

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies

**Effectiveness of Health Posters in Awareness
Creation and Promoting Behavior Change. A Case
Study of UNICEF's Billboards: Addis Ababa**

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Abstract

This study is designed to examine how effectively UNICEF's billboards in Addis Ababa communicate health message. In other words it looks into whether the billboards are designed in a way the audience understands them. It also explores the strategy employed to design health posters and billboards.

Since the major concern of the research is to know how effectively the billboards transmit the intended message towards the audience, 120 respondents are randomly selected as research participants. Questionnaire is used as a major data-gathering instrument. Besides, to substantiate the study UNICEF's communication planners and programme officers as well as health workers in Family Health International (FHI) are purposively selected. Interview is conducted with UNICEF's communication planners and programme officers while focus group discussion is made among FHI health workers. Accordingly, the data gathered is analyzed by using different methods of data analysis, like: descriptive approach for qualitative data and using frequency and percentage for quantitative data.

The result shows that unsuccessful message transmission of UNICEF's billboards is related significantly with inadequate skill of message designing proficiency of UNICEF's communication planners. Generally, it is noted that the target audiences have not participated in message designing and in the decision process, which contributes for unsuccessful message transmission. This result of the study, therefore, proves unsuccessful communication flow through UNICEF's billboards.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background

In talking about posters, Helfand states,

Posters have been a powerful force in shaping public opinion because propagandists have long known that visual impressions are extremely strong. People may forget a newspaper article but most remember a picture. A pamphlet or a newspaper can be thrown away, unread; the radio or television turned off; films or political meetings not attended. But everyone at some time or other notices messages when walking or driving, or sees posters on bulletin boards, in offices, hospitals, clinics or pharmacies. The main objectives of posters are to influence attitudes, to sell a product or service or to change behavior patterns. Public health posters are clearly in the third category, their purpose being to alter the consciousness of the public to bring about an improvement in health practices (Helfand cited in Boyle, 2003, 1).

Similar to Helfand's, Starrs and Rizzuto, state,

These tools could be reminders of important messages that might be forgotten by people. Moreover, they can be used over and over again, and people can share them with friends, relatives, and neighbors to spread information and gain the support and understanding of others. They can encourage discussion by showing a certain situation or scene that might be controversial

(such as man helping his wife at her work) (Starrs and Rizzuto 1995, 39).

The exhibit from the world's largest collection of public health posters housed in the National Library of Medicine (United States) reveals the potential of posters as effective medium for communicating information about disease, identifying risk factors, and promoting behavioral change. By examining the history and function of public health posters, the exhibit suggests that social, biological, and cultural factors have collectively influenced the design of public health campaigns throughout the preceding century (Boyle, 2003).

Public health educators began to use posters in educational campaigns starting from early nineteenth century. Health education specialists adopt modern methods of visual persuasion. Instead of dull pamphlets, they felt that modern health messages should mark attractive layouts, colors, and typefaces for greatest impact (Colgrove, 2004). "Publicity should be dramatic, entertaining, and carefully planned" Moree cited in Colgrove (2004, 506). Posters are designed in a way to catch the attention of viewer and communicate messages quickly, most often with limited text and strong graphics. As relatively inexpensive forms of popular media, posters in the twentieth century are favorite ways to advocate a cause. They provide opportunity for community concerns, and can be used to call to a broad public audience (Boyle, 2003).

Due to the many qualities posters have, public health campaigners are encouraged to use them as powerful medium for visually communicating knowledge about disease, and for promoting changes in behavior. In the process, poster designers developed a visual vocabulary to help shape and define "normal" and "healthy"

behaviors and conditions which has provided the basis for a variety of campaigns against infectious diseases and environmental health hazards (Boyle, 2003,2).

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study aims to examine how effectively UNICEF's billboards in Addis Ababa communicate health message. In other words, it looks in to whether the billboards are designed in a way the audience understands them. It also explores the strategy presently employed by UNICEF communication unit in designing health messages.

Posters and billboards are believed to play vital role for people to gain awareness and control over factors that influence their basic needs. Concerning this visual aids, Starrs and Rizzuto (1995, 1) state "experience has shown that, a well-designed campaign can change people's knowledge, attitudes and behavior" (Starrs and Rizzuto, 1995, 1). They also emphasize that effective campaigns begin through research to find out what people currently know, believe and do.

Particular attention needs to be paid in designing posters and billboards especially for a society where reading culture is not vastly developed. Many people doubt the quality of health posters and billboards produced in Addis Ababa.

Most of these visual materials seem to be produced on impulse rather than assessing audience's background and involving target audience. So their effectiveness is also doubtful. Though initiatives have been taken to curb health problems (like the spread of HIV) little has been done to certain the impact of these posters and billboards on bringing awareness and promoting behavior change.

A report on assessment of the National Health Communication (2004,8) states that, “in most cases the health learning materials produced at the central level are mostly not considered useful and applicable to their situations”. Most of the regions believe that, materials and messages created by the center do not explain the realities of the regions.

Mody (1991, 19) states that, “Most of the development workers frequently lack the skills, tools, techniques and attributes to understand and involve audiences in the development process. This is a problem of communication and unfortunately not enough practical attention has been paid to the research to lessen it”. Accordingly audiences should have the opportunity to collectively criticize, analyze and participate in the communication process (White, 1991).

1.3 Objective of the study

1.3.1 General Objective

This paper is designed to examine the effectiveness of UNICEF’s billboards in creating awareness and promoting behavior change. In other words, the general objective of the study is to investigate if message is clearly communicated in a way the target audience perceives.

1.3.2 Specific Objective

More specifically the study attempts to see the following objectives:

- To draw attention to use visual images in health promotion both to aid in creating awareness and in promoting behavior change.
- To assess knowledge, attitude and perception of audience in relation to visual images.

- To assess the poster designing process undertaken by UNICEF: whether the pre and post-production process involves the target audience or not.
- To identify gaps and draw lessons in relation to health posters designing process.

All the undertaking of this study is finally expected to show how effectively message is communicated through UNICEF's billboards. To this end; the study answers the following basic questions based on a framework for making public awareness posters by Bowers (1981).

- Is the channel preferable by the community?
- Does the image represent the caption?
- Does the message stimulate emotions?
- Is the message clear and easy to understand?
- Is the message target specific?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is believed to promote the utilization of posters and billboards for the purpose of message transmission. It is believed to contribute towards generating guidelines necessary for further improvement of poster production to bring about the expected result.

This study promotes the significance of empowering people to participate in any development work through participatory communication. It enables the society to influence the decision-making processes of formulating and implementing products and programs intended to satisfy their needs and solve their problems. The society will benefit if messages are transmitted to them in a way they understand best, thus creating awareness and promoting behavior change.

This research has significance to communication planners and message designers as well. It helps them to examine and act upon the strength and weakness of their message transmission skill. For UNICEF too, this study is important because it enhances message-designing skill of communication planners and health workers.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The paper examines the effectiveness of UNICEF's billboards in communicating health messages. However this study does not include the recently produced UNICEF's billboards since they came out after the data for this research has already been gathered. Moreover, the study doesn't incorporate other billboards produced by other organizations, because UNICEF's billboards are created with multi purpose to overcome the obstacles that poverty, violence, disease and discrimination places in a child's path. Furthermore they advocate for measures to give children the best start in life mostly with the nurturing and caring of children as a corner stones of human progress.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

To conduct this study, only UNICEF's billboards in Addis Ababa are used due to time and financial constraints. As a result, these constraints couldn't help the researcher to incorporate billboards out side Addis. Thus, due to this, the study doesn't show the audience perspective outside the capital city. This in turn shows that the results of this study are applicable to the selected area.

CHAPTER TWO

Since this paper is to draw attention to effective message transmission through the use of posters and billboards, to aid in creating awareness and behavior change, the issue will be investigated in relation to communication as a process and communication as meaning generation to emphasize on effective message transmission.

2. 1 The Communication Process

This section starts by including “The communication process” with the intention of enabling target groups and partners to carry out effective two-way communication, in the implementation of health communication. Communication is a very wide term and different scholars seek to define its effectiveness. Mody (1991, 41), in speaking about communication said, “When we talk about achieving communication, we are using the word to refer to an outcome or end-effect”. The aim of communication as an out come is ‘to make common’ to share.

Communication is achieved then when the sender and the receiver hold meaning in common. That is when the meaning the sender wanted to share is identical to the meaning the audience receives. The degree of communication achieved is a function of the relevance of the topic to a particular audience and the appropriateness of the treatment, presentation/form of the information Mody (1991, 42).

Exposing people to a lot of information does not necessarily result in communication. As expressed by Krishnan (2004), People need to receive the message in a way parallel to the perceptual range of their minds and become a vital part of their thinking and judgmental processes. For Krishan, an effective

communication is when there is relevance between the messages and the needs of the given individuals. In supporting this notion, Wilson (1999) states that message that does not recognize the given individual's (receiver's) needs, status, knowledge, and language skills can interfere to effective communication. Lack of sensitivity to receiver may result in breakdown to communication.

Misleading messages puzzle the receiver. According to Bowers (1981) a communicator commits the worst crime when he/she communicates inappropriate message, since it confuses the receivers and destroys their credibility of the communication. Thus, a communicator to conform acceptance and validity from the side of the intended audiences may do some rapid action research. (Bowers, 1981)

People started to be involved in active participation in order to shape their societies. There has been transfer from the top-down approach of communication to a more participatory approach. Primarily, projects started and planned by professionals without discussing with the grassroots. Health educators have also been such professionals. They have begun different health campaigns without discussing with target audiences. Posters and other health promotions have implemented the top-down approach. Parker (1994) states "the predominant method for the production of health education materials incorporates a somewhat top-down approach where health professionals, in collaboration with media professionals develop media products" (Parker, 1994, 64). Health professionals set the agenda without the consent of the people for whom the messages were intended.

According to Fiske (1990) communication studies can be grouped into two based on their focus. The first one is concerned with how senders and receivers encode and interpret, and with how senders use the channels of communication.

It sees communication as a process by which one person affects the behavior or state of mind of another. If the effect is different from or smaller than that which was intended, this school tends to talk in terms of communication failure, and to look to the stages in the process to find out where the failure occurred (Fiske, 1990,2).

This type of top-down approach to communication and development can be traced back to Harold Lasswell as well as Shannon and Weaver, known as the communicator-message-receiver models of communication (C-M-R).

This model has its own drawback. The communicator is seen as having the power to influence the recipients or receiver of a message. Here communication is from the sender to the receiver without feedback, and is therefore, a one-way process. “Such models easily engender popular credence, for, on the surface, they offer a logical appeal to what is surely a popularly held view—that communication is about how effectively communicator transfers messages to a receiver”(Parker, 1994,38).

On the other hand, according to Piotrow et al., (1997,18) “ communication is effective when it is two-way interactive process involving two or more individuals or groups in which all participants both encode (create and share) and decode (perceive and interpret) information until the goals of each are adequately achieved”. As mentioned in their writing the definition and practice of communication shifted from monologue to discussion. Habermas (1997) points out “understanding is based on interaction and discourse where all parties have

equal opportunity to explain, interpret, and justify without fear, violence, or sanctions".

Feedback is vital part of communication. According to the national HIV/AIDS guideline (2003) feedback is the response from the receiver that shows the level of understanding, acceptances or rejection of the transmitted message. In general, feedback is the reaction of the receiver to the message received (National HIV/AIDS Guideline, 2003). Feedback is also defined as "the transmission of the receiver's reaction back to the sender" (Fiske 1990, 21). It helps the communicator adjust his or her message to the needs and responses of the receiver to feel involved in the communication, thus makes the receiver more likely to accept the message. "It is there to make the process of transmitting messages more efficient" (1991, 22).

The second group in communication studies sees communication as the creation and exchange of meanings .As stated by Fiske (1990) "its main concern is how messages or texts interact with people in order to produce meaning". According to Fiske, the main concern of this group is the function of text in our culture. "It uses terms like signification, and does not consider misunderstandings to be necessarily evidence of communication failure-they may result from cultural differences between sender and receiver. The main method of study is semiotics (the science of signs and meanings)" (Fiske 1990, 2).

According to Tomaselli (1995), semiotics is a study of how meaning occurs in language, pictures, performance and other forms of expression. The method incorporates not only how things come to mean, but also how prevailing meanings are encountered between individuals, groups and classes and their respective cosmologies and conditions of existence.

As mentioned earlier, the C-M-R models view communication as the transfer of message from A to point B. However, semiotics sees communication takes place after the creation of a message using signs (Fiske, 1990). A sign could be a word, picture, gesture etcetera. If a message is sent from person A to B, person B will try to create meaning from the message which meaning was intended by person A. In order for this process to be possible, the two have to share the same conventions and use the same sign systems. The meanings of A and B will more or less become approximate (Methembu, 1995).

If a professional creates message to a non-professional, the probability is that the conventions s/he uses are different from those of the receivers of the message. Such a situation might occur from the fact that the professional might not be aware of certain codes that identify with that particular audience.

This study therefore, seeks to explain that health information campaigns that are structured in a linear fashion, meaning that there is a transfer of messages from source to receiver; the message could in the process be affected by noise. Noise could be anything, which affects the message from the source to receiver. Therefore, to change the linear type of communication, there is a need to change formulation of these messages using the two-way mode of communication. Thus, results effective communication. Scholars that consider communication as meaning generation believe that people's cognition and retention ability contributes for effective communication.

2.1.1 Cognition and Retention

Cognition is an essential feature of semiotics. Through cognition people create meaning from observation. “It is through the senses that we interact with, and learn about, the world around us” Walker and Chaplin (1997, 19). In particular, some people remember better what they see rather than what they hear, and “if there is emotion involved, the memory is enhanced even more” Swetmon (1998, 7). If memory is enhanced, knowledge can be preserved. Supporting this concept other scholars like Morgan and Welton say that learning is believed to occur once cognitive processing of knowledge has taken place (Morgan and Welton, 1992). A person’s learning style is made up of combination of how he or she perceives, organizes and processes information (DePorter, 1992).

It is also known that individuals have different sensory preferences or cognitive styles, and that learning is more effective when multiple sensory channels are involved (Kearnsley, 2000). DePorter (1992) identifies these differences in learning styles as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (V-A-K). Specifically, visual people learn through what they see, auditory people learn from what they hear, and kinesthetic learn from movement and touch. DePorter goes on to say that, ‘although each of us learns in all three of these modalities to some degree, most people prefer one over the other two’ (1992, 112).

“When there is a mismatch between cognitive style and the mode of presentation, it is argued that performance is deemed to be reduced” McKay (1999, 324). One of the most basic problems, as DePorter (1992) identifies, “many people don’t even realize they are favoring one way or the other, because nothing external tells them they’re any different from anyone else” (1999, 114). As a result, many people

struggle with print materials provided by many publishers. Instructional designers are supposed to give great credibility to this area of sensory preference. Some people especially those who are not well read or who live in an environment where reading culture is not commonly practiced are therefore less likely to comprehend messages presented by the more usual, text based method.

2.1.2 Analogy, Metaphor and Metonym

Like cognition, emphasis is not so much on communication as a process but on communication as a generation of meaning. Allowing people to create meaning from observations is an essential feature of cognition, and analogy is one of the most fundamental aspects of human cognition (Messaris, cited in Flood, 1997). Viewers respond to the image automatically parallel to their real-world experience. Meaning is given to an image as a viewer interacts with it. “The receiver of the message is not passive but rather involved in the production of meaning. The reader helps to create the meaning of the text by bringing to it his experience, attitudes and emotions” (Fiske (1990, 43).

Images can also be used to exemplify abstract concepts to stir emotion. Morgan and Welton (1992, 109) note that

you cannot make a picture of the feeling ‘comfort’ but, ‘you can make a list of the objects which produce that sensation: fire, slippers, armchair, and so on’. By doing this you are using ‘metonymy’ or using the attribute of something to convey meaning, rather than trying to represent the thing itself. It may also be used to represent a cause by using an object to represent the person or organization.

Similar to the use of metonymy is the use of metaphor. Morgan and Welton (1992) describe the Metaphor as “the use of a physical object to represent an abstract idea or emotion. This depends upon a conventional link between the connotations of the object and those of the idea” (1992, 105). According to Heath (2000,122) “what amounts to visual perception carries meaning because the imagistic character of neural activity manages the link up with stored experience that gives coherence to primary sensory images” .

Thus images can be used to show abstract ideas only by showing the effects of the idea. For instance, being unemployed is not something that can be portrayed directly, but a photograph of a person looking miserable and idle, evidenced in their posture, along with appropriate facial expression and dress, can signify the economic condition which produced it (Morgan and Welton, 1992). Heath adds that, “simply put, it would seem that seeing and attending to specific features within images can engage the learner in recalling information that has been stored through prior experience and can now be articulated, if need be verbally (Heath 2000). Thus, Junks (1995) believes the manner in which the concept of an idea is understood “is deeply bound up with the issue of appearance, of picture, and of image”. As the Austrian-British philosopher Wittgenstein (cited in Jenks1995, 1) declared, “a picture is a fact and a logical picture of facts is a thought”.

It is therefore possible for communication educators to respect the relation between society’s visual practice and its visual culture (Jenks, 1995). Focusing on the needs of audience and facilitating the best possible message transmitting method should lead, to greater audience satisfaction and possibly even better message transmission. To conclude, it is suggested by the above-mentioned scholars, that the opportunity to facilitate message transmission by using the tools of analogy, metonym and metaphor should not be ignored.

2.2 Visual Culture and Communicating with Image

The notion of communicating with images is not a new phenomenon. Early mankind discovered the ability of making pictures, a method of visual awareness through symbolization, which differs from any other symbolic method that is known (International Visual Literacy Association, 2001). The earliest illustrated posters have similarity with the high-tech Internet of today. Undoubtedly, society has advanced, and come up with sophisticated communication devices, like newspapers, television and computer networks. Both communication devices are designed to catch the attention of the viewer and communicate messages quickly with limited text and strong graphics (Helfand cited in Boyle, 1990). Visual mediums and genres are becoming increasingly popular at the expense of written word (Shirato and Yell, 1996).

The concept of communicating with images is familiar to message designers. Griffin and Schwartz, cited in Heath (1997, 40) state “by the mid-1980s the notion that images are more potent than words, and that given a lack of congruence between visual and verbal information the visual will win out, had been repeated often enough to become accepted wisdom”. Clear pictures increase the target audience’s level of understanding of the issue presented, and support the presenter’s message by clarifying points, more over with pictures, the ideas presented are both words plus images not only words (Heath, 1997). The use of visual aids guide people, by illustrating and emphasizing ideas more effectively than words alone (Andreas, 1974).

Where it may appear therefore that people living in a developing countries are more dominated by illiteracy than those living in the western world where visual culture is highly dominating. (Schirato and Yell, 1995). Transmitting messages

using visual images is advantageous not only for illiteracy-dominated culture but also for young people who are not well read and who prefer visuals than texts. Griffin and Schwartz (1995,41) say that, “while young people today maybe less inclined to read and less verbally literate than the previous generations, it has become a cliché that they are more visually facile and skilled. This increased visual literacy is attributed to children’s copious exposure to and experience with television, video games, and computers”.

The most important aspect here for message designers and educators is to present visual materials in a way that promote young and low literate people to retain information that contributes for satisfactory message in an illiteracy dominant culture (Sankey, 2000). Therefore, the way in which people approach the visual medium will need to be considered, particularly among communication designers. Communication designers need to review their approach to the design of visual materials, particularly materials designed for society where reading culture is not widely practiced.

“Although the book is likely to remain a major instrument of education and knowledge transfer for generations to come, technology based on visual images will provide information that print media cannot deliver” Rogalin cited in Flood (1997,866). It can be said therefore that huge numbers of visual media have gained credibility for message transmission .As indicated by Schirato and Yell (1996, 209), “As a preferred means of communication, they can produce reality in an objective way”. In particular this replica of reality can give support to cognitive processing, for awareness creation and the creation of knowledge that promotes behavior change. Developing a refined understanding of the nature of visual communication is therefore essential to critical media consumption and in the design of meaningful visual materials.

2.2.1 Posters and Billboards in Promoting Health Message

Among the visual images, posters and billboards are utilized to transfer health messages. Like advertisements for consumer goods, health posters play on emotions of their target audiences to motivate them in to actions. “When we view these posters, we are educated in the potential for action-which is what advertising does best, but little else” Gilman cited in Boyle (2003, 2). The relationship between health and advertising ran in both directions. As asserted by Bundesen, the president of the American Public Health Association, cited in Colgrove (2004, 507) “health is a saleable commodity, a desire for good health must be aroused, stimulated by knowledge of its value and means of attainment. Then the health salesman must come in”.

By combining images and text, public health posters have included the techniques of advertising to sell ‘health’ as a precious commodity. Similarly Colgrove(2004,506) says “health education was clearly linked to notions of commerce and sales .The emergence of health education was fed by the rise of consumerism, as health professionals self-consciously borrowed the new techniques of advertising that were remaking the American landscape”.

Drawing on the success of posters as advertising tools, public health educators began to use them in educational campaigns during the years of the First World War. According to Brandt (1983) the campaign against venereal diseases, one of the highest-profile public health efforts in the years during and after World War I, featured the latest persuasive techniques such as posters and films. For centuries, epidemics of smallpox, plague, tyhus, and cholera had encouraged to respond to measures designed to inform and educate citizens about health hazards (Boyle, 2003).

Toon (1940) emphasized that the new direction toward fighting illness started to take shape in the late nineteenth century in campaigns against tuberculosis. Maternal and child health were one of the principal areas in which the new educational methods were applied. According to Meckel (1990), public health officials sought to reform the practice of mothers—especially poor and immigrant ones. Due to technological changes in printing and photographic reproduction and the mass distribution of commodities, new forms of persuasion entered into all areas of daily life. New ways of shaping attitudes and behavior change in a form of colorfully illustrated advertisements in newspapers, magazines, and store window displays, showed up. Health education and public health professionals were quick to see the potential of these methods and adopt their use (Moree, cited in Colgrove, 2004).

The use of advertising in the service of good health was rooted in health professionals embracing the new methods of persuasion. Persuasion was felt to be a source of behavior change than using force. As written by New York State Health Commissioner Matthias Nicoll (cited in Colgrove 2004, 509) “Persuasion is a slow process. Its results are seldom spectacular but they are certain and durable, accomplishing far more among average human beings”.

However, even supporters of health education agreed that the effect of mass advertising often proved to be temporary that requires constant reinforcement that was costly and time consuming. But these efforts were seen as a worthwhile investment that would yield lasting value, especially as the principal sources of morbidity and mortality changed over the course of century from acute infectious threats to chronic “lifestyle” conditions less amenable to the coercive interventions of the early days of public health (Colgrove, 1990).

2.3 Steps in Designing Health Posters and Billboards

Most scholars believe in the importance of well-designed health posters, which involve the participation of target audience. Such posters, most likely transmit message effectively. If time is spent planning the design of visual ads, they effectively transmit message (Piotrow et al., 1997). Mody (1991) suggests helpful steps for a production team, to put the audience in the director's chair. Step number one is to learn everything about the topic. The topic may have been selected by a foreign funding agency, so it is advised that the production team is supposed to make sure to check their facts so not to mislead and misinform the target audience. Mody (1991, 18) also indicates that the major contribution of government media producers assigned to the sectors of agriculture, health, or education would be to initiate discussion among the community to verify whether the goals they are assigned are compatible with community needs. She further explains "conducting consumer research before developing ads helps for effective communication through the mass media".

The next step is to observe the life style of the target audience to help the production team decide what to communicate. The media the team select, the words, gestures, characters and settings they choose, and whether they treat the topic in serious, comical or dramatic form, will be determined by the age, sex, race, occupation, education, economic class and religions of the target audience.

Dialogue with the audience on what each segment already knows, feel, and do on the topic is vital. A smart communication design team will exploit what works locally and what is familiar to the community, rather than introducing alien concepts. Objectives on what audience impact to use is recommend to be written to measure whether communication has been achieved

It is the responsibility of the production team to choose channels to reach the objective the team has set. Balt (2001) suggests for development communicators to 'repackage' information in forms that are clear to target audience, in order for audience to adapt it to their understanding. She also states that producing materials in the relevant local language is advised to be given special attention. According to Piotrow et al., (1997) often posters are printed in the language of government, or in English as well as the local language. They proposed the design to be always clear so that they will transmit clear message for those who couldn't read or write.

“The contribution of local artists and performers in the production and use of traditional media guarantees respect for traditional values, symbols and realities and at the same time ensures that such media production appeal to rural audiences” (Balt, 2001,23). Concerning media production in an understandable and attractive manner, messages should be targeted to a specific group, and focused on a specific problem, action -oriented, simple and to the point, appropriate to the target group and the Obstacles they face. (Mody, 1991)

The other step is to design a creative-persuasive strategy to package the meaning the team wants to share. At the same time specifications are recommended to be written for every message, describing its goal, content, and recommended format. What these messages will achieve, what content will go in to, how this content will be packaged to ensure audience attention and comprehension are better to be considered.

One of the most important steps is pre-testing. Pre-testing sample helps the audience to find out whether the chosen approach is working. The purpose is how well the production performs with this audience on criteria such as attention,

comprehension, novelty, utility and credibility, before mass production. According to Mody (2004,13), it is also vital to pre-test draft messages on the audience, before the messages are produced in final form for distribution. According to Anyaegbunam et al., “Pre-testing usually helps to verify the correctness and effectiveness of the material” . Correction is vital after pre-testing to avoid confusion and misinterpretations. In supporting this view Piotrow et al., (1997, 25) state “messages could be based on information achieved from audience members and pre-tested with them to confirm they were perfectly designed”.

Pre-testing helps to find out whether the messages are understandable, culturally acceptable and appropriate, or relevant to the target group .It also helps to avoid costly mistakes by organizations .If messages are pre-tested the organizations can tell that every one understands and likes the message, so that the message will be completed and distributed. After this processes it is essential to modify the message design according to pre-test finding. Piotrow et al., (1997) recommend the importance of careful planning and pre-testing the initial design of posters.

Then the team can proceed with final production test of the message on a sample of the audience. The audience may state that they do not like the title of the program, the faces of the characters, or the sets chosen. After messages have been tested and finalized, the next step as mentioned in Starrs and Rizzuto (1995, 71) is the production and distribution to target groups. It requires Careful planning to confirm that the message reaches the right people at the right time. The team must determine whether the technological delivery system of the mass media is carrying the message to its intended audiences or not. Situations where they have a good chance of being read, heard, or observed, must be considered. Monitoring physical exposure, attention, and implementation levels after message distribution

begins is vital as well as evaluation of the message. “This helps to learn whether the message is achieving its knowledge, and goals” (Mody 1991, 55-63).

Starrs and Rizzuto(1995, 71) propose that the right place for posters and billboards is to post them where many people will see them, such as markets, food stalls, restaurants, bus stops, churches, banks, health centers, and family planning clinics. If posters are placed in the open, they are supposed to be protected from wind, and sun. “Remember posters do not do any good sitting on a shelf. If materials are distributed to health centers or other places, check to make sure they are put up in the proper place”.

“Only a participatory process can lead to a participatory system. Hence, audience participation -based approach is recommended for message design in support of national transformation into a self-sustaining, participatory community decision-making system” Mody (1991, 118).

CHAPTER THREE

3. Methodology

3.1. The study area

The study area, United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) is selected for the following reasons:

- The fact that it has the global authority to influence decision-makers, and the variety of partners at grassroots level to turn the most innovative ideas into reality.
- . The fact that it works to assure equality for those who are discriminated against, girls and women in particular and it works to hold everyone accountable to the promises made for children.
- The fact that UNICEF is engaged in development programs to bring about awareness and change in behavior in the society.
- Personal enthusiasm and interest on the part of the researcher are among the major reasons.

3.2. Data Sources and Instruments

The study is based on primary data .The instruments employed for data collection are in-depth interview, questionnaire, and Focus Group Discussion [FGD] through which variables that tap important domains believed to be important predictors of the event of interest are gathered.

3.3 Study Design

The aim of this research is to examine the effectiveness of UNICEF's billboards in creating awareness and in promoting behavior change. For this study, both

qualitative and quantitative approaches are used .By employing quantitative data analysis; simple statistics like frequency distribution is used. Percentages are rounded. Qualitative research examines the complex occurrence experienced by the participants by observing people's action in a natural setting (Wiersma, 1995).Wiersma further explains that “qualitative research usually gathers observations, interviews, field data records, questionnaires, transcripts, and so on”. The central method in qualitative research is simply talking and listening to people (Adler and Adler, 1994).

Qualitative information is gathered from the sampled individuals from the study population. Such design provides an analysis of message effectiveness using the visual aids. Thereby a more valid assessment of perception will be gained. Besides, since the samples are the community and health workers, this approach could help to address the possible impact of the various health related messages and information campaigns currently being conducted as part of the community awareness program.

3.4. Sampling Techniques

3.4.1 Sample Size

The total number of samples included in this study is 113 individuals. One hundred twenty questionnaires were distributed only for the community out of which 20 returned. The researcher due to time constraint and for manageability selects this number. For analysis of the questionnaire, the researcher has designed different categories. The researcher based on source-message-channel-receiver-feedback identified categories. Two graduate students coded the variables accordingly. Then coders achieved complete agreement on each variable. Interview is conducted with UNICEF's communication planners and program officers, while focus group discussion is made among health workers in Family

Health International (FHI). “Focus group responses are often more complete and less inhibited than those from individual interviews. One respondent’s remark tends to stimulate others to pursue lines of thinking that might not have been brought out an individual situation” Wimmer and Dominick (1983, 146)

3.4.2 Sample Selection

In this study for selecting cases (the target audience), simple random sampling technique was chosen. The coders distributed the questionnaire randomly to people around their neighborhood. These people are found where they are at a convenient time and then selected right there.

The basic reason for choosing this technique is that Random sampling is a set of items that have been drawn from a population in such a way that each time an item was selected, every time in the population had an equal opportunity to appear in the sample (Hoffman, 2002). If a researcher is collecting data on a large group of people (called a "population"), he/she might want to minimize the impact that the survey will have on the group that the researcher is surveying.

It is often not necessary to survey the entire population. Instead, the researcher can select a random sample of people from the population and survey just them. The researcher can then draw conclusions about how the entire population would respond based on the responses from this randomly selected group of people (Hoffman, 2002). In terms of the community, the researcher needs to give some chance for each element in the population of being selected and to avoid bias regarding whom to be included in the survey. This sampling method also helps the researcher to get variety of responses based on difference on age, gender, literacy level, etc.

However, while conducting interviews with program officers and health workers purposive sampling technique is employed through which the researcher chose these samples with an underlying theme.

3.5 Background Characteristics of Target Audiences

The target populations of this study include the target audiences (youth, senior people, elders) ranging from the age of 17-56. Some of them are selected from places where they could have easy access to UNICEF's billboards in thinking of their familiarity in terms of their closeness to the nearby billboards. The others are selected from organizations like Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Ethiopian Airline (EAL), and Students from Addis Ababa University and people from different lifestyles. The researcher selects people in ECA and in EAL because these people are mostly cosmopolitan and have international exposure. Moreover UNICEF's program officers and health workers from Family Health International (FHI) were included in the study. This was because the researcher believes that health workers have extensive knowledge on health message preparation. Program Officers in UNICEF were included because they are the one who design the message and work with the community.

3.6. Data Collection and Processing

3.6.1 Questionnaire development

For developing questionnaire for the study, model questionnaires with standardized format are reviewed. After making sure that each vital variable identified from reviewed literature were built-in, the questionnaire are developed both in Amharic and in English format.

The researcher uses both open-ended and close-ended questionnaire. The close-ended ones require respondents to specify the extent of their agreement to a particular statement. The open-ended ones are used to gather attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and wider views of the respondent.

The questionnaire is distributed to the target audiences to survey their perceptions towards the billboards and to find out whether it has an impact on the life of the target audiences. Moreover it is intended to see if the messages portrayed by the posters are parallel to the vital needs of the community and at the same time, to assess the designing process as per the audiences' level of understanding.

3.6.2 Interview

Interviews allow the researcher to capture the perspectives of project participants, staff, and others associated with the project. The use of interviews as a data collection method begins with the assumption that the participants' perspectives are meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit, and that their perspectives affect the success of the project. (Mohoney cited in Frechtling and Westat, 1997).

In depth interview is conducted with UNICEF's program communication unit in which according to Mohoney, the interviewer does not follow a rigid form, where he/she seeks to encourage free and open response from the respondents, and also capture respondents' perceptions in their own words, a very desirable strategy in qualitative data collection. This allows the researcher to present the meaningfulness of the experience from the respondent's perspective (Mohoney cited in Frechtling and Westat, 1997). Such interviews elicit rich, detailed material that can be used in analysis. They are best conducted face-to-face, although in some situations telephone interviewing can be successful (Lofland and Lofland, 1995).

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with some of the participants because interview is known to be a very good way of accessing peoples' perceptions (Wiersma, 1995). Some factors not mentioned by the participants in the questioner, like personalized responses, are obtained by conducting semi-structured interviews. Interviews are used to seek supplementary information that cannot be gathered through the questionnaires. The interviews are conducted with one person at a time. The interview is informal, because the researcher wants the people to discuss their opinion freely and in an open manner. Some of the interviews are fairly structured in order to get the specific information that the researcher was looking for and to keep the interviewees from getting out of line.

The interview made with UNICEF's Communication Unit is meant to obtain information about the participatory nature of the posters and billboards in the production and monitoring process. Further, to know if their message transmitted is appropriate according to audience's level of understanding. In the case of health workers in FHI the group discussion is intended to learn the procedures of message designing implemented in their organization and above all to know their attitude towards UNICEF's billboards.

The study is analyzed using qualitative and quantitative data analysis. In other words, the results gained through questioner, and interviews are analyzed quantitatively. The results are categorized into appropriate categories for analysis using cross tabulations. Cross tabulation helps the researcher to analyze and address the research questions and measure possible association with the categories of age group, and literacy level.

3.7. Background Characteristics of the Study

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was created by the General Assembly during its first session, in 1946. In 1950, UNICEF co-operates with developing countries in their efforts to protect their children and to enable them to develop their full potential. This co-operation takes place within the context of national development efforts and has its goal the realization for every child of the opportunity to enjoy the basic rights and privileges embodied in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the general Assembly in 1959, and to contribute to their country's progress and well-being.

UNICEF co-operates with developing countries in several ways

- It assists in the planning and extension of services benefiting children, in consultation with the countries concerned, and in the exchange of experience between countries.
- It provides funds to strengthen the training and orientation of national personnel, including health and sanitation: workers, teachers, nutritionists and child-welfare specialist, and
- It delivers technical supplies, equipment and other aids, ranging from paper and textbooks to equipment and medicines for health clinics to pipes and pumps bringing clean water to villages.

Under its Basic Services strategy, adopted in 1976, UNICEF assists Governments to plan, develop and extend-in both rural and urban environments-low-cost community-based services in the interrelated fields of maternal and child health, applied nutrition, clean water and sanitation, formal and non-formal education, responsible parenthood and supporting services for women and girls.

Particular progress has been made in recent years in UNICEF program to bring about a virtual revolution in child survival and child development at low cost and in a relatively short time, emphasizing immunization, breast-feeding, growth monitoring and a simple oral dehydration method. A current major goal is universal child immunization against vaccine-preventable diseases by 1990.

There has been a concerted effort to create awareness and to stimulate behavior change among the majority of the population. This has been done through interpersonal channels, mass media and group drama. UNICEF provides posters and billboards and uses advertisements on municipal poster sites. These Posters and billboards are being used in the fight against HIV/AIDS, in promoting Girls education, and in protection of orphan and vulnerable children. This is due to the ability of these tools in reaching large audience. (United Nation, 1987)

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Analyses and Interpretation of Data

The researcher's main research question is to examine audience's response towards UNICEF's billboards. Based on this, this chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire and interview obtained from respondents. The questions are arranged following the steps in communication process: source, message, channel, receiver and feedback. The researcher, in order to tackle questions that would supposedly be helpful concerning effectiveness of message implemented these steps. The data collected through the interview is also analyzed and interpreted together with the questionnaires.

The audiences were asked to respond to the following questions based on Bowers's framework on Public Awareness Posters (Boweres, 1981) and Mody's (1991) questionnaire design concerning audience analysis towards effectiveness of billboards.

- Do you find the message to be clear?
- The relation of caption with the image presented.
- Importance of message in relation to societal needs.
- Can the billboards be used as support materials?
- Is the placement of the billboards appropriate?
- Are the billboards attractive?
- Are you provoked by the message?

The findings of the study are presented below as the data were collected from different sources namely, the target audience, Program Officers in UNICEF, and Health Workers in Family Health International (FHI). The first part deals with the

results obtained from the target audiences. The response given by the target audience is presented first due to the fact that the major concern of the research deals with the perception of the target audience who is the main focus of the research. The second part deals with the result of focus group discussion conducted among health workers in Family Health International, and interview obtained from program officers in UNICEF. The last part deals with general discussion on the findings of the results.

4.1.1 Analysis and Interpretations of audience response.

The table below shows the educational level of the audiences and their channel of preferences. Here educational level is tackled because the researcher thinks that people tend to use certain communication channel based on their educational level, most well read people prefer radio or newspaper rather than audio visual channel. As stated in the literature review, people who do not read and write well prefer visual images. “The better educated tended to use the print media: those with less education were inclined towards the electronic and visual media” Fiske (1990, 19).

The researcher presents the following table that illustrates audience channel preference. Through this table one comes to find out which medium of communication is preferred by the community for the purpose of creating awareness and promoting behavior change.

4.1.1 Differences in Literacy Level of the Audiences and their Channel of Preference

EDUCATION * PREFERABIL CHANNEL Crosstabulation

			PREFERABIL CHANNEL		Total
			TV	RADIO	
EDUCATION	BA	Count	31	12	43
		% within EDUCATION	72.1%	27.9%	100.0%
	MA	Count	17	5	22
		% within EDUCATION	77.3%	22.7%	100.0%
	PHD	Count	3	2	5
		% within EDUCATION	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
	DIPLOM	Count	2	13	15
		% within EDUCATION	13.3%	86.7%	100.0%
	12 and below	Count	5	10	15
		% within EDUCATION	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	58	42	100
		% within EDUCATION	58.0%	42.0%	100.0%

4.1.2 Difference in Literacy level of Audiences and Their Viewpoint towards Billboards

EDUCATION * SUPPORT MATERIAL Crosstabulation

			SUPPORT MATERIAL		Total
			YES	NO	
EDUCATION	BA	Count	22	21	43
		% within EDUCATION	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%
	MA	Count	11	11	22
		% within EDUCATION	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	PHD	Count	5		5
		% within EDUCATION	100.0%		100.0%
	DIPLOM	Count	4	11	15
		% within EDUCATION	26.7%	73.3%	100.0%
	12 and below	Count	1	14	15
		% within EDUCATION	6.7%	93.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	43	57	100
		% within EDUCATION	43.0%	57.0%	100.0%

As it is depicted in table 4.1.1, from BA holders, 72 % prefer television, where else 28% prefer Radio as channel of communication. On the other hand, from those grouped as (12 and below) 67%, prefer radio. No figure is found in preference of billboards as channel of communication. As from the questionnaire gathered, most of the respondents do not have access to TV Set. Thus prefer radio. It seems that the respondents unlikely consider the billboards, as information channels .The reason for this will be explored in the following section.

On the other hand table 4.1.2 depicts the attitude of the respondents towards UNICEF billboards. Among BA holders 51% of the respondents consider these tools as support materials. Among those grouped as (12 and below) only 7% consider the billboards, as support materials while 93% of them do not. As from this figure it is obvious that almost half of those who have access to TV and Radio

consider the billboards as support materials. Their reason is that they already obtain information from TV and the billboards remind them what they already saw from TV programs. In other words, they reinforce their well-established beliefs gained from the broadcast media.

To the contrary, the majority of the respondents grouped as 12 and below rarely notice the presence of the billboards. According to the majority's response, they are either busy with their mundane activities or they are not used to thinking of pictures as a way of expressing ideas. Some of the respondents do not seem to pay attention to the materials or even if they do, the materials are not appealing enough to take their attention away.

In general, according to the information indicated in the above two tables, there is a variation in the respondents' literacy level and their preference of communication channel. In other words those with high literacy level prefer television and consider the billboards as support materials to reinforce what they get from TV and radio while those with low literacy level use radio as main channels of communication and do not consider the visual material as an option or as an independent informational channel. Therefore UNICEF's billboards are considered as support materials among 43% of the society. This may be due to the fact that the billboards are not presented in eye-catching manner and also some audiences are not used to the culture of communicating through visual images.

Table 4.1.3 Placement of Billboards

EDUCATION * PLACEMENT OF BILLBOARDS Crosstabulation

			PLACEMENT OF BILLBOARDS		Total
			APPROPRIATE	NOT APPROPRIATE	
EDUCATION	BA	Count	30	13	43
		% within EDUCATION	69.8%	30.2%	100.0%
	MA	Count	16	6	22
		% within EDUCATION	72.7%	27.3%	100.0%
	PHD	Count	4	1	5
		% within EDUCATION	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	DIPLOM	Count	9	6	15
		% within EDUCATION	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
	12 and below	Count	6	9	15
		% within EDUCATION	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	65	35	100	
	% within EDUCATION	65.0%	35.0%	100.0%	

Table 4.1.3 shows that among 22 MA holders 16(73%) said the placement of the billboards is appropriate thus easily noticed. Among the 15 respondents (12 and below) 6(40%) consider the placement as appropriate while 9(60%) disagree. There fore, the number of the respondents who seem to be satisfied with the placement of the billboards exceeds the number of those who consider the placement to be inappropriate. The reason mentioned by the latter ones is that, they find the billboards mostly erected together with other commercial billboards, thus the materials may not be noticed. According to a report on National Health Communication (2005, 15) “one of the characteristics of effective message is its capacity to stand out and get noticed above anything else”. It seems that audiences fail to notice some UNICEF’s billboards.

4.1.4 Audience Opinion towards the Presentation of the Billboards.

4.1.4.1 Percentage distribution on education versus attractiveness

EDUCATION * attractive Crosstabulation

			attractive		Total
			yes	no	
EDUCATION	BA	Count	26	17	43
		% within EDUCATION	60.5%	39.5%	100.0%
	MA	Count	18	4	22
		% within EDUCATION	81.8%	18.2%	100.0%
	PHD	Count	3	2	5
		% within EDUCATION	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
	DIPLOM	Count	9	6	15
		% within EDUCATION	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
	12 and below	Count	10	5	15
		% within EDUCATION	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	66	34	100
		% within EDUCATION	66.0%	34.0%	100.0%

4.1.4.2 Percentage distribution on education versus provocative

EDUCATION * PROVOCATIVE Crosstabulation

			PROVOCATIVE		Total
			YES	NO	
EDUCATION	BA	Count	9	34	43
		% within EDUCATION	20.9%	79.1%	100.0%
	MA	Count	5	17	22
		% within EDUCATION	22.7%	77.3%	100.0%
	PHD	Count	2	3	5
		% within EDUCATION	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
	DIPLOM	Count	5	10	15
		% within EDUCATION	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	12 and below	Count		15	15
		% within EDUCATION		100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	21	79	100
		% within EDUCATION	21.0%	79.0%	100.0%

The above tables show the different response towards the presentation of UNICEF’s billboards. In table 4.1.4.1, among 43 BA holders, 26(60%) respond that the billboards are attractive. In table 4.1.4.2, among BA holders, 9(21%) respond that the materials are provocative while 79% consider them not provocative. On the other hand, in table 4.1.4.1, from those grouped as (12 and below), 10(67%) consider them as attractive. In table 4.1.4.2, among the (12 and below) groups, all 100% state they are not provocative at all .In other words from both groups the majority consider the billboards as attractive but not provocative. This similar response among the respondents tells that the billboards neither provoke the viewers to create awareness nor do they promote behavior change. There fore as can be seen in table 4.1.4.1 the absolute majority of the community is not provoked by the message transmitted through these billboards. Thus, it is highly unlikely to create a stimulating environment to adopt the proposed behavior or the message conveyed through the billboards.

Table 4.1.5 Education level and Audience response on message clarity

EDUCATION * MESSAGE CLARITY Crosstabulation

			MESSAGE CLARITY		Total
			YES	NO	
EDUCATION	BA	Count	18	25	43
		% within EDUCATION	41.9%	58.1%	100.0%
	MA	Count	11	11	22
		% within EDUCATION	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	PHD	Count	5		5
		% within EDUCATION	100.0%		100.0%
	DIPLOM	Count	3	12	15
		% within EDUCATION	20.0%	80.0%	100.0%
	12 and below	Count	1	14	15
		% within EDUCATION	6.7%	93.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	38	62	100
		% within EDUCATION	38.0%	62.0%	100.0%

As it is illustrated on Table 4.1.5 the message does not seem to be clear for the majority of the respondents. Among BA holders 25(58%) find the message confusing, similarly the result seems to be the same among 14(93%) of those grouped as (12 and below).

The above table shows that the message is unclear for all the respondents. The findings show that the message is not designed in a transparent way where the respondents could easily grasp the essence. Thus, the respondents seem to have less opportunity to understand what the message is all about. As a result, their access to information through this channel is relatively low.

4.1.6. Relation of Image with Caption (text)

MESSAGE CLARITY * RELATION OF IMAGE WITH CAPTION Crosstabulation

			RELATION OF IMAGE WITH CAPTION		Total
			GOOD	POOR	
MESSAGE CLARITY	YES	Count	25	13	38
		% within MESSAGE CLARITY	65.8%	34.2%	100.0%
	NO	Count	1	61	62
		% within MESSAGE CLARITY	1.6%	98.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	26	74	100
		% within MESSAGE CLARITY	26.0%	74.0%	100.0%

In terms of relation of image with text, the result of the findings shows that there is a high variation among the respondents. Out of 100 respondents, 26% consider the text express the image and vice versa while 74% neither find similarity nor relation between the image and the text. Most respondents stated that they have to read the

caption in order to learn what the message tells. They do not find the image to be descriptive on its own.

Table 4.1.7 Picturing Famous Athletes on Billboards.

AGE * FAMOUS ATHLETES Crosstabulation

			FAMOUS ATHLETES		Total
			effective	not effective	
AGE	17-22	Count	5	7	12
		% within AGE	41.7%	58.3%	100.0%
	23-28	Count	9	10	19
		% within AGE	47.4%	52.6%	100.0%
	29-34	Count	9	17	26
		% within AGE	34.6%	65.4%	100.0%
	35-40	Count	5	10	15
		% within AGE	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	41-46	Count	5	10	15
		% within AGE	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	47-52	Count	4	7	11
		% within AGE	36.4%	63.6%	100.0%
	53-57	Count		2	2
		% within AGE		100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	37	63	100
		% within AGE	37.0%	63.0%	100.0%

The researcher combines athletes and billboards due to the fact that most UNICEF's billboards present photographs of famous Ethiopian Athletes. As from the above table, the feedback from the majority of the respondents towards the photographs of famous athletes on UNICEF's billboards seems negative. Especially the majority between the ages of 29-34 does not find this method effective. According to an interview conducted with UNICEF's communication

planners, this is done on the ground that using the photo of the athletes supposedly bring impact on effectiveness of the message. According to the research findings, the majority like the fact that the message is simple –one image at a time. But the image of the athletes is meaningless in relation with the message transmitted.

The audiences see these billboards and relate them with certain sport events. In fact, this results in misinterpretation of message. This is due to the fact that, they couldn't find any relation between the message transmitted and the image on the billboards that transmit the message. They relate the famous runners with sport related activities.

As a matter of fact, using images of famous athletes is positively viewed by some of the respondents. Only 37% of the respondents positively view the athletes' photo as contributing for effective message. They negotiate with the idea that these famous runners contribute in highlighting the message to make it effective. According to the findings, this is because most people adore the athletes. They have a tendency to get credibility and to hold attention of the viewer. Such kind of poster gives the perception of what the image is rather than saying more about the issues behind the image. In other words the posters with photo of the famous athletes are mostly perceived by viewers to transmit messages related to the athlete's success rather than the intended message the posters are supposed to transmit. In addition, some people say that it doesn't always work using the face of these famous athletes because people will get bored to see the same face everywhere they go. Famous people are watched in TV and/or on newspapers front page. They conclude that the message has more tendencies to be addressed to the government rather than the society (public). The picture should show some practical action rather than words. With out reading the caption people need to understand the message from the graphics.

Thus, applying photos of famous people with no relation to the message is unlikely to convince people. According to the result of the interview, people prefer to see images that are engaged in helping the poor and support orphans than any famous athlete. It is recommended by most of the respondents for these sport figures to create a scene where they are having some relation with the message transferred. Some of the suggestions by the respondents to improve the pictures are like for example; the photo of the sport figure surround by children around him/her or a photo of some renowned personality also known for taking care of kids and orphans would bring more credibility towards the message.

Table 4.1.8 Audience response on awareness creation and stimulation of dialogue through UNICEF’s billboards.

AWARENESS CREATION * STIMULATE DISCUSSION/DIALOGUE Crosstabulation

			STIMULATE DISCUSSION/DIALOGUE		Total
			YES	NO	
AWARENESS CREATION	YES	Count % within AWARENESS CREATION	31 73.8%	11 26.2%	42 100.0%
	NO	Count % within AWARENESS CREATION	6 10.3%	52 89.7%	58 100.0%
Total		Count % within AWARENESS CREATION	37 37.0%	63 63.0%	100 100.0%

As the above table indicates 52(90%) of the respondents state that the billboards unlikely create awareness nor did they stimulate discussion .On the other hand 31(74%) of the respondents state that both awareness and discussion is created by

messages transferred through the billboards.¹¹ (26%) of the respondents stated that the billboards help them to create awareness but not motivate discussion. In general, as from the figures, the billboards unlikely create awareness among the majority of the respondents.

Concerning behavior change, the majority of the respondents state that it is difficult to bring behavior change. It seems that they unlikely consider billboards to bring about behavior change since behavior change does not come over night. “It is a long process”, was a statement by some of the respondents.

Few affirm that they changed their behavior especially towards message transmitted about girls’ education through UNICEF billboards. On the other hand, this view contrasts with most respondents who seem to be against the ‘girl education’ poster. These respondents do not think that the ‘girl education’ poster would apply to city life. This is most likely because the respondents are from urban area of the country. According to them city girls are not denied education. They believe that, the communicator tries to reach audiences that are either changed their behavior or not in a position to changes their behavior.

Almost all respondents agree on one thing .All accept the fact that the message carried by UNICEF’s billboards is important as well as timely. According to Helfand, relevant message is important to the life of the viewer and has the probably to be remembered (Helfand cited in Boyle (2003, 2). The respondents like the fact that the messages refer to real life situations. Overall, what can be realized from such response is that UNICEF identifies the community’s problem before designing the messages (UNICEF’s problem identification is evident).

4.1.2 Focus Group Discussion with Health Workers in Family Health International (FHI)

Focus group discussion is made among seven FHI health workers. This is due to the fact that, the health workers in FHI are involved in health related campaigns and are familiar with production of health related materials including posters and billboards. Focus group discussion is made among this group to discuss ideas in relation to successful communication through visual images. According to their response concerning the process they undergo while message designing, all of them say that their first task is to define their target audience. They need to know their target audience's literacy level, the language they prefer and then they undergo the process of pre-testing on the targets before final production on the appropriateness of the material. They also make a research on audience's preference in channel usage. They make sure if the target audiences are interested to use billboards and posters, whether the message presented on posters are to the target audiences needs and preference.

In describing the process while they design these visual materials they said that they identify group for whom they distribute the material. They prepare distribution checklist, which could be signed by the recipient. Then their staff checks during follow up supervision. They said that this process help them to find out if the message reaches the intended audience. They also conduct post launch assessment to see if the audiences have seen, liked and understood the posters and the billboards. This is their mechanism to find out whether the messages reach the intended audience or not.

All of the health workers consider posters and billboards as important reminders to people. They provide as channels for people to see them repeatedly, especially those who don't have access to any medium. The health workers state that well designed posters and billboards operate as stimulators of discussion and dialogue among people, thus creating demand for further information or services.

Based on the discussion conducted among the health workers of FHI, concerning 'awareness creation through billboards and posters', FHI's posters are not only based on awareness creation but on transmitting message to the target audiences to implement them in their day to day activities. Their objective is not only to create awareness but to provide the solution as well. The health workers recommend posting billboards on places where people could easily access them or come across by chance. They assume that their posters and billboards give chance for those who have problem to get access to mainstream media.

More over, in describing the difference between health posters and commercial posters, the health workers said that, health posters are designed based on the community's identified need unlike commercial posters where the designers impose on the audience to persuade them buy their product. They also note that the clients are the one who determine the design of the material but in commercial ones it is the other way round. According to Wro.Abynesh (Program Coordinator) the purpose of FHI's communication products is to sell their message. She recommends that health message is supposed to be powerful so that it can be sold and creates demand on the client.

An expert from FHI said "posters and billboards are crucial in health communication since they are good reminders of people's day to day activity". He further said, "It doesn't mean that posters create awareness just because they are

posters but their capacity to create awareness depends on the development of appropriate health messages that are powerful enough to capture the heart of people. This is due to the fact that the message is research based”.

While commenting on UNICEF’s billboards and posters, the expert said “as to my understanding they are intended for advocacy purpose not for utilization of the public but for government, decision makers and for donors”. He further said “this is due to the fact that the nature and images of the materials do not mostly relate to our self or the audience” .He also had a chance to collect opinion on UNICEF’s posters from people and most of the respondents like the images but not relate the message to them selves. “Maybe it’s not target specific,” he concludes. When asked to comment on how he identifies UNICEF’s billboards from billboards designed by FHI, he replied, “UNICEF’s billboards are cumbersome, non-compatible width and length and most fall down in some part of the regions”.

The group discussion is concluded after the health workers recommend all the participatory monitoring system in the designing and development of messages that help to find out whether the messages reach the intended audiences or not.

4.2.1 Interview with UNICEF’s Communication Planners and Program Officers

An interview was conducted with six UNICEF’s communication planners and program officers. The researcher selects this figure since the number of experts in UNICEF willing to be interviewed equals to this figure. One of the interview questions was to know if UNICEF gives training to health workers to improve their communication skills. Two of them agree that adequate training is given and also they said that specialist always provide advice in creating message

(communication experts). On the other hand, four of them asserted that the training given is not enough. They also said that UNICEF carries out no involvement of specialist with experience in designing information campaigns.

All communication planners and program officers assert that the message they design is focused on specific problem, simple and to the point. All confirm that they rarely involve target groups while they design posters and billboards. Four of the Program Officers say the target groups do not participate in the decision making process unless occasionally. This shows that the target group is unlikely involved in the decision making process. Community members are supposed to be in charge of the decision and production processes rather than 'professionals' (Servaes, 1996).

According to the interview, the program officer's role in designing posters is highly decisive. Technical experts and communication planner review the materials. Concerning pre-testing of the materials, five of the interviewees respond that they unlikely pre test their materials every time. One interviewee said, no study has been done to know the effectiveness of the posters so it is hard to know whether the messages are accepted, understood, liked by the community and it is hard to know if audiences change their behavior due to the information campaign. Two of the interviewees seem to agree that they sometimes evaluate their materials while four do not. It is advised by Mody to pre-test the initial design on a sample of audience to find out whether the chosen approach is working to know how well the production performs with this audience (Mody, 1991).

In describing the primary beneficiaries the interviewees assert Children up to 24, youth, mothers and the general population to be the primary beneficiaries. All agree that the objective of UNICEF's billboards and posters is to raise awareness that leads to commitment and action.

4.1.4 Discussion

Based on the many feedback gathered through questionnaire, focus group discussion and in-depth interview, the researcher comprehend that, in order to provide information in a way people understand, audience's taste and preference should be assessed. The relevance of the information to the community's needs and concerns should also be put into consideration. In the literature review it is also stated by Wilson (1999) that message that does not recognize the given individual's (receiver's) needs, status, knowledge, and language skills can interfere to effective communication.

According to the research conducted on UNICEF's billboards, almost all of the respondents believe that the many issues (concerning health) mentioned by UNICEF's billboards are vital for the community and they accept the fact that the issues are timely and concern of the society. This shows that UNICEF identifies the society's needs before designing messages. To undergo the process of problem identification is the first procedure in message development. As it is stated in the literature review "conducting consumer research before developing ads helps for effective communication through the mass media" (1991, 18). Before developing any message design one is supposed to start identifying the problem. It seems that UNICEF has succeeded in problem identification.

As from the result of the findings, one can see that problem identification is not the only solution to an end effect. The findings show that the majority of the respondents do not perceive the message appropriately. Most of the respondents even though they consider the billboards as attractive and eye catching, they seem to disagree with the presentation of the images in relation to the text. Most of the respondents could not create coherence between the picture and the message

transferred. As from the findings, UNICEF Billboards though considered attractive and simple to lots of the respondents they tend to fail from transmitting their intended message to the large number of the respondents. Consequently, they fail to provoke people by depicting striking, relevant image that will be imprinted in the audience's mind. This contradicts with Starrs et al., (1995) statement on the literature review that posters need to be descriptive and need to tell their message in a fraction of seconds.

The images and the captions are not combined to present and integrate message. The majority of the respondents state that the images are not elaborative /descriptive unless the texts are read along with them. They suggest the images to be more descriptive and provocative in order for audiences to perceive the message at a glance. The literature also supports their suggestion by emphasizing on designing of posters in a way to catch the attention of the viewer and communicate messages quickly, most often with limited text and strong graphics (Boyle, 2003). According to the research question on effectiveness of UNICEF's billboards in successfully transmitting messages; it is unlikely to say effectiveness has been achieved.

The respondents agree that UNICEF's posters and billboards are the biggest in size compared to other billboards in Addis Ababa. Most of the respondents easily notice them for their big size. They state that the billboards are clear to the viewer at a glance and they usually have one large slogan. This is supported by Mody (1991) to use familiar realistic imagery with fairly large size that could be seen from a distance while designing posters.

Most of respondent seem to be content with the placement of most of the billboards. According to the respondents, the billboards are erected in open spaces

where they can stand out by themselves, without any other commercial billboard outshining them. On the other hand, some do not seem to agree with the placement. They state that, most billboards are not put up in the proper places, but are posted in places where lots of commercial billboards are posted all in one place, thus, passed by without being noticed. Their message cannot bring about the needed behavioral change, not to mention their failure to reach the eye of the audience. According to Sarrs et al., (1995, 38) “messages that are boring will not attract attention and certainly will not persuade any one or anything”.

The other thing observed through the research is that UNICEF rarely pre-tests posters and billboards with the representatives of the target groups. Some are not pre-tested with the intended interaction group; instead they actually go into mass production without verifying the correctness and effectiveness of the health posters.

Had the materials been pre-tested, the message would have been clearer and would have been produced as per audience’s level of understanding and acceptance. It is also stated in the literature review by Anyaegbunam et al., “Pre-testing usually helps to verify the correctness and effectiveness of the material” (2004, 13). As from the findings, it seems that UNICEF rarely undergoes formal evaluation on the material. This is an independent study on how people in the community perceive visual materials.

It seems that the message is not target oriented. To whom the message is addressed to is ambiguous. All of the respondents prefer radio and TV rather than billboards. Some of the messages are not written in the local language. Since few people at the community level can read English, having the message on posters in English limit their effectiveness. Materials that include text, especially people who do not

read very well should use local language with easy to read type (Starrs and Rizzuto 1995).

In general the billboards prepared by UNICEF seem to be vague in determining what their role is in the total campaign strategy. It is unlikely that UNICEF specifies whom these billboards target. Generally it is unlikely that communication is achieved through these billboards. It is indicated by Fiske (1982) that effective communication occurs when the sender and the receiver hold meaning in common.

Societal needs are identified when organizations go in to societal life and discuss their problem. When people start to talk about their problem face-to-face with the concerned development agencies, their problem will be identified by these agencies together with the people. Unfortunately this process of participation in designing messages through billboards does not seem to be put in to consideration by UNICEF. Participatory audience research is an essential pre-requisite for the planning of successful communication strategies (Balit et al., 1999)

All in all the findings tell us that we seem to be far from an increasingly visual modern culture. Concerning this, Schirato and Yell also state that, people living in developing countries are more dominated by illiteracy than those living in the western world where visual culture is highly dominating. (Schirato and Yell, 1995).

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

Having gone through the analysis of the information obtained through questionnaire, in-depth interview and focus group discussion, the researcher has come up with the following findings.

5.1. Summary

Visual images are considered effective in transmitting messages. Among the visual images, posters and billboards play a great role in promoting health related messages. These tools are found to be useful for people who are not well read and for young people who mostly prefer visual than text. Message transmitted visually is useful for society where reading culture is not commonly practiced.

The main objective of the study is to assess the effectiveness of UNICEF's billboards in transmitting health message to the intended audiences. In other words, it is intended to see clarity of message transmitted through UNICEF's billboards. To this effect this study is initiated with the following specific objectives:

- To draw attention to use visual images in health promotion both to aid in creating awareness and to promote behavior change.
- To Assess knowledge, attitude and perception of audience in relation to visual images.
- To assess the nature of poster designing process undertaken by UNICEF: whether the designing process is participatory or not.
- To identify gaps and draw lessons in relation to health posters designing process.

The appropriate sample size is determined and the required samples are selected by simple random sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique is employed to gather information from UNICEF communication officers and FHI health workers.

The data source for this study being primary, the instruments applied for data collections are questionnaire (for the target audiences), in-depth interviews along with focus group discussion - FGD (for FHI health workers). The data is analyzed using a computer program called SPSS.

In summary, the findings of this study suggest the following points:

The findings in this study show unsuccessful message transmission through UNICEF's billboards. According to the results obtained, it appears that there occurs misunderstanding between message transmitted and audience's perception due to inappropriate presentation of the billboards.

Therefore, one of the major issues explored in this study is inadequate designing of visual images with out participation of the target audience in planning, producing, management and evaluation of the message. Message designers /communication planners are found to be the only decision makers in message designing .The un participatory /top-down nature of communication plays a great role in hindering the audiences from being involved in designing process of the messages that is intended to address them.

According to the results of the study, the majority of the respondents find the messages ambiguous .It is observed that most of the respondents are not provoked

by the message. The reason seems to be that the message is neither strong enough and the images are not striking. Hence they fail to create awareness let alone be promoters of behavior change, whereas, the importance of the issue raised through the billboards is found to be true by the majority. UNICEF is doing well in raising the societal issues that is timely. Hence raising only the societal problem but not transmitting messages to create solution is found to be of no avail. Groups with lower educational level percentages show less interest in obtaining information through these visual images. On the other hand, those with high educational level who have access to TV set regard the visual images as support material. This result of the study proves the visual materials fail to transmit messages effectively and the majority does not seem to develop the culture of being informed through visual images.

Further more, communication planners' treatment to the design is found to have an impact on the audience. From most communication planners it is found out the messages are not pre-tested and evaluation and monitoring conducted by them is poor-seemingly. This poor attentions results in top-down information flow on the part of message designers of UNICEF .As a result audiences are made to consume the message which in turn creates room for lack of interest and being refrained from noticing the billboards.

5.2. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that UNICEF's billboards are unlikely to be prepared in a way audiences understand them. On the other hand, it seems like UNICEF's communication planners rarely involve target audiences in the message designing process and are not likely to follow up after the message is produced and distributed. This result of the study, therefore, proves unsuccessful communication flow through UNICEF's billboards.

To sum up the study made to explore UNICEF's billboards and perception level of audience on visual image may be included as follows:

- Communication planners seem to have influence on message designing.
- The audience fails to find the message clear.

From the present study therefore, it is possible to predict that not involving target groups in designing message and not assessing the perception level of audience by communication planners has more effect in failure of message effectiveness. Audiences especially those from low literacy level are disadvantaged from being informed.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings made the following recommendations are forwarded by the researcher as possible solution for the problems being investigated.

- 1) Pre-testing, monitoring and evaluation create understanding of message among target audience and save the company/organization from spending high amount of money.
- 2) Audience participation in any development work increases confidence in the ability of the target audience to understand the messages. Communication planners need to make use of visual images where the audiences participate in designing their own message.
- 3) Captions and images need to create coherence and the pictures just because they are of famous people should not be presented on posters. They should have some relation with the message they transmit.
- 4) Posters should be posted in a strategic and open place where they can be seen by greater number of people.

- 5) Visual images should be familiarized among the community since they are good way of transmitting message.
- 6) In order to create visually literate environment, message designers/communication planners should aim at audience perception behavior and come up with message that is provocative. To this goal message designers should practice various ways of motivating audiences. They have to encourage people who don't have access to broadcast media to take part in message designing process and to know more about these visual aids.
- 7) Designers also have to repeatedly urge the community to get feedback from the posters/to know their feeling by encouraging focus group discussion that help them to develop confidence, while designing the next posters and also encourage them to tell what should be included and what should no be included. Further research should investigate the influence of visual images on low literate part of the community.

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These are samples of UNICEF’s billboards posted in different areas of Addis Ababa with the purpose of girls’ education and vulnerable children.