Ethiopian Dialogue: Merging Theory and Praxis in Journalism Training

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Abstract:

  This paper reports on an End of Project evaluation of a media training campaign that created a supportive social environment for preventing and mitigating the impacts of HIV/AIDS. Internews' approach was to create an enlightened and committed local broadcast community. The Local Voices HIV/AIDS training project enacted a dialogic, language-centric, model for training journalists. The Local Voices project educated hundreds of journalists, produced thousands of stories, and informed hundreds of thousands of people about HIV/AIDS. The essay provides an overview of media development in Ethiopia, reports the results of an end of project evaluation of the Internews Local Voices HIV/AIDS media training from 2005–2010, provides a discussion of the principles of dialogue and how it informed the training and communication practices in Addis Ababa, and evaluates the aspects of the training program that inform other media training and development initiatives.

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Many professional communicators believe that theory and practice are different activities, that theory is some sort of rarified place apart from the world of professionals and everyday citizens. Seeing the two areas merged in a professional context is rare, but this is exactly what the Internews Local Voices project has enacted.

Internews Local Voices is a HIV/AIDS training program, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Local Voices was created to train local journalists how to report on HIV/AIDS.

However, given the low levels of media literacy and professionalisms among Ethiopian journalists and citizens, Local Voices first had to equip journalists with the skills to create compelling and interesting content. The protocol journalism strategies of the past where journalists simply repeated messages provided by governmental or corporate spokespeople is an ineffective journalism strategy and was not likely to result in increased HIV/AIDS literacy. Moreover, in countries like Ethiopia and India where many dialects are spoken, complicated and technical health issues need to be translated into coherent local language in order to resonate with people.

This paper reports on a campaign that sought to create a supportive social environment for preventing and mitigating the impacts of HIV/AIDS through an enlightened and committed local broadcast community. The Local Voices HIV/AIDS training project enacted a dialogic, language-centric, model for training journalists, and, in the process, was able to educate and enlighten hundreds of journalists, tens of thousands of people, and produce thousands of stories.

The essay is divided into four sections, (1) an overview of media development in Ethiopia, (2) the results of an end of project evaluation of the Internews Local Voices HIV/AIDS media training that was conducted in September 2010, (3) a discussion of the principles of dialogue and how it informed the training and communication practices in Addis Ababa, and (4) aspects of the training program that can inform other media training and development initiatives and suggestions for communication professionals in journalism and public relations.

Media Development in Ethiopia: Media and Democratization

In the developed world, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that millions of people still rely on radio, and to a lesser extent local television, for their information about the world. Currently, no national data exists regarding Ethiopian media outlets (although a number of NGOs have conducted media monitoring activities and know something about the kinds of stores reported). Exactly how many are served is difficult to gauge when one considers that many people often listen to the same radio or share a television. Exactly what the demographic and geodemographic profile of listeners consists of is hazy. Internews and other NGOs have conducted surveys and market research but the data are limited.

Ethiopia's GDP is agriculture based and among one of the lowest in the world. Ethiopia ranks 215th out of 230 (CIA World Fact Book, 2011) and the per capita GDP (USD) is only $1,000. According to Internet World Stats, a market research organization, only 0.4% of Ethiopians have Internet access (www.internetworldstats.com/af/et.htm).

In places like Europe and the U.S., access to the Internet is almost universal, with more than 90% of the wealthiest Americans online regularly, and more than 80% of all Americans having online access (www.pewinternet.org/Static-Pages/Trend-

Data/Whos-Online.aspx). In countries like Ethiopia, Access to the Internet is limited to elites—government officials, NGOs and aid organizations, large corporations, etc. Even the elites and more privileged citizens who enjoy access to the Internet and e-mail, suffer from poor performance of local networks. High-speed, broadband access is limited or non-existent.

State controlled, and state influenced media are common in Ethiopia and put pressure on media professionals. Because of low per-capita income (which limits the interest of advertisers), and because of pressure from politicians and governmental officials, Ethiopian media has remained largely undeveloped. No college level journalism training is available in Ethiopia, and graduate level training is available, almost exclusively, to elites and governmental officials. Thus, not only have journalists been unable to obtain basic journalism skills training, they have also been discouraged from experimenting with alternative content formats, and have lacked access to basic, modern, journalism equipment like digital recorders, editing software, or computers.

Until recently, with training initiatives by various NGOs including USAID, Internews, and others, virtually all African journalists practiced protocol journalism (cf., Akinfeleye, 1987, 1988; Taylor 2009), and the state controlled media would frequently be filled with hours-long speeches by governmental officials—something still true to a lesser extent today. Over the last 5–10 years, a number of media training initiatives have resulted in thousands of Ethiopian journalists obtaining training and learning how to write, produce and edit professional media content using techniques like natural sound, narrative, and audience centered reporting.

In practice, citizens require information about the state of their nation and region in order to make well-informed decisions about their future. Part of the picture

of essential information in places like Ethiopia includes information about health and welfare topics like Malaria, HIV/AIDS education, and birth control and family planning. Access to mass media content about public health and other messages enables people to live better lives. Traditionally, such information was presented monologically, with public health officials and reporters reading complicated health statements and providing information of limited quality. Increasingly, however, as a result of more formalized and up-to-date media training, journalists have begun to experiment with new formats and to produce higher quality media content that draws on the experiences of actual citizens, and includes novel approaches like call-in shows, interviews, and natural sound.

In resource poor and newly developing nations like Ethiopia Kenya, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, "national development" often takes precedence over democracy and individual liberties (Taylor & Kent, 2007, 2009). Station managers and owners of media outlets have their positions because of their support and patronage of governmental officials and people in positions of power. Thus, station formats and content while not dictated are often similar and follow from well-known "national development" initiatives. While not anti-democratic per se, a heavy national development agenda often results in practice in disparate publics, and diasporas. Where homogenation is sought, "local voices" are silenced.

Media training and professionalism act as a force to build civil society and democratization. When media professionals receive education and training outside of their employers, they naturally bring those skills and experiences back to the workplace where they share their knowledge with their coworkers. Unfortunately, in nations that do not value public knowledge and journalism skills (an essentially unskilled job now in Ethiopia with journalists coming from all areas) Even when

professionals take their skills elsewhere—from state media or private media organizations to communication agencies, and international and multinational aid organizations—they continue to build society and make their nations more livable places.

Results of Five-Year Internews Local Voices Training

The second section of this essay reports the results of an end of project evaluation of Internews' Local Voices HIV/AIDS media training that was conducted between 2005 and 2010. The purpose of reporting this data is to show that dialogue (discussed below) is a viable model for relationship building and training. Many critiques of dialogue have complained that the approach is unworkable in the real world. The Internews approach uses dialogic principles and takes a relational approach to professional training.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) funded Internews' Local Voices HIV/AIDS training program. Local Voices sought to create a more supportive social environment for preventing and mitigating the impacts of HIV/AIDS through an enlightened and committed local broadcast community. In other words, Local Voices wanted to approach the problem of HIV/AIDS from a relational standpoint rather than the monological orientation of government health information.

One of the project's objective was to strengthen, radio and television media content by increasing the frequency of messages, and by improving the quality of programming on a diversity of topics related to HIV and AIDS. Because of the general lack of professional skills among Ethiopian journalists, Local Voices had to both educate journalists about HIV/AIDS, as well as train journalists how to be more skilled.

Local Voices operated from 2005 to 2010. The first phase of the project was part of a global Local Voices program that included Kenya, Nigeria and India. In 2007, Ethiopia was re-funded under a cooperative agreement with USAID/Ethiopia. The mandate of the Local Voices program involved training practicing journalists, station managers, owners, and administrators, as well as public officials and governmental public relations professionals (Note: there currently exists no independent public relations agencies or professionals in Ethiopia, all titular public relations professionals work for the government or state run agencies like the ministry of heath).

The Local Voices Program was evaluated in August, 2010, during a one week, on the ground visit by a U.S. Communication Professional. While in country, the evaluator observed the everyday practices of the Internews staff, toured the facilities of Addis Ababa University, and met with university personnel. Focus groups with journalists, editors, and station managers were conducted, as well as interviews with governmental officials, aid agency professionals, broadcast experts, local, national, and international journalists, and public relations professionals to document the impact of the program. Program assessments such as this one, especially at the closeout of a project, are essential because they provide a baseline for future projects and help identify relevant issues for other assistance projects.

The best evaluations are based on longitudinal data that includes both qualitative and quantitative indicators. The Ethiopia evaluation triangulated four different data sets: Formal and informal interviews, focus groups, Data from quarterly and annual reports prepared throughout the project, and empirical research by media and health professionals. The four data sets provide a comprehensive picture of the Local Voices program.

Every campaign needs to be based on both formative and evaluative research. In public relations, the RACE (research, analysis, Communication, and evaluation) acronym describes the process of environmental scanning, audience and occasion analysis, empirical research, message development and testing, and formative and evaluative research. The Local Voices project was no different and measured performance on dozens of indicators in order to determine whether the project was achieving donor goals. Training and educational targets were set based on experience in the other countries in the region, as well as Internews' many years of journalism training experience.

Well-informed and professionally trained media professionals are able to assist marginalized groups, connect remote regions, and focus attention on the needs of marginalized groups living in remote communities. Marginalized groups are common in the developing world where roads are poor, transportation unreliable and hard to come by, and most citizens lack resources and access to television and Internet technology. Moreover, government national development initiatives rarely concern themselves with meeting the needs of all citizens, sacrificing democratic values and rights in the process.

As mentioned above, Local Voices was a five-year project that sought to train and educate journalists about HIV/AIDS and effective professional journalism. As a donor sponsored, media development, initiative, Local Voices tracked dozens of indicators including such things as: gender, status (journalist, public relations professional, station manager, etc.), number and type of stories produced, whether recipients of training are being productive, grant recipients, recipients of advanced training, etc.

The Local Voices project achieved some impressive results. In terms of numbers, the Final report suggested that in the last two years of the project:[1]

- The number of stories published in the last two years exceeded the targets by more than 400% (1,056/4,952).

- Local Voices Ethiopia had tremendous improvement in its journalist to story ratio. The number of stories published in the last two years of the program exceeds the number of stories published in the first three years by a factor of 6.9. An almost 700% improvement was realized:

    - Previous *three* years: 1.5 stories per journalist trained.

    - Last *two* years: 11.2 stories per journalist trained.

- The number of mentoring visits *in the last two years* exceeded the mentoring visits *during the first three* years by more than 550%.

- The number of mentoring visits in the last two years exceeded the targets by more than 470% (11,000 mentoring visits over five yours).

- The number of journalist trained in *the last two years* (374) nearly matches the number trained in *the previous three years* (390).

- Each person receiving a travel grant, produced on average five stories from the grant.

Considering the fact that the Local Voices project consisted of a full time staff of six, employing local journalists and recipients of past training to achieve goals, and operated on a budget of less than a million dollars (we need to confirm but it was close to this), is astonishing. The projections for the number of journalists trained and

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[1] The management of the project changed hands mid stream. The first few years of the project had to deal with political pressures, local distrust, etc. After De Masi took over in 2008, the project took off. Data are reported on the last two years when the dialogic approach was firmly established.

measurement indicators were very reasonable (see tables 1–3). Yet, Sonya De Masi, the country director and project manager exceeded the projections by a factor of 5–7 hundred percent in some cases.

One of the primary reasons that Local Voices was so successful was because the model of training was relational or dialogic. In training sessions, Local Voices staff do not tell people what to believe, but guided participants toward their own conclusions independently. On questions of HIV/AIDS vocabulary, for example, Local Voices worked with local journalists and communication professionals to develop a handbook that translated health terms into a number of local languages, making it easier for journalists to communicate important health information to their individual audiences. Additionally, in training sessions, participants spend time discussing the implications of pejorative language and how to make their broadcasts more compelling to their listeners.

Many journalists and media professionals explained how the Internews training made them more aware of the actual health issues and better prepared them to serve their audience:

In the past, language used was derogatory. Internews helped produce materials (handbooks) and provided training. People can now look into the manuals for ideas and suggestions. In the past stories were long and boring but now we are more selective in our language and we produce more compelling stories…(anonymous)

The previous coverage before Internews made people afraid of AIDS and made people who had it seem bad. I used to be afraid of people with AIDS and thought that I might be able to catch it from them if I came near them. Because

of the training I have been able to move past my fears and now actually produce stories to educate people about it. (Anonymous)[2]

Social responsibility, personhood, and communication

One of the outgrowths of professionalization and advanced training is that the recipients not only work to raise the bar themselves, but also believe that the bar should be raised for everyone. Audiences naturally gravitate toward more compelling and professional content thereby forcing all of the actors in a region to raise their standards, especially in the case of media content.

Teaching media professionals how to report on health and social issues and offering citizens socially responsible heath content, benefits the entire nation, making citizens healthier and more productive. Local Voices' approach, which included teaching journalists how to tell people's HIV/AIDS stories, enabled journalists to humanize people who suffered from the disease and helped their neighbors to begin seeing people who had HIV/AIDS as people who were "sick" rather than people who should be feared or hated.

Many of the state actors who were interviewed argued that national development initiatives should trump trivial news content, in many cases arguing that there was a difference between news and entertainment, and that entertainment was not very important to a developing nation. At the same time, most of the people who were interviewed had been trained by Internews and believed that "entertaining content" was more compelling than boring content, but that people should not really care. Such irrational dichotomization was common and in many cases was just an

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[2] Although all interviewees signed an informed consent form, serious risks still exists for journalists. Thus, all references to interviews from the Local Voices EOP report are attributed to anonymous.

example of paternalism and elites in power working to maintain the status quo. All interviewees agreed that compelling, high quality, content brings audiences to messages and increases their exposure to useful content. And yet, they could not explain why efforts were not made to improve all of the content delivered by their broadcast outlets. What was also clear was that the Internews training did lead to increased professionalization and increased social responsibility—at least as far as health coverage was concerned.

The Local Voices training was much more than a series of one-off training sessions. Local Voices maintained a studio that journalists could sign up to use—ten programs were produced each week—a suite of computers with editing software, and an assortment of professional equipment that could be rented out by journalists (digital recorders, cameras, etc.). The Internews facilities allowed messages to be produced that benefited thousands, and helped act as a model of good practice. The relational, dialogic, approach was a key factor. Journalists and communication professionals could come in at any time of the day and work with the person who they felt most comfortable with.

Most journalists visited the Internews office several times. Many came in more than others, of course, but in general, the staff were available for one-on-one counseling/training and to assist at every stage of the creative process from story ideas and interviews, to software, technology, and editing.

Principles of Dialogue:

How Dialogue Informs Training and Communication in Addis Ababa

Dialogue represents an orientation toward the world that acknowledges the inherent worth of other people and assumes that although people do not have to agree, treating others fairly and making an effort to minimize power relationships and

domination lead to more humane experiences and better living and working conditions for everyone. Dialogic communicators respect individual self-worth and believe that everyone's opinion is important and valuable (cf., Kent, 2002). Central tenants of dialogue include a willingness to take personal and professional risks (self disclosure, sharing corporate information, etc.), a willingness to engage other in conversation, and a willingness to seek collective solutions to problems. As Rogers put it, to manifest an attitude of "unconditional positive regard" (1992/1957, p. 828) for the other.

The principles and philosophy of dialogic communication go back decades to philosophers like Buber (1970), Bakhtin (1981), Rogers (1957), Laing (1969), Freire (1994), Ellul (1985), and others, as well as communication scholars like Kent and Taylor (1998, 2002), Pearson (1989a, 1989b), and Anderson, Cissna, and Arnett (1994).

The dialogic orientation, then, is rooted in relationships and not instrumental exchanges. As one of many journalists in Addis Ababa noted,

> In and of itself, I do not think that a workshop is a perfectly useful thing. I think the approach in the Ethiopia project and the way it is run, is the way that it is with many Internews projects is that any formalized workshop training is backed up by five times as much mentoring—one-on-one mentoring. So that whatever skills a journalist learns in a workshop session is not forgotten or is a one-off. (Anonymous)

The training conducted by Internews is dialogic in that the trainers and seminar participants build relationships with each other and spend time together. Participants are on a first name basis with the trainers and staff of the Local Voices office and spend substantial time interacting in the shared space of the office (propinquity, a feature of dialogue). Moreover, the training is designed to build on previous knowledge

that is co-constructed with session participants so that the relationship with trainers is much more like a friendship than a hierarchy or student/teacher relationship.

The dialogic, language, and relationship based training enable professionals to grow and expand their skill base but also feel comfortable coming back to Local Voices for assistance in the form of travel grants, equipment checkout, studio time, software and computer access, etc. Additionally, the program rewards persistence and productivity by awarding participants who complete a designated number of stories technical equipment like digital recorders and grants at public ceremonies. Participants are treated like they are special, rather than just another group that needs to be trained to meet a training quota.

The strength of the relationships that formed between the staff of Local Voices Ethiopia and past participants was palpable. Given that the project evaluator was on location during the last days of the program one would expect to see some sadness and disappointment on the part of visitors/trainees. However, most interactions seemed to be very dialogic. The Platonic or Agapic love that seemed to exist was obvious and a clear signal that both participants and staff/trainers felt affinity for each other. Many professionals work together for their entire lives and still never treat each other with such respect and care. This empathy, supportiveness, opening oneself up to another is uncommon and one of the central features of true dialogue.

One of the reasons that a dialogic approach works in places like Ethiopia is because local journalists are so starved for education and training. Most practicing journalists in Addis Ababa were never trained in journalism, coming from an assortment of backgrounds that include language and literature, philosophy, and many other areas.

The idea of dialogic training has deep roots in journalism pedagogy. Dozens of books have been written on the principle of "coaching" in journalism, professional writing, business (cf., Clark & Fry, 1992; Rich, 2009). The idea of the coaching model is that a mentor (typically one's supervisor) works both to encourage and strengthen the writing skills of a novice or less experienced subordinate, as well as to provide substantive feedback about how to improve one's writing and communication. The coaching model is dialogic and helps to build the confidence and skills of the less experienced subordinate.

Local Voices: Global Messages

The activities of programs like Internews' Local Voices speaks to a number of constituencies. Perhaps the most important group is the journalists and editors that are trained. Building capacity[3] is one of the most important roles of projects like Local Voices. From the standpoint of media assistance organizations like Internews, the importance of understanding the complexities of local politics, and culture stand out, as does the importance of using summative data to improve practice and creating effective data reporting and informational graphics instruments. Finally, from the standpoint of educators, the importance of fostering professionalism and standards of excellence stand out as important activities.

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[3] "Capacity" is a term that refers to the ability of human agents to help achieve a given goal. For example, if surveys needs to be conducted in another country but no native speakers are available who can conduct the survey with any reliability, we "lack capacity on the ground." In the case of Ethiopia, the limited educational opportunities for journalists mean that the skills and availability of trained professionals exceeds the demand. No capacity exists.

Local Journalists and Editors

It is easy to lose sight of the impact than an educated populace has on a nation. Education raises the standard of living and teaches people how to adapt their knowledge and skills to other contexts. One of the questions that was asked of the media training in Ethiopia, was whether the money was well spent "was the training worth the time and money when we consider that many people who receive training will eventually leave their positions and move on to other opportunities." Virtually all of the interviewees believed that such a question misses the broader issue. As Deborah Ensor, regional director for Africa explained,

> People tend to judge success based on numbers: x numbers of stories written, x number of journalists trained, and although that could be a quantitative indicator, to me it does not say much about the success of a project because you want to know more...you want to know that the training has been embedded in them and has taken hold somehow and is embedded in their work. . . . Even if or when journalists leave journalism and become something else, they bring those skills to bear about questioning, getting facts, checking information, and being wise.

In places like Ethiopia where there is limited social capital, educating anyone is a positive thing, even when the people trained eventually move on to new professional opportunities. Like the Peace Corp., there is no expectation that everyone can be trained, professionals train as many people as they can, as thoroughly as possible, and encourage people to share their skills with others.

Another factor that should not be overlooked is the power of self-persuasion or identification that comes from joining a professional association or becoming associated with a group of experts. Students in the U.S. are encouraged to join

professional associations like the SPJ (Society of Professional Journalists) and the

PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) with the hope of fostering professionalism.

The journalists who were trained by Internews developed a genuine sense that they

knew more than their colleagues (specialized knowledge). A sense of Identification by

Unawareness as Burke (1973), described it. That identification and sense of

confidence or elitism encouraged trainees to behave more professionally and to want

to raise the state of journalism within their own organization. As virtually all focus

group interviewees suggested:

> "What we have is not just training but mentoring. People who have not been
> trained may do everything right, but they lack the subtle understanding and
> skills that we have"; "We have more sophisticated research and interviewing
> skills and we are able to adapt, to do things in other ways, and to produce more
> compelling content"; "Internews trains us in real journalism, provides us access
> to professional equipment and software"; "We have a keener ability to visualize
> the environment and see other angles and ways of telling a story"; "We have in-
> house training at my station but Internews provides access to professionals,
> follow-up. Out training does not include follow-up or evaluation for
> improvement."

Initially, Internews, funded by money from PEPFAR (the President's Emergency

Plan for AIDS Relief), was viewed with suspicion by local journalists, editors, station

managers, and governmental officials who were concerned about a U.S. agenda being

forced on Ethiopia. Wisely, however, local voices focused on journalism training and

professional skills. Journalist trainees were quickly able to see how digital editing

would make their lives easier and their stories more compelling (cf., Diffusion of

Innovations, "trialability" and "observability," Rogers, 1995). By understanding the

diffusion process better, journalism training programs like Internews could be more strategic in their planning and speed diffusion of journalism professionalism and technology.

The training of local journalists requires cultural adaptation. Similarly, from the standpoint of media assistance organizations like Internews, the importance of understanding the complexities of local politics, and culture stand out, as does the importance of using summative data to improve practice and creating effective data reporting and informational graphics instruments.

The staff of media training organizations like Local Voices are usually local journalists and communication professionals. However, journalists are not graphic artists and most lack the analytical training to be able to unpack a complex set of data and produce a useful and compelling report. Useful data is more than numbers in an Excel spreadsheet. Examining almost any professional publication with data (newspapers, magazines, annual repots, books) shows that tables are not simply cut and pasted cells from spreadsheets. Data are selected to tell a story. When data become informational graphics rather than simply spreadsheets they become more useful. The lack of visual communication training and critical/empirical research skills are a flaw in the training and preparation of both the journalists and media professionals who work with NGOs like Internews, and a problem with some of the staff.

For annual reports to be useful requires that they contain specific suggestions and data to support claims. Many of the research documents examined that were produced by Internews contained inconsistent variables and could not be easily compared. All the data in the world is useless if it cannot be used to make predictions and improve professional practices. On this point, both journalists and media

organizations like Internews would benefit from help by academics and communication professionals.

Media Training Organizations

One area where media training organizations are often lacking is in the area of capacity. As suggested above, the state of the media landscape in Ethiopia only five years ago was poor. Television and radio broadcasts often featured governmental officials reading complex and boring health information for hours on end. Hours long political speeches were (and still are), broadcast, unedited, and used to fill airtime. Most journalists practicing at the time had little faith in the Protocol Journalism (cf., Akinfeleye, 1987, 1988), rip and read approach, where citizens were all treated the same and audiences could see little difference among most government media outlets. All of that has changed over the last five to ten years because of a number of media training efforts sponsored by the BBC, USAID, Internews, and others.

But capacity means more than having trained journalists practicing locally. Training requires support staff who understand data gathering, media monitoring, report writing, etc. Foreign organizations cannot just walk into countries like Ethiopia with tightly controlled media and strong governmental actors and conduct business like they might in the U.S.

In a background interview with a foreign journalist in Addis Ababa, s/he talked about being attacked and beaten for an international story that s/he wrote. All journalists, local and foreign, are cognizant of the risk factors that exist. Changing the media landscape is something that takes courage and commitment. Given the lack of educational opportunities for journalists in Ethiopia, on the job training is likely to be the only game in town for a while. As Tenaw Terefe, the assistant dean and coordinator of the Journalisms and Communication department at Addis Ababa

University put it, "We have eighty million people and only one graduate program in journalism." In the U.S., a country of 300 million there are hundreds of programs.

One suggestion for building capacity that was in the Local Voices End of Project Report was to conduct training (or teach courses) through educational institutions like Addis Ababa University. University administrators who currently have to try and staff classes with Fulbright Scholars and visiting professors would likely jump at courses on media monitoring and report writing. And, from the standpoint of capacity building, having journalists with such training in the workforce will help to speed the spread of media professionalism and has a snowball effect on journalism in general.

A final issues that needs to be considered and resolved by media training organizations like Internews is how to build capacity and enact training in a country with poor infrastructure and journalists who have little or no ability to attend training sessions. As Asfaswassen Merkonen, a Journalist for 8 years (Ethiopian Television), and a public relations officer for the Ministry of Health put it, the second biggest obstacle to success is "that we sometimes have transportation problems and our programs sometimes get distorted. When I plan to go at a specific given time someone at the office might say 'no car today, no car this week,' so we prolong our program." When governmental officials are thwarted in achieving their training objectives, outside professionals are likely to have more problems. Program planning needs to consider issues of culture, geography, education, and other variables when they are planning educational campaigns. A final group that can learn from the Local Voices efforts are Western academics and educators.

Academics and Educators

Academics in journalism and public relations also have a lot to learn from the Local Voices training. In particular, the importance of fostering identification and

professionalism. Although many schools have student affiliations with professional associations, the majority of students do not participate in them.

Although the authors do not know of any data on this, our personal experience with almost a dozen schools—and time served as a faculty advisors to the PRSSA— suggests that fewer than 20 percent of the students in any given program probably belong to their school's professional association (IABC, LPH, PRSSA, PWA, SPJ, etc.), if one is available. The power of the professional association to socialize is often overlooked (cf., Taylor and Kent, 2010) and can play a big role in the acceptance of professional standards and behaviors. Moreover, when professional associations are run dialogically, they have the potential to serve important roles in the socialization of members.

But dialogue is not enough. More theory needs to be brought into the journalism curriculum such that both journalists and managers understand principles like Diffusion of Innovations (Rogers, 1995), Community Power theories, persuasion, rhetoric and figures of speech, and other communication principles and theories. Although the EOP evaluation found that the Local Voices project did an excellent job of meeting its mandate, also clear was that the training lacked basic features of a strategic information campaign.

Yes, Local Voices avoided local and state politics and tried to steer clear of controversy, focusing on training and education. But a number of strategic choices could have been made that might have increased the reach of training and brought more people to seminars. For example, the formation of a Board of Professionals who might be consulted a few times a year could have helped increase the diffusion process. Similarly, developing training materials that included take-away documents, posters and signs, brochures, online and social media content, etc. could have

increased the reach of training and allowed people who did not attend training to both learn what they missed, as well as providing step-by-step directions on important principles, thereby increasing reach. In essence, a public relations or message design professional sitting in on the planning might have been able to offer some useful suggestions.

Conclusion

As suggested in the introduction, "Many professional communicators, particularly journalists and public relations professionals and educators believe that theory and practice are different activities." This essay has proven otherwise. Exceptional programs like Local Voices blend theoretical concepts like dialogue and professional practice. Creating places where colleagues and professionals have "unconditional positive regard for the other" (dialogue) is not only desirable but possible. There are a number of other areas where what we learn from programs like Local Voices can also inform practice.

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Table 1

5.1: Expected Result 1: *Increased access to information on and coverage of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and available services.*

Seven indicators inform result one:	*Target*	*Delivered*
1. 5-day basic journalism workshops (255 journalists trained)	16	26*
2. Advanced journalism workshops	6	10*
3. The number of stories broadcast/published	1056	4952*
4. Mentored field trips	4	5*
5. Travel grants	20	16
6. The number of media manager events	4	4*
7. The number of media managers trained & offered tech. assist.	100	228*

* Met or exceeded target (based on 7 of 8 quarters).

Table 2

5.2: Expected Result 2: Increased quality of media outputs on HIV/AIDS and other programs.

Four indicators inform result two.	*Target*	*Delivered*
1. The number of media institutions receiving training and technical assistance for continuous improvement	24	64*
2. Content analysis of HIV reporting	4	4*
3. HIV Media guide	2	2*
4. Number of roundtables held	24	20

* Met or exceeded target (based on 7 of 8 quarters).

Table 3

5.3: Expected Result 3: *Strengthened media institutions.*

Five indicators inform result three.	*Target*	*Delivered*
1. Number of journalists trained	176	346*
2. Number of mentoring opportunities	1,000	6,673*
3. Equipment grants	20	20*
4. Curriculum development	0	2*
5. Advanced workshops and technical assistance	6	9*

* Met or exceeded target (based on 7 of 8 quarters).