or reject the innovation (adoption or rejection), and the confirmation of the innovation by the individual.

The diffusion process embodies several of the aspects, such as, two-step flow of information model, networking, information gaps, and attitude change (Traditionally the model emphasized, in McQuail's (1987) words, organization and planning, linearity of effect, hierarchy (of status and expertise), social structure, reinforcement and feedback.

A research by Paul Lazarsfeld and colleagues asserted people are more influenced by members of their family, friends, neighbors and fellow workers. The primacy of group life in shaping social attitudes, emphasizing the importance of social relations within the audience in determining responses to media messages (Williams, 2003).

Servaes, (1999) criticized diffusion as a model which assume as a new idea/innovation always comes from the outside not from within. On the contrary, as Servaes noted there is a need for an understanding of the existing local beliefs, traditions, culture and interpretation life before any new idea or innovation takes place.

## ***Health communication approaches***

### **Community Mobilization**

Like other areas of health communication, community mobilization efforts aim to influence health behavior. Scholars considered social mobilization one type of model for multifaceted

and multidisciplinary health communication intervention. According to UN-AIDS (2005), quoted in Schiavo (2007) a community is “a group of people who have shared concerns and will act together in their common interest.”(p. 150).

Community mobilization goes beyond participatory research, which involves intended audiences in the design, implementation, and analysis of research protocols and data related to the health related issues and its audiences. Unlike social marketing which is designed to influence the behavior of target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that the society of which they are part, community mobilization seeks to promote community empowerment by developing skills that can be used beyond addressing the specific problem or health issues (Fishbein, Goldberg, and Middlestadt, 1997 as cited in Schiavo, 2007).

Babalola (2001) cited in Schiavo(2007) suggested that using a peer-to-peer approach, such as relying on credible community members, to diffuse new ideas and prompt action in health outcomes.

There are several models that describe the key steps of community mobilization. A few general criteria are common to all of them or reflect practical experience. This research emphasized on empowerment and social context in describing the concept of community mobilization and its application.

## **Empowerment**

It is believed that information and knowledge will persuade people to become involved, to commit themselves, and thus help ensure the success of the project or the program.

For example, Campbell (2003) argued that knowledge of health risks is a key precondition for health enhancing behavior change. However, imparting knowledge about how to avoid health risks needs to go hand in hand with creating contexts where people are most likely to put that knowledge in to action.

Many debates about empowerment focus on the emotional or motivational dimensions of empowerment and conceptualizing in terms of a subjective sense of confidence. Fore

instance, Paulo Friere's conceptualization of empowerment quoted in Campbell (2003) adds a more cognitive or intellectual dimensions to understanding of empowerment, focusing on people's intellectual analysis of their circumstances. Friere argued that a vital pre-condition for positive behavior change by marginalized social groups is the development of critical consciousness.

On the other hand, Campbell in the ongoing mentioned three groups of strategies or approaches applied in peer education which is most commonly used within health promotion:

*Information provision approaches seek to increase people's knowledge about the causes of health risks and how to avoid them. A second group of health promoters have argued that, in addition to providing people information, it is necessary to increase individuals' motivation to perform healthy behaviors, as well as training them in the appropriate behavioral skills. Self empowerment approaches seek to address all three dimensions, with the aim of empowering individuals to make rational health choices through strategies to increase their motivation and behavioral control over their physical, social and internal environments. (p. 41).*

## **Social Context**

According to Campbell(2003), 'health-enabling community' refers to a social and community context that enables or supports the renegotiation of social identities and the development of empowerment and critical consciousness, which are important preconditions for enhancing behavior change.

Similarly, the traditional views that health related behaviors determined by individual rational choice, the social identity literature emphasizes how health related behaviors are shaped and constrained by collectively negotiated social identities. Thus for example, "using a condom or visiting traditional healer is an act structured by social identities rather than simply by individual decisions". (p. 47).

In this regard, Campbell (2003) suggested that social context is a key player in enabling and supporting health-enhancing behavior change. In addition, he mentioned 'Perceived citizen power' as the most important dimension of health enhancing social capital. Therefore, according to Campbell (2003), the impact of health program is likely to be maximized by the participation and presentation of the grassroots' communities in planning and implementing.

### ***Strategic Communication on HIV/AIDS Epidemic***

It has been argued that strategic communication, which can address both behavior and social change, has proven highly effective. Scholars defined strategic communication in different way in a different context. Mckee, et al. (2004) defined strategic communication on HIV/AIDS epidemic as follows:

*Strategic communication is a promising response to the HIV AIDS epidemic that has been vastly underutilized to date. It combines a series of elements, extensive use of data, careful planning, stakeholder participation, creativity, high quality programming, and linkage to others that stimulate positive and measurable behavior change among the intended audience. (p. 26).*

Besides, Mckee, et al. (2004) proposed three principles which must respond to the critics that call for greater empowerment and must also recognize the need to go to scale as quickly as possible. Those principles are: target social norms as well as individual behavior, expand ad hoc activities to a coordinated social movement and bring community level activities to scale through a linkage with mass media.

### **HIV AIDS, Knowledge and Behavior**

According to Mckee, et al. (2004),

*behavioral change communication is defined as; a research based, consultative process of addressing knowledge, attitudes, and practices through*

*identifying, analyzing, and segmenting audiences and participants in programs and by providing them with relevant information and motivation through well defined strategies, using an appropriate mix of interpersonal, group and mass-media channels, including participatory method. (p. 53).*

Information and education are indispensable to health promoting norms and behaviors and to change unhealthy practices. Murphy (1998) supported the idea that although one can organize information to make it more understandable, usable and appealing, information is necessary but not sufficient to bring about behavior change in most people. However, it can make a difference when embedded in well designed way.

On the other hand, Kelly et al cited in Piotnow et al. (1997) underlined limitation of the concept of knowledge as measured in many of the studies: the concept of knowledge may be more about recognizing ideas than having a use full understanding about issues.

(UNAIDS 1999 b) cited in Kalipeni et al. (2004) suggested current knowledge confirms that sexual behavior, the primary target of AIDS prevention efforts, world wide is deeply embedded in individual desires, social and cultural relationships and environmental processes.

Kalipeni et al. (2004) further claimed that the central factor in the proliferation of HIV/AIDS in Africa is identified as promiscuous behavior, tries to rationalize it through the cross-cultural frame work is that “behavior patterns that exist in one society but not in another or in varying degrees in different societies are the result of differences in the way society’s structure and give meaning to behavior.” (p. 49).

Aggleton (1996); (as cited in Kalipeni et al., 2004) also points out, motivations for sex are complicated, unclear and may not be thought in advance, societal norms, religious criteria, and gender power relations infuse meaning to sexual behavior and facilitate and or impede both positive and negative changes. Thus giving information alone is not sufficient to induce behavioral change among individuals.

Furthermore, Kalichman & Hospers, cited in Mckee, et al. (2004) argued early in the epidemic, many practitioners assumed that simply giving correct information about transmission and prevention would lead to behavior change, however, a paradigm shift from behavior change to social change proved naïve second generation interventions drew on psychosocial and cognitive approaches that educated individuals in practical skills to reduce their risk of infection.

### ***Communication planning and communication Campaign***

The concept of communication campaign is central for this study since the program is designed to mobilize youth for prevention activities of HIV/AIDS and related issues which is directly related with the purpose of campaign which intended to bring about certain specific effects.

In this regard, Rogers and Storey (1988) cited in Rogers (2003) explained a campaign as an organized set of activities and messages which intends to generate specific out comes effects by a relatively large number of individuals, usually within a specific period of time and through an organized set of communication activities.(p. 379)

Windahl et al. (1992) suggested that communication planning usually views communication and information as means of control and conformity in terms of knowledge, attitudes, values and behaviors.

According to Windahl et al. (1992), many communication planners perceive their work as predominantly creative. They further pointed out; finding new solutions to communication problems; formulating new messages; finding and combining new channels; defining and segmenting the public an interesting and perhaps funny as ways of offering opportunities to be creative.

Furthermore, Windahl et al. (1992) put more emphasis on empathy, social perspective taking, sensitivity to relationship standard and understanding a situation among other qualities that are useful in communication planning. In addition, Windahl et al. (1992) believed that communication campaigns are the initial tangible product of the planning process.

Concerning the relationship between sender and receiver in a communication campaign, McQuail (2000) pointed out:

*Campaigns depend rather heavily on the relationship between sender and receiver. Some campaigns purport to be in the interest of the recipients (such as health and public information campaign), while others are clearly on behalf of the sender\_ most commercial advertizing and most propaganda. (p. 445).*

On the other hand, Hyman and Sheatsley cited in Windahl et al. (1992) mentioned selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention as common threats to the success of information campaigns.

Besides, Mendelsohn (1973) (cited in Windahl et al., 1992), suggested the following three conditions communication campaigns should be met to be successful:

- 1. Campaigns should have realistic goals based on the assumption that the public's addressed are not overly interested, if at all, in the message.*
- 2. The mere offering of information through a campaign is insufficient. The communication planner should use environment support systems, interpersonal communication combining mass communication.*
- 3. The planner must know the campaign's public's well enough to recognize them as different targets based on their mass media habits, life styles, values and belief systems, and demographic and psychological attributes. (p.113).*

Knowing your audience is the key element for the success of health communication planning. According to Piotnow (1997), knowing your audience in the context of health communication planning means “be clear about what you want them to do or believe; use a multifaceted and participatory approach to affect their core beliefs and behavior.”

### ***Interactive use of radio***

The interactive communication models suggested that communication is not static but a process of action and reaction to what said. According to Narula (1994), “by reacting and

interacting, people can create patterns of communication and communicate communication functions. The functions could be, creation of social realities, informing, educating and motivating people,” (p. 56).

Interactivity is radically the character of new technologies, however there are many changes to the old ‘technologies’ and to media industries that have implication for the audience. Rogers (2003) described interactive media as the media that allow continual motivated choice and response by the users.

Rogers, also defines interactivity as follows:

*Interactivity: The capacity of reciprocal, two-way communication attributable to the capacity of medium or relationship. Interactivity allows for mutual adjustment, co-orientation, finer control and greater efficiency in most communication relationships and process. (P. 497).*

Radio is the dominant medium for community expression in most part of the world. It can also serve as a tool for a particular group or individual to get an information or knowledge about a particular issue or situation.

According to Ellen Kraft, program director of WGBH- FM in Boston quoted in Keith, M. (1987) outlines her programming philosophy. She pointed out affection as one of important element in successful radio programming. Instead of trying to change people’s habits, to get them to do what programmers think they should be doing at a certain day and time, a more productive approach is to match the type of program content with the likely activity of your target audience at given periods. (p. 183).

Similarly, Katy McDonald of Metro FM (cited in Beaman, 2006) stated to be effective listeners must perceive the program as part of them and the program should be responsive to the concerns of listeners. “Your program could be excellent with quality content, stylish presentation, humor, good music but it will be a flop if it is wrongly targeted”. (P. 25).

Erwin, J describe interactive radio station as user friendly, technologically superior, and the audience can very easily put forward their queries and suggestions related to the program and feel connected. ([www.insiderreports.com/storypage](http://www.insiderreports.com/storypage))

Some of the benefits of using interactive radio stations Erwin mentioned are: producing relevant content that fixes the listeners interest thus making them loyal to the radio station. Give opportunity to listeners ask questions related to the program and give feedback. This creates goodwill and a friendly rapport with the listeners.

### **Radio broadcasting in combating HIV/AIDS**

Among the main mass media radio is about effective means to address the message about HIV/AIDS for the medium's characteristics.

Since the 1960's UNESCO, (cited in Andrew, 1994) has been stressing the importance of radio broadcasting in community education, especially in the rural and areas of developing societies. The organization's faith in radio is based on the mediums unique characteristics which are cheap to purchase, versatile in utilization and any one literate or illiterate can learn from it. This all facts simplify that the effectiveness of radio on combating HIV/AIDS pandemic in developing countries.

### **Group Communication**

Scholars have suggested different point of view for the effectiveness of group communication. For example, Hybles and Weaver (2001) indicated that effective small groups have certain characteristics in common:

*A sense of solidarity, an ability to focus on their task, and a task that is appropriate for their particular group. In addition, effective group must be of a workable size; from 3 to 13, must meet in appropriate surroundings with suitable seating arrangements and must inspire its members to feel cohesiveness and commitment, (Hybles & Weaver, 2001, p. 302).*

Besides, Beebe and Masterson (1986) argued that effective group communication requires knowledge of the principles and dynamics that characterize small group interaction, together with practice in applying those principles.

In the case of considering the audience as a group, Rogers (2003) pointed out the readership of a local newspaper or the listener group of a community radio station as common examples of a media audience which is also in some sense a social group. This type of audience has an independent existence prior to its identification as an audience. Here the audience shares at least one significant social/cultural identifying characteristic\_ that of shared space and membership of a residential community. Local media can contribute significantly to local awareness and sense of belonging. (p. 374).

## **CHAPTER THREE: Research Methodology**

### ***Research design***

Since the main purpose of the study is to investigate the type of communication strategies in which the program applied and explaining the appropriateness of those communication strategies; active and interactive participation of participants enable the researcher to collect the data which could answer research questions. Consequently, qualitative research method selected as research method to achieve the objective of the study.

According to Creswell, (2003), qualitative research enables the researcher to develop a level of detail about the individual or place and to be highly involved in actual experience of participants. (p. 181).

Similarly, it is also argued that qualitative method helps to describe and understand rather than explain human behavior (Bryman, 1988). Since the intent of the study is to understand the way of communication and describing its application, qualitative design employed as a method.

There have been many attempts to define qualitative research in the social science. However; as Mason (2002) argued, qualitative research is not a unified set of techniques or philosophies, and it has grown out of a wide range of intellectual and disciplinary traditions. Regardless of the difference in definition we might apply either of the research method to use

the distinction, since it can be used as convenient way of exploring basic styles of the research (Payne, G. & Payne, J., (2004). For instance, Bryman (2004) underlined that unlike quantitative methods, qualitative research does not see the subjects and their social world as passive, but as contributing meaning to events and their environment.

Similarly, Qualitative methods (normally) using inductive procedure), seek to interpret the meanings people make of their lives in natural setting where as quantitative method (normally using deductive logic) seek regularities in human lives (Payne, G. & Payne, J. (2004).

### **Sampling**

Purposeful and convenience sampling was utilized in the study as a sampling strategy. Participants for the study selected because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study, which is the concept of purposeful sampling as (Creswell, 2007).

On the question of what form the sampling will take, Miles & Huberman (1994) as cited in Creswell (2007) suggested several qualitative strategies available; ‘Opportunistic’ which has the purpose following new leads; taking the advantage of the unexpected, is one of the strategies suggested.

According to Creswell (2007), researchers can sample at the site level, at the event or process level, and at the participant level. In a good plan for a qualitative study, one or more of these levels might be present and needs to be identified. (p. 126).

### **Selected Samples**

participants	Total number	selected respondents	Sex	
			F	M
Producers	10	3	2	1
Teachers/coordinators of listeners	100	10	4	6
Target listeners/students	~ 2000	30	12	18

Which form listener groups at school				
Head of the station	1	1		1

### ***Methods of data collection***

Focus group discussion, individual in-depth interview as well as document review were used as data gathering tool to triangulate information. Using those methods help seeking convergence of meaning from more than one direction (Lindolf & Taylor, 2002). To ensure the data gathered is trustworthy, a variety of primary sources; listeners/students, teachers/moderators and producers selected as participants of the study. In this regard, Mason, (2002) stated that using different questions for different interviewees help to generate situated knowledge.

### **Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

Focus group discussion was selected as data gathering tool since it helps to capture students own views and actions expressed in their own words which otherwise was impossible through the questionnaires. With regard to the number of groups and participants in each group Seal et al., (2007) recommended the number of group participants between four and eight as a norm.

I choose focus group discussion in addition to the interview as data gathering tool since it provides more elaborated account of information relatively quickly from a large number of research participants and it is more naturalistic than interview (Seal et al., (2007).

To ensure a wide range of opinions is represented, Richardson and Bowie 1995 as cited in (Payne, G. & Payne, J. (2004) suggested two methods of selection for focus groups; existing groups can be approached and discussions held with the members who agree to participate and alternatively, random sampling followed by allocation to groups could be used. (p. 105). The number of groups of student who held discussion was two, each having ten members.

According to head of the station, the schools which came for the cluster meeting were chosen having better participation and activities in the program compared to the other schools; hence, this helps the researcher to gather reliable data as the students were keen to the subjects and enthusiastic to work. In this regard, (Deacon, Golding & Murdock, 1999) suggested the strong version of convenience sampling is where sampling focuses around natural clusters of social groups and individuals, who seem to present unexpected but potentially interesting opportunities for research. (p. 54).

To help the students express their opinions freely, two teachers, one for each group, were selected to moderate the group discussion together with the researcher. This was done because the students were familiar with discussing under the supervision of teachers; this was also helping the researcher to deal some eventualities appropriately during the discussion. With regard to this, Green et al., (1993) as cited in Seal et al. (2007) suggested some ethical issues specific to the interactional nature of focus groups; group members may collude to silence, intimidate, or harass one particular participant, or even the researcher. Besides, to ensure the listeners'/students' discussion is unbiased and free from influences, producers of the program were not present during the discussions.

Moreover; I chose two schools, from two different districts, to set up a group discussion from 'target listeners'. Hence, it helps to get students in their natural setting, at the 'grassroots'. In this regard, Creswell (2003) argued 'the qualitative research takes place in the natural setting enables the researcher to develop a level of detail about the individual or place and to be highly involved in actual experience of the participants.' (P. 181).

The first school, Limat 'Ber Elementary and Junior High School' is from one of the four target district, Lay Armachiho, in the Capital, Tikil Dingay, 28 km from the zonal capital, Gondar. It is situated along the road leading to Humera. The Woreda has a total population of 163,399. The child population under 18 constitutes 54.6% of the total.

The other school is from the other target district Chilga, 'Aykel Elementary Junior High School' which is about 55 Km away from the Zonal Capital. The Woreda, in 2010 projection, has a total estimated population of 233,013 of which 117, 892 are male and 115,121 are

females. Of these, children under 18 are 121,167. It has a total land area of 251,566 Ha or 2,515 Km<sup>2</sup>

In each school two groups, one teacher for each group chose as a moderator together with the researcher to facilitate the discussion. The discussion was held on Sunday which is more convenient time for the students since it is considered as a holyday and they are not supposed to do works on Sundays to avoid problems by the families not to attend the discussion. To avoid noise, the discussion was held in their school in the class room.

### **In-depth Interview**

Coordinator of the station, three out of ten, producers of the program and teachers/coordinators of listeners selected for in-depth interview for having profound knowledge of the issues under discussion.

I developed one set of questions for the head of the station, a different set of questions for producers and coordinators of listeners/teachers with some overlapping questions. This ensured cross checking and consistency in the data gathered. Mason (2002) stated semi-structured interview, involving for the construction or reconstruction of knowledge, can ensure that the relevant contexts are brought in to focus so that situated knowledge can be produced through dialogic and other interaction during the interview.

Similarly, according to Mason, ‘‘semi structured interview helps for understanding of depth and complexity in a society, like people’s situated or contextual accounts and experiences, rather than a more superficial analysis of surface comparability.’’ (p. 65).

On the other hand, Miller & Glassner (2004) as cited in Silveman (2004) claimed that the strength of qualitative interviewing is precisely its capacity to access self-reflexivity among interview subjects, leading to the greater likelihood of the telling of collective stories. (p.130). Interviews can also produce retrospective and prospective versions people’s actions, experience, feeling and thoughts (Gobo, et al., 2007).

Further, Gobo, et al. (2007) pointed out the researcher's role during the interview was directing the interviewees' talk by asking non leading questions and probes; since cooperative engaged relationship centered mutual self disclosure can encourage deep disclosure(p, 20).

In addition to the major data gathering tool discussed above, interview and focus group discussion, I also used document review as a secondary source of information to enrich the data.

### **Document review**

To inform the research better, I used document review as a secondary data. The implementation strategies of the radio station, the manual of the program, reports and proposals were reviewed to see how they designed aligned with communication strategies.

### ***Data analysis procedure***

All the individual and focus group discussion and in depth interviews were tape-recorded. Then, I transcribed and translated the data from Amharic into English, except the interview with the head of the station.

In this study, thematic coding method of analysis was used. According to Bryman(1988), thematic coding is useful because it enables us to see the kinds of issues. I sorted out the extracts from the texts which were relevant to the research questions. The presentation of the data was then structured in a form of discussion triangulating the ideas gathered using the three methods (focus group discussion, individual interviews and document review) and using pertinent quotations to illustrate and serve as supporting evidence for the major findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### ***Description of the project***

Save the Children Norway Ethiopia (SCNE) in collaboration with GEMC (Gondar Educational Media Center) started a radio program named Yechalal in 2003 for 19 in school and 2 out school listening groups as a pilot project able to reach 110 primary schools and 97 ABECs (Alternative Basic Education for Children out of school) with a total number of 4,410 club members (GEMC, 2009).

The project is implemented in three districts (Woredas) of north Gondar zone; Chilga, Layarmacho and Alefatakussa (now divided into two separate districts Alefa and Takusa).

Initially, the radio program was designed on the basis of KAP survey conducted in 2003 to identify areas of gaps that existed among the knowledge, attitude and practice about HIV/AIDS of children and youth in those selected districts and every year the radio manual updated based on the feedback from listeners, monitors and assessment results (GEMC, 2007).

According to GEMC's 2002 proposal, the general objective of the project is to provide a source of information and forum for discussion on HIV/AIDS, HTP's and child right violation issues that are relevant to youth and children living in North Gondar zone and to

make target listeners active participant in the prevention and intervention activities (GEMC, 2002).

The project has its own implementation, strategies and activities:

Listening groups each has 21 members meet every Saturday from 11:30 – 1:30 PM in their school to listen the radio program. Each listener groups is provided a radio set envelop and stamps to communicate with program. A teacher assigned as an advisor or coordinator. They discuss on the issues they listened and send report to GEMC. The club members expected to be active participants in fundraising, contributing and conducting IGA activities to run the group, to support OVC (Orphans and Vulnerable Children), to support bed ridden patients and old aged people. They are expected to disseminate message they got from the broadcast to their school mates and to the community (GEMC, 2009). 'Yichalal' radio program has four packages:

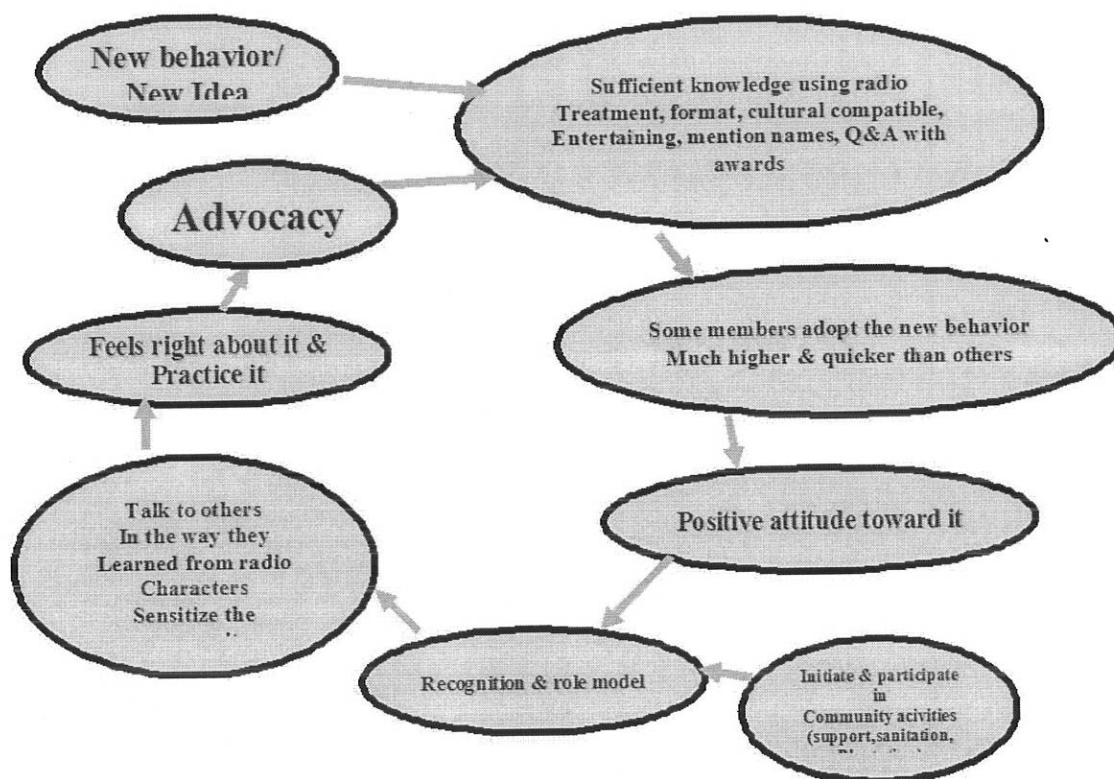
1. 'Melikt kutr Ande (መልዕክት ቁጥር አንድ): 'literary means message number one.'
2. 'Tikuret Lehtsanat' (ትኩረት ለሕፃናት): ' literary means focus on children.'
3. Enastaws (እናስታውስ): literary means 'let's remember.'
4. 'Melikt Kutr Hulet' (መልዕክት ቁጥር ሁለት): literary means 'message number two.'

In message number one and two letters of listeners containing reports of activities carried out, questions, and contributions are aired. 'In focus on children' children's right issues are entertained. Where as 'Let's Remember' is a program on HIV/AIDS and related issues. As indicated in the terminal report, the program uses a range of formats, such as drama, story and interview.

In addition, GEMC and SCNE have planned to extend the project in the coming three years (2010 – 2012).

For secondary school student's listening members special series of trainings will be given on reproductive health issues. Generally, the model below indicates the modified model to be implemented in the program for the coming two years:

### Modified Model of Audience-Media interaction



Adopted from; the proposal to extend the project December, 2009.

### **Topographic description**

'Yichalale' radio program project is broadcasted in four woredas of North Gondar Zone- Chilga, Alefa Takusa (now Divided), and Lay Armachiho. North Gondar is one of the 11 zones of the Amhara Regional State with a total area of 55,734 Km square. It has 23 Woredas with a total population of 2,957,228 (Projected 2004, Zonal Planning and Economic Development Department). The zone is bordering with the Sudan in the West, with Tigray Region in the North and North West. In the South it also shares border with South Gondar Zone and Lake Tana. Out of the total population, 88 % people are depending on what they can grow on their limited patches of land. The grazing land is limited and farmers with many cattle keep them in another area

### ***Theme of Data for Discussion and Presentation***

As mentioned in chapter one the main objective of this research is identifying and analyzing the communication strategies as well as their appropriateness in the radio program target area. Further to this the objective also identifies factors which might hinder or promote the process of communication. Data was collected from target listeners of the program and the program producers. This chapter presents the data collected and gives a detailed description, analyzing the data in a way that depicts the type of communication strategy which is in use by the radio station.

The chapter is divided in to three themes based on research questions and data gathered from the participants. The first theme discussed and presented the communication strategies which are in use by the program. Under this section the interaction between the radio program and target listeners described in terms of how they are communicated and the level of participation of target listeners.

The second theme analyzed the activities of listeners as a target listener group in line with their role in disseminating information about HIV/AIDS and related issues to the society. This helped to examine the application of communication approaches.

The third theme explored the factors that could probably hinder or promote the communication process. This will attempt to discover whether or not the communication strategies are appropriate or apt to the set objective of the radio program.

Some selected quotations from focus group discussions and individual interviews included to illustrate and corroborate and to draw inference for the findings. Besides, the analysis will plug-in by the theoretical reflection in the literature review.

### **Communication strategies**

This section has been explored the types of communication and analyzes their applications, the interaction between listeners and the radio program; the way listeners and the program

communicate. Furthermore, the levels of participation of target listeners with the program have been discussed.

### **Interaction between listeners and the radio program**

As Rogers (2003) stated, interactivity may be attributed to the medium or to the relationship between the audience and the medium. In the case of 'Yechalal' radio program it is possible to look at the interaction of the target listeners with the radio program. Hence, how listeners interact and the level of listener's participation with the program has been discussed to present the interaction between listeners and the program.

### **Ways of Interaction**

One of the implementation strategies the radio program applies is listener groups which have become significant in that it is a means to re-disseminate message delivered through radio; serving as a source of information to the radio station becoming a forum for horizontal discussion on the issues transmitted from the radio station (GEMC, 2007). To establish a two-way communication between the program and listeners, letters from target listeners serve as a main tool for feedback.

In relation to information in which letters are used to establish two-way communication, producers interviewed explained that they sometimes develop the content of the program based on the feedback from target listeners, present the concerns, questions the students raised in their letters sent to the program segment. Assignments for discussion and request are also given to listeners by producers as a means of establishing interactivity between the program and listeners.

As the head of the station, Getnet Eshetu explained that the number of target listeners is around 2000 increasing by 100 yearly starting from 2007. Each student is expected to send six letters per year to become a graduate of the program's listener group and for incentive, they given a radio set at the end of the school year. According to the head of the station,

averages of fifty letters received from the listeners are shortlisted and processed each week.

On the other hand, one producer during the interview raised the predicament letters from listeners create; He pointed out the problem of managing letters from listeners since they are large in number and only fifty can be processed during the week. This is so because processing of the letters involves reading and sorting through hundreds of letters to select the ones that are relevant to the criteria set for such feedbacks and sometimes the content of the program.

Furthermore, most of producers pointed out that the station provides envelope and stamps for target listeners to alleviate the costs of sending letters. However, some students become disappointed or discouraged participating in the program because their letters are not broadcasted; according to the producers this is because such letters are not received and broadcasted for the reason that they are not properly addressed to the station. In addition to the problem of sending and receiving letters, illegible handwriting, difficulties to get timely feedbacks from school radio listening groups found in more remote areas are also some of the problems mentioned by producers.

As explained earlier, letters are the only means to connect listeners with the program. However from the description of the problems caused by using letters as the producers mentioned above, it can be noted that, listeners generally find it difficult to get their queries and suggestions in relation to the program and their reaction to the producers and the program segment.

Interpersonal communication is one method of communication implement in the program. As the head of the station enumerated, stimulating peer communication and making it possible for messages to enter social networks and become part of everyday interactions is the objective of establishing listener groups at school. This means interpersonal communication is utilized as a means of communication between the students within each group and also by the group to the society.

Getnet further explained that the intention is to make listeners agents of spreading what knowledge they learnt from the program to family members and others in their communities through their daily interactions, schools/community activities, drama, song. They expected to reach out to the community and foster discussion and debate bringing about sober reflection and process of learning about HIV/AIDs and other related issues. This is like Paul Lazarsfeld stated is emphasizing the importance of social relations within the audience in determining responses to media messages (Williams, 2003).

In practice, most of the teachers interviewed indicated that students are not capable of addressing the set objectives of the program to the community in the target area. This view was affirmed by most of participants in FGD who stated that they themselves could not talk to their family about sex. The words of a member of one of the Focus Group Discussion;

*Most of the time, we cannot freely talk in front of our parents about sexual issues. If we tried to teach them about things like using condom to protect them against HIV infection, they will consider us as being wayward. The only chance of communicating what we learnt is usually through the use of drama performed in the school. In addition, we sometimes teach the society at church on Sundays. But, most of them do not give us attention since delivering messages by children like us is not common and acceptable.*

Students\Target listeners said during the discussion that they prefer interpersonal communication to communicate with their friends since it allows them to ask questions about things they are doubtful of. But they prefer radio in terms of credibility to get facts about HIV/AIDs and related issues. As Rogers (2003) stated the greatest trust out from the knowledge stage was provided by the mass media, while interpersonal channels were salient in moving individuals out of the persuasion stage.

### **Participation of listeners**

In the literature, (as reviewed in chapter two of this study), most scholars describe participation emphasizing people's involvement to solve their problems, promoting their

feeling and interest and have equal access to the means to express their feelings. To analyze the participation of listeners in 'Yechalal' radio program, it is possible to look at their involvement in the program. In so doing, the analysis of listeners' level of participation in the program with due consideration to listeners' activity as a target group and the efforts on the side of producers to promote listeners' participation are analyzed in the ongoing.

Listeners and the program communicate through letters. Letters are used to establish two-way communication. However, as the data revealed letters do not allow listeners to get equal access to the means of expressing their points of view, feelings, and experiences. This is the central point of participatory communication according to White et al. (1994).

Creating 'activity competition' among different listener group and Supervisions are ways of motivating listeners' participation. Letters from listeners are also play a key role as a means of promoting 'activity competition' among listener groups. In this case it is important to define the meaning of 'activity competition' and supervision with the context of how producers themselves are using the terms.

'Activity Competition' in the ongoing implies the use of social/environmental activities included in a group or individuals letter to motivate or initiate another listener group to do likewise or even much more than the first group have accomplished. 'Activity competitions' often mentioned in the letter from listener group and promoted by the producers include helping people living with HIV/AIDs, environmental sanitation, teaching/enlightenment of community on various issues and other activities. The appreciation, encouragement and acknowledgement from the producers are ways of setting up the 'activity competition' among groups/individuals who wants to be mentioned or rewarded by the radio program.

Further to the above and as a form of encouragement and acknowledgement, producers sometimes went out to visit the schools and the places where the practical activities were performed, talking to the community about the activity performed by the students and strategically about the objective of 'Yechalal', asking the students questions about the problem they faced and offer them advice; this whole process is called 'Supervision' by the radio program producers. This 'supervision' is used as a feedback tool, reinforcement of

what the students are disseminating and finally to encourage 'activity competition' among groups that wants a visit from the presenters of the program.

One of the producers of 'Yechalal' program explained that letters from listeners are used by producers as a medium of knowing what is going on in the groups and to encourage such 'activity competition' among other listener groups. Letters from listeners which may be a source of 'activity competition' are read on the program.

The segment of the program where letter are read is named 'Best messages'; which aired the letter which is selected as the 'best' for the week. The name(s) of the school (if sent by a listener group), the student/listener are mentioned in this segment of the program. For a letter to be selected as 'best' it should list activities done by the group listeners or a listener which is comparatively better than letters sent by other listeners.

In addition, one of the producers stated that, "whatever listeners write, they always wish to hear their names mentioned on the radio, this is one of the main reasons for writing letters".

The above assertions in this section show that mentioning listeners' names promote better listeners participation, while their letters demonstrate the impact of the effort of the radio program at using these children as agents of change in relation to the set objective of the program. In the same vein the assertions also shows that encouraging 'activity competition' among groups and individual listeners helps to advance better involvement of the groups in community/social activities. Moreover, these activities create openings to communicate the objectives of 'Yechalal' to the adults and community where such activities took place as parents and adults will be more receptive to listening to what the students have to say.

Besides, to reinforce what the students are saying or the main objective of the activity they performed, the 'supervision' visit by the producers of the program who are adults are often used to strategically educate and buttress the points the children are trying to make to the adults or the community at large. Finally on this note, the 'supervision' visit provides grounds for the producer crew to have first-hand knowledge of the impact of the program and

reassess the content and strategy of the program, thereby enhance participatory communicational approach.

Further investigation of the method of feedback (letters from the listeners), shows that before listeners send letters to the station there is a requirement; a school administrator is expected put the school stamp on the letter as a sign of confirmation that students really perform the activities they listed in such letters.

Despite the fact that was already established that letters are also used as an instrument in creating 'activity competition' among listener, which is one way of motivating listeners' participation, listeners' participation through letters becomes constrained by the requirement that school stamp must be present and practical activities performed listed. This is emphasized by White et al. (1994) where he stated that participation is a continuing process, for which it is difficult to establish fixed criteria. Stress is laid on spontaneous initiatives from below, leaving aside all preconceived ideas or standard models.

Another comment by the producers about the involvement of target listeners in the program through letters, explained that letters from listeners help producers to know the performance of the program since listeners sometimes write suggestions about the program. Similarly, another producer stated that they could understand the need and interest of target listeners from their letters. The producer explained the point as follows:

*"In order to write the script for the program, most of the time we use magazines and newspapers to get information about HIV and related issues which we believe can entertain listeners. In addition, we can understand their interest and need from the feedbacks they send. Sometimes we ask for comments about the program and we tried to act accordingly."*

The other implementation strategy by the program or set of action to pursue its objective is that all the radio scripts are produced and voiced by trained children and youth, which is one way of making the program interesting for listeners as the head of the station stated.

Child Right Convention and Ethiopia HIV/AIDS policy documents are strongly utilized during the training on radio production for amateur producers. In addition, all basic and entertaining radio formats (drama, interview, radio quiz, stories, Vox pop, music, radio spots etc.) are utilized during the training as he further stated.

In reality, most of the producers asserted that the training given cannot help to become creative and they do not believe the program is interesting since the contents are routine. They expressed their frustration in that the contents can not be changed as they are guided by the program manual and other senior staffs of GEMC.

With regard to listeners' interest, most of the students in the focus group discussion attested that they liked the 'Focus on Children', segment of the program more; as that is presented by children and like to hear children's voice. 'Focus on children' section is voiced by selected children. To participate in this segment, students and youth from listeners and local city are provided with trainings on radio program production.

## **Activities of students as a target listener group**

### **Students as a target**

The baseline survey of the program conducted in (2003) by Shitaye and Yohanis on 19 schools indicated that significant number of students have misconceptions and less awareness about prevention of HIV.

Traditionally, schools are regarded as institutions that "model society" where students learn skills needed to make decisions about complex issues. In respect of such topics as HIV/AIDS, however, school-based promotion has been a subject of controversy.

As it is mentioned in the Program Implementation Strategy (GEMC, 2007), the intention of designing the program targeting schools was:

*HIV and or sex education in schools can delay the onset of sexual activity and reduce HIV rate. School decisions and actions directly affect many community members. HIV interventions in schools can teach behaviors that will empower children to make healthy choices related to sex and other health issues. They can provide children with opportunities to learn and practice life skills, such as decision and communication skills, which in turn can help enhance other important areas of adolescent development.*

From the above strategy, it can be noted that students are expected to be agents for change in the society through the use of strategy which tries to delay early starting of sexual activities through the teaching of behavior that empowers to make healthy choices in relation to sex.

However, the baseline survey which was carried by the radio program does not suggest anything about type of communication strategy to be implemented on the program rather it only showed that there is misconception about HIV/AIDs among the students without expressing issues related to the individual behaviors and the socio-cultural interactions and role of the environment concerning AIDs.

### **Group setup and activities**

According to the interview with teachers, to setup the listener group in each school, twenty one students/children between ages 12 to early twenties are selected using the basis of their educational performance, conduct speaking and interaction skills among their peers.

Most of the participants during the focus group discussion claimed that the discussions within the group helped them as an icebreaker to practice free discussion about sex and the discussion help them to improve their speaking skill as well as the discussion habit. As claimed in the words of sixth grade student participant from one of the FGDs.

*“I never discuss freely as we do within the group about sex freely than in other situation. So that the discussion within the group after and before the program help me an opening room for free discussion concerning sex issues.”*

The above extract indicates that the audience shares at least one significant social/cultural identifying characteristic, which is talking *freely concerning sex issue*.

Besides, as part of the positive effects of communication within the group, a producer mentioned that group activities and group report, a report which lists what they have performed as a group, helped them to build commitment and relation. This view was noted by Hyber and Weaver, (2001) when they stated that, a sense of solidarity is one of the criteria of group communication.

Even if group listening create a culture of free discussion, as most of the teachers during the interview claimed, there are problems teachers pointed out which arises within the group during discussion time; disturbing each other while they are supposed to be listening, interruption and distractions because of the late comers. Also noted sometimes loss of attention while trying to take notes which will help them remember the issues discussed.

There are some preconditions producers mentioned for listeners to continue being a member of listener group throughout the year and graduate with a radio set at the end of the school year. These preconditions are: Teachers/moderators of listeners are supposed to keep the attendance of each listener groups every Saturday. The producers also requested that teachers should send the attendance to the station. Each listener are not allowed to be absent for more than five to ten days otherwise they will be dismissed as a member of the listener group.

The above explanation by producers about 'preconditions' confirms further that the students'/target listeners' participation in the group is conditioned by preconceived criteria.

In addition to disseminate message about HIV/AIDS, listeners are expected to do some practical activities like sanitation and hygiene, tree plantation, reconstruction of old and damaged house of the community members. This is one type of implementation strategies of the program which helps to build the group credibility by the society. The engagement of listeners in practical activities promoted social responsibility as FocasLich (2006) pointed

out. This is to mean creating context which is one element of empowerment which is emphasized in the literature of this study.

On the other hand, interview with teachers\coordinators of listeners showed, listeners are more engaged on practical activities than teaching the society about HIV/AIDS and related issues. This is because, as teachers further explained, they want to send a report of practical activities they performed so that they will get the chance of their letters being aired. Since this is one of the criteria producers are using to select a letter to be aired.

Supporting the above paragraph's view, some of the students in the focus group discussion mentioned that they liked to be engaged more on practical activities than disseminating message about HIV/AIDS and related issues because they found doing practical activities are more comfortable and acceptable than disseminating messages. This kind of distraction can become an impediment to what the program was set up to do which is activities that have direct relationship with HIV/AIDS prevention. This would be digression from activities that have direct impact on the objectives set by the program in the first place.

### ***Factors likely to promote or/and hinder the communication process***

The discussion under the section of listeners' participation indicated that listeners' participation is often influenced by a number of factors which in turn hinder the communication process. There are also positive set of actions which could promote the process of communication in the case of listeners' participation and in other cases. In this section, some of the factors which could probably hinder or/and promote the communication process indicated by the participants will pin point.

In terms of what factors that hinder their participation in the program, almost all of listeners during the focus group discussion mentioned, their parents are not happy sending their children to listen the program because the program is broadcasted on Saturday and Saturday is normally market day in the area as parents do want to send their children to market.

Rogers (2003) stated norms of the social system are one of the predispositions which could influence the effect of communication messages in the innovation –decision process.

According to Mckee et al., 2004, learned from the case study in Ghana in rural areas where sexuality cannot be discussed in public; showed traditional social networks have an effect on sexual health. ‘Seres’ are (peer groups of female friends) based on age cohorts; 15 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years, 25 to 30 years ‘’Seres’ are relatively formal, holding weekly or monthly meeting with an agenda; provide tangible help to members during weddings, child births, and death; they under take community activities.’ (Mckee et al., 2004, p.86). The study indicated that using traditional net works such as ‘Seres’ involved tapping into a very powerful, local network for message dissemination. ‘’Meaningful, locally connected data can prompt action. People will act only when they feel that HIV/AIDS is a concern to them and their community.’’ (p. 87).

As noted in the review literature of this study, scholar suggested that current knowledge confirms that sexual behavior, the primary target of AIDS prevention efforts, world wide is deeply embedded in individual desires, social and cultural relationships and environmental process.

To analyze the appropriateness of communication strategies implemented by the program, it is important to define culture in the context; culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning, but also in institutions and ordinary behavior (Williams, 1965, p. 332 quoted by FocasLich, 2006).

Further, as FocasLich (2006) declared:

*The way life in the target area of the program, North Gondar, the way of life is harsh existence of subsistence farming. Food and other basic resources are scarce. For this reason, children are usually expected to work from the age o five. The culture is dominated by the centuries old ideological forces of Orthodox Christianity, and as such is exceedingly male- dominated. Traditionally, women have little or no say in whether, when and who they marry, whether or not they go to school, how many*

*children they give birth to, and how they conduct their lives in general. (p. 14).*

As indicated by most of the focus group discussion (FGDs) traditional communication channels are a common means of exchanging various personal kind of information but not health issue. As a case in point from 'Aykel Elementary School;

*The society exchange information in (' MAHBER' and 'EDR') which is a type of traditional social meetings in which the community meet together and talk informally about any social issues. However children are not part of this social meeting. Information about health issue is usually delivered by health professionals. The society believe health professionals are better qualified than anybody else to give information concerning health issues (Fassil, a teacher in Aykel Elementary School ').*

The head of the station, Getnet Eshetu, confirmed child right issues and CRC convention articles are part of the program's content to be discussed in each week program for the response to the cultural context. Similarly some of the students confirmed that as they started challenging their family by telling them their rights.

Even if some of the students\target listeners in the focus group discussion raised that they start to discuss and negotiate with their parents about HIV and related issues, most of them argued they could not easily influence their parents' attitude.

From the in-depth interview with the teachers it was also observed that the students face resistance from the community and the culture discourages children to talk in front of adults. In addition, listeners' families have little understanding about the advantage of the program.

Confirming the above statement, a teacher from Chandba Elementary School noted that:

*Families of listener are not encouraging students to be members of the listener group. They just consider the time the students spend to listen the program as it wastes for nothing. This is because overload of work*

*expected from the students Saturday is the market day hence students should go to market.*

Similar to the above explanation, grade eight participants said the following during the discussion:

*My father is not happy to send me in order to attend the program and participate in the activities. He just believes I am attending to get 'the radio' the station award us at the end of the year and he said to me, 'stop attending the program and do what I order you to do, I will buy radio for you.'*

The above description illustrated that target listeners faced objection on the side of family members which causes frustration and social stigma. It can be also noted that the community lack awareness about the program.

Pertinent to the above view, Campbell (2003) argued that imparting knowledge about how to avoid health risks needs to go hand in hand with creating contexts where people are most likely to put that knowledge in to action. Promoting community empowerment by developing skills that can be used beyond addressing the specific problem or health issues, like focusing on people's intellectual analysis of their circumstance Paulo Friere mentioned.

Besides as Getnet further explained the radio producers and freelancers are most of them having cultural proximity to the audience with similar culture, language, age, attitudes and other characteristics which is another set of action for the response to the culture.

The strategy the radio program implementation activities evokes to encourage listeners to involve in different community implementation activities like sanitation, old house repair and fencing the school compound to make listeners to be recognized in the community.(GEMC, 2006). This is one of the factors which could promote the communication process viewed by most of participants.

Encouraging each listening group to select their local advisors which they call 'club fathers/mothers' to give advice to listeners and serve as a link between the group and community is also another implementation strategy; taking the advantage that traditionally rural Communities do give respect to the elderly people.

In relation to the implementation strategy mentioned in the above paragraph, some of the students in the focus group discussion verified that the club mothers and fathers who select as an advisor for the group have very little involvement in the activities of the program. Hence, it can be noted that designing a sound communication strategy is not enough for the achievement of communication process.

The radio manual is another set of action the radio program is using to pursue the objective. According to the head of the station, to design the specification for the radio program manual, messages determined at the beginning based on the result of the base line survey of the program. The objective of the KAP survey, conducted on the target area in 2003 by Shitaye and Yohannes, was to assess knowledge, attitude and practice of the members of the media clubs and anti HIV/AIDS clubs of the schools towards HIV/AIDS.

Being anti HIV/AIDS club in the school is one of the criteria to be a member in the listening group. This in turn helps the group listeners to have a better awareness about HIV/AIDS and related issues since they were participate in the anti HIV/AIDS club of the school before they become target listener group.

Getnet further added that after the first program content, designed based on the KAp survey, the manual revised 4 times. He mentioned some strategies they use to revise the manual; these are:

*In all of the cases we followed participatory message design, where listener's views and demands are incorporated. We collected message issues by workshop, from supervision reports, listener's letter requests, low cost research findings and recommendations, global and national direction papers, local AIDS secretariat current reports, feedbacks from*

*club sponsor teachers (coordinators), and media staff in collaboration with freelancers.*

On the other hand, one of the producers of 'Yechalal' claimed that producers can't be out of the specification in the manual to design contents of each program. He further explained:

*I am not comfortable with the specification in the radio manual since it is somehow fixed. For example, the radio program manual doesn't allow delivering music which is talking about love, rather the music we usually voiced is about country. I think this influence the entertaining capability of the program; it would be good if we could include contents which talk about love experience of some people.*

Concerning the issues about the radio manual the other producer raised another example during the interview, she stated that, "The content of the program emphasize more on 'Abstain' among the three methods to protect HIV/AIDS the intention is it can delay the onset of sexual activity in schools and reduce HIV which is one of the objective of the radio program". However, the baseline survey by Shitaye and Yohanness showed that considerable proportion of the study subjects are experiencing high- risk sexual activity.

The interview from the producers showed that they are not comfortable with the specification in the manual since it does not allow them to be flexible in designing messages and it decreases the program's entertaining capability. One producer commented on the manual; "It is like, 'this the truth and this is the way you have to know about HIV/AIDS and you have to accept it.'"

Technological quality is one of the characters of interactive media. Apart from other problems that affect the level of interaction between the radio program and listeners; radio sets procurement problem and not available in large number are the main factors stated by the head of the station and most of the teachers.

To clarify the above paragraphs view one teacher said:

*The radio which set for the group by the station supposed to last for one year, however, it will damage soon and it could not enable students to listen clearly. Mean while it will damage and there is any body for procurement. For example, she said, in the case of the group which I coordinate, I have given my own radio for the group to solve the problem.*

On the hand, in relation to procurement of the radio set for the group listener, one producer stated that even it is stopped now, the station were allowed coordinators to bring the radio to the station for procurement. As he further stated they stopped taking the responsibility for procurement of radios currently because of shortage of budget and some of listener groups activities and membership has dropped since showing that the listeners seems to care more for the radio set that is giving out.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATION**

### ***CONCLUSION***

This study investigates the type of communication strategies implemented in the program. It also examines the appropriateness of the communication strategies, to the socio-cultural context of the community in the target area. Interview and focus group discussion were mainly employed as instruments to collect data and to confirm how appropriate the strategy in use by '*Yechalal*' radio program. Document review was also used as an instrument to collect data to cross check the information.

The analysis of the implementation strategies of the program and the interview with the head of the station reveals that the program utilized participatory approach of communication and empowering students to bring about change in the society in relation to HIV/AIDS and related issues.

Letters from listeners is the main tool used by the program to establish two way communications from the target listeners back to the radio station. As a motivation mechanism, techniques such as 'activity competition' and supervision, reading of letters and mentioning of writers name and activities are utilized to promote participatory communication.

Empowering students in school through social/environmental activity is another type of communication strategy implemented in the program. Letters are also used strategically to reinforce students' activity in the environment and as a means of getting feedback from listeners about the program.

This being said, the application of those communication strategies implied by the data shows that the role or actions of listeners in the program is more guided by already set criteria rather than emphasizing target listeners' needs and interests. The general notion is that the radio program does not consider target listeners to design a communication approach to be implemented in the program.

Moreover, even if a set of actions or implementation strategies designed to pursue the objective of the radio program have actual impact in the communication process; the results implied that there are problems in the application of the implementation strategies which hinder the communication process.

The data from the focus group discussion among listener groups reveals that community's culture in the study area does not encourage free discussion about sexual issues and majority of the community are not aware of the advantage of the radio program. This is one of the main challenges that hinder the communication process or makes the communication strategy in use by the program less appropriate.

Even though the group structure help to practice a discussion habit among listeners, this discussion habit among listener fails to achieve the set objective of using students to passing necessary information to the parents and the adults.

'*Yechalal*' radio project targeted four districts with current population of 2,957,228. In addition, most of the communities do not have an access to the media. This in turn brings about additional obstacle on the planned agents of change students have to overcome to be able to achieve the set objective of the program.

Further more, limited number of staff, quality of the medium that is the radio, shortage of budget and the location of schools are also some of the factors that could hinder the process of communication confirmed by the data.

## **RECOMOMDATION**

As the findings of this study indicate the society in the target area are not aware of the advantage of the radio program. So it needs to adopt a type of communication approach which fosters the involvement of the society at large to increase their willingness to discuss HIV/AIDS and related issues with their children and partners to ensure that HIV/AIDS prevention information is readily available and understandable to the majority of the population.

In either case, the finding of this study identified the problem of addressing the majority of communication as one of the factors which could hinder the communication process in the program, it can be suggested a necessary next step for the radio program is scale up the coverage, content, and distribution of the program to address the majority of population that are currently aware of the dangers of HIV/AIDS, or not aware of the availability and location of prevention methods.

The result of the findings of the study unveiled that the radio program gives less emphasis on prevention methods of HIV/AIDS, especially the use of condom. This is against the backdrop that the 'activity competition' often embarked upon by the listener groups are not even HIV related. Hence, the importance of increasing the communities' knowledge about the benefits of consistent use of condoms for reducing HIV/AIDS risk is recommended.

Moreover, this study is limited to analyzing the communication strategy which is in use by the program involving only target listener groups. Therefore, a kind of experimental research involving both target listeners and other group of the society in the target area in order to adopt more appropriate communication strategies which consider participants communication need can be suggested as a future study area on the program.

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## **Appendix I**

### **Interview guides and discussion themes**

The general objective of this study is to analyze the type of communication strategies implemented in 'Yechalal' radio program. The study is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Art in Journalism and Communications, Addis Ababa University; School of Graduate Studies. While your responses will be kept in confidence, aggregate data will be presented representing averages or generalizations about the responses as a whole. No identifiable responses will be presented in the final form of this study. Thank you very much in advance.

### **Profile of students/target listeners:**

**Gender**

**Name of school**

**Age**

### **A/ Interview guide for the head of the radio station**

- 1. Is there any communication strategy in use in the program?**
- 2. If your answer is yes for question number one, can you explain the strategies that you implemented?**
- 3. What do you do when students fail to act according to the strategy of the program?**
- 4. How far are your communication strategies culturally appropriate?**
- 5. Can you explain how you set listener groups?**
- 6. Who is responsible in designing the messages which is disseminating in the program?**
- 7. What were the major challenges in the communication process?**

8. How do you get feedbacks from listeners about the programs?
9. Do you think the target listeners could challenge traditional influences? How?
10. What factors do you think which might hinder listeners not to participate in the activities of the program?

**B/ Interview guide for producers of the program**

1. How do listeners participate in the program?
2. To what extent is the listeners' participation in the program?
3. What efforts have you done to entertain the need and interest of listeners in the program?
4. What factors do you think which could hinder listeners' participation?
5. Do you have any frame work or guide line to design the contents of the program?
6. How do you know the performance of your program?
7. What have you done to help listeners actively participate in the program?
8. Do you think students could challenge the tradition of society? How

**C/ Interview guide for teachers/ moderators of the group**

1. What problems do you face in managing the group?
2. How do students discuss HIV/AIDS and related issues with friends, family and their neighbors?
3. Which section of the program do the students like most? Why?
4. What factors do you think which could hinder or promote the process of communication?
5. What can you say about the reaction of the society on the program?
6. What recommendations can you present to improve the process of communication in the program?

D/ Discussion Guide for Focus Group Discussions (a guide for students/target listeners).

- Listeners' role in the program
- The reaction of the community on the activities of the students
- Challenges encountered and motivating factors to listen the program
- The method of communication within a group and between the listener and the producer
- Traditional ways for disseminating important information

## Appendix II

### I. ለፕሮግራሙ አዘጋጆች የቀረቡ ጥያቄዎች

1. አድማጮች በፕሮግራሙ ላይ እንዴት ወይም በምን አይነት ዘዴዎች ይሳተፋሉ?
2. አድማጮች በፕሮግራሙ ላይ ያላቸው ተሳትፎ እስከምን ድረስ ነው?
3. በፕሮግራሙ ላይ የአድማጮችን ፍላጎትና ምርጫ ለማሟላት የምታደርጉትን ጥረት ቢገለጹልኝ?
4. አድማጮች በፕሮግራሙ ላይ ያላቸውን ተሳትፎ ሊያደናቅፉ የሚችሉ ነገሮችን ቢገለጹልኝ?
5. የፕሮግራሙን ይዘት ለማዘጋጀት የምትጠቀሙበት መመሪያ አለ?
6. የፕሮግራሙን ጠቃሚነት ወይም ችግሮች እንዴት ታውቃላችሁ?
7. አድማጮች በፕሮግራሙ ላይ በንቃት እንዲሳተፉ ለማድረግ የእናንተን አስተዋፅዖ ቢገልጹልኝ?
8. አድማጮች የአካባቢውን በህላዊ ተፅዕኖ ይቋቋማሉ ብላችሁ ታስባለችሁ? እንዴት?

### II. ለአስደማጭ መምህራን የቀረቡ ጥያቄዎች

1. አድማጮች በቡድን በሚያዳምጡ ጊዜ ቡድንን ለመምራት አዳጋች የሆኑ ሁኔታዎችን ቢገልጹልኝ?
2. ተማሪዎች የኤች.አይ.ቪ ኤድስ እና ተመሳሳይ ጉዳዮችን በተመለከተ? ከጓደኞቻቸው እና ቤተሰቦቻቸው ጋር በምን መልኩ ወይም እንዴት እንደሚወያዩ ቢገልጹልኝ?

3. ከፕሮግራሞች መካከል አድማሮች አብልጠው የሚወዱት የትኛውን ነው ለምን?
4. አድማሮች ከፕሮግራሙ ጋር እንዲሁም ፕሮግራሙ ከአድማሮች ጋር ያላቸውን ተግባራት ሊያፋጥኑ ወይም ሊያደናቅፉ ይችላሉ የምትሉትን ነገር ቢገልፁልኝ?
5. የአካባቢው ነዋሪዎች ስለ ፕሮግራሙ ምን ይላሉ?
6. ፕሮግራሙ የበለጠ እንዲሻሻል የእርስዎ አስተያየት ምንድነው?


### III. ለአድማሮች የቀረቡ የመወያያ ነጥቦች

1. በፕሮግራሙ ላይ የእናንተ/ የአድማሮች/ ሚና
2. አድማሮች በምታከናውኗቸው ተግባሮች ዙሪያ የሕብረተሰቡ አስተያየት
3. ፕሮግራሙን ለማዳመጥ የሚገፋፋችሁ ወይም የሚያነሳሳችሁ ነገሮችና እንዳታዳምጡ እንቅፋት ሊሆኑ የሚችሉ ነገሮች
4. ከቡድን አባሎች ጋር እና ከፕሮግራሙ አዘጋጆች ጋር የምትግባቡት ዘዴ በአካባቢው ጠቃሚ መልዕክቶችን ለማስተላለፍ ያለ

## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all the sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name Tigist Mekonnen

Signature 

Date of submission June 24, 2010

Place of submission Addis Ababa University