AIBD / UNESCO / UNDP Regional project: “Young TV Producers Network in Asia on HIV and AIDS”

Regional project (Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan)
November 2006 – March 2007
In collaboration with Pakistan Television (PTV) / PTV Academy

A Report
prepared by
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AIBD / UNESCO / UNDP Regional project:
“Young TV Producers Network in Asia on HIV and AIDS”
A report

Preamble: HIV and AIDS is no longer simply a health problem. It is a pandemic becoming a total socio-economic disaster. It affects the groups whose functions and skills are most vital for development.

Asia is strongly affected by this pandemic with about 7.4 million of the world’s 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). As indicated in the UNAIDS report 2004, the epidemic in this region is expanding rapidly (around 1.1 million newly infected people the year before). To contain the epidemic, there is growing recognition that HIV prevention efforts must be scaled up and intensified, as part of a comprehensive response that simultaneously expands access to treatment and care. Only through these fundamental efforts coupled with increased global and national commitment will the world be able to achieve universal access to relevant information and education concerning HIV and AIDS, and truly begin to prevent new infections and treat the PLWHA.

Media must play a major role in this broad-based strategy by bringing scientifically exact and ethically and socially just information (SE&SEJI) to the public with the widest coverage. This task has to be done in close coordination with the 4 Poles:
- Professional Health Care Providers working on HIV and AIDS;
- Government Agencies and Ministries;
- Community Based Organizations ("grass roots associations"), NGOs, and UN Agencies;
- Private Sector

Media programming must promote a better awareness on how the virus is transmitted and also a better understanding and care for PLWHA. Media is the most powerful means to reach countries’ populations, and this great power carries responsibility. Media professionals need to acquire accurate knowledge about HIV and AIDS as well as its social and economic impact, in order to deliver pertinent programmes. To be able to deal with the issue in an ethically appropriate manner, media professionals must fully understand its psychosocial component – the fear, stigma, blame, denial, discrimination etc. And in order to present the issues in a captivating manner, producers have to be re-oriented to international quality standards of production.

“Young TV Producers Network in Asia” which started in 2002 with the view to encourage TV broadcasters in Asia to play a more important role in the campaign against HIV/AIDS.

2 projects have been implemented in the framework of this programme:
- In 2002/2003: for 16 producers from SAARC countries
- In 2004/2005: for 12 producers from South-East Asia and China

In both cases, various components were successfully implemented:
- The trained young producers have gained skills and expertise on HIV/AIDS issues and are able to produce relevant programmes. They now constitute a group of skilled professionals capable of handling this complex issue in its various components (medical / social / cultural, etc) and provide scientifically exact and socially and ethically just information.
- 20 short programmes have been produced and broadcast in the participating countries and shared with most national TV broadcasting organisations in Asia-Pacific and HIV/AIDS related organisations. These short films have been compiled onto DVD / VCD for a wide dissemination in the region.

The choice of having a regional approach has proven relevant – it has given participants more exposure and understanding of the pandemic and various aspects through different country cases and cultural / social environments. It also helped to promote positive emulation among producers.

For some of the participating countries, the short films produced in the framework of this programme were among the very first produced and aired.
The Asia – Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), UNESCO and UNDP intend to carry on contributing to this international campaign by implementing a follow-up project for Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan in 2006-2007. Such regional endeavours would enable countries in this region to become more involved in a wider regional network for quality TV programming in campaigns against HIV/AIDS.

The objectives of the project were to:

1- Expand the young television producers network on HIV and AIDS in Asia.
2- Offer producers from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan opportunities to enhance their expertise on television campaign relating to HIV and AIDS
3- Produce and distribute a DVD of the HIV and AIDS related TV Items to be offered to broadcasting organisations worldwide and to be used by HIV and AIDS advocacy groups.
4- Encourage Asian broadcasting organisations to produce and broadcast more quality HIV and AIDS related TV programmes.

Phase 1 of the project: Workshop on HIV and AIDS, 6-25 November 2006, Islamabad

A three week workshop on HIV and AIDS was organised in Islamabad from 6th to 25th of November, 2006. The venue of the workshop was PTV academy. The participants were young producers – one from Tajikistan, 3 each from Afghanistan and Iran, and 6 from Pakistan. Besides, 2 participants from Syria on self funded basis were included in the workshop. Out of the 15 participants, 7 were women.

Though 4 participants were selected from Afghanistan only 3 could make it to the workshop due to unavoidable circumstances.

The resource persons for the workshop were:
- **Mr. Scott Rawdin**, a senior producer from France with vast experience in the field of TV Documentary and also HIV-AIDS related TV programmes.
- **Ms. Moneeza Hashmi**, General Manager, HUM TV Lahore, Pakistan
- **Dr. Shankar Chowdhury**, HIV/AIDS Programme Expert, UNESCO New Delhi Office
- **Ms. Gulan Kripalani**, Consultant for UNDP

The list of participants and trainers with contact details are given in Annexure 1.

The workshop in Islamabad had benefited from the “lessons learned” from the previously implemented AIBD/UNESCO projects and the professional experiences of Mr. Scott Rawdin and Dr. Shankar Chowdhury. The inputs from Ms Gulan Kripalani and Ms Moneeza Hashmi added value to the workshop contents.

The participants received inputs from ten local resource persons, specialized in HIV & AIDS in Pakistan: Ms Nighat Rizvi and Mr Faisal Shafiq (NGO AMAL), NGO Nai Zindagi (field trip), NGO SACHET (field trip), VCT Center (field trip), Dr Asma Bokhari (National Program Manager NACP), Dr Farah Naureen (NGO TAMA), Dr Naseer Nizamani (NGO FHI), Ms Shukria Gul (PLWHA UNAIDS), Mr Pervez Tufail (NGO TB PI). They gave excellent guidelines to the TV Producers on how TV programmes can be sensitive about the issues surrounding HIV & AIDS.

Workshop Contents

In general, the workshop focused on the “need to inform” the public with scientifically exact and ethically and socially just information. In specific terms, the contents of the workshop covered the following:

- Basic SE&SEJ Information re: HIV and AIDS;
- Update re: the pandemic worldwide / by country (sources: WHO, UNAIDS);
- Economic, cultural, gender and ethical issues;
- Country contacts for each participant – where can they be sure to find SE&SEJ Information;
- Terminology – “sensitive language”; adapting the message to the local languages and cultures;
How to collaborate with the “4 poles”: Professional Health Care Providers; Governmental Agencies and Ministries; CBOs/NGOs/UN Agencies; Private sector.

How to construct the film’s contents and production in accord with these partners;

Basic information about the pandemic and the need to be sensitive to the surrounding issues was taken up by Dr Shankar Chowdhury. His sessions were quite interactive and the trainees were constantly prompted to participate.

Next, to be truly effective, we need to “convince” the participants and get their full commitment on the issue. HIV and AIDS is a complex matter and requires a very strong personal involvement from the producers. The experiential exercise on HIV and AIDS conducted by Gulan Kripalani got the producers very emotionally involved. For the first time, they understood what it meant to be HIV positive.

Gulan Kripalani also dealt with the gender dimensions of the pandemic. Moneeza Hashmi explored this dimension further by prodding and making explicit the gender biases of the trainees themselves.

The complexity of the HIV issue requires a suitable duration for the workshop. Based on previous experience, and due to the fact that, unlike previous projects, this project will be consisting in only one workshop instead of two, two weeks are required for HIV and AIDS issues and storytelling. An additional week was useful to address production issues with hands-on drills to help them better prepare their production skills to guaranty beautiful sound and images in harmony with the particular situations that arise when working on AIDS related productions. Special attention will be placed on working with PLWHA – especially, how to present those who wish to be filmed.

Hence Scott Rawdin placed stress on the following items -

Storytelling:
- Creativity – developing the “right side of the brain” to find new, original, surprising, and seductive ways of communicating;
- Story structure and archetypes: choosing a structure in harmony with the subject. “Everyone who works on the project is at the service of the subject.”

Production:
- The sound and light sculpt: the image enhances the beauty of the person, place and environment; the sound which is rich and transports the auditor by its harmony. This appealing, colorful composition encourages the spectators’ identification with the protagonists.
- The particularities of HIV and AIDS Productions.
- Hands-on exercises to learn how to apply the theories in guided, assisted workshop drills.

Funding:
- How to pitch a project: “How to present the project to win allies and influence their decision.”
- Potential funding agencies, institutions, cooperation programs, etc. and the private sector.

As the past experiences of AIBD and UNESCO show, training sessions that result in broadcast productions are useful to the AIBD/UNESCO partners and their public. The nature of the HIV and AIDS pandemic is such that ongoing training is necessary for Media people. Scientific, psychosocial and economic aspects of this disease are in constant evolution. And those responsible for reporting these developments must keep themselves abreast of this information to report it in a scientific and socially responsible manner. The links to resources on HIV and AIDS and discussion groups were provided to the participants.

However, those who do the reporting are not often the decision makers. Their chief editors often request presentations that are in direct conflict with what this pandemic needs – either scientifically or socially. To help the overall communications process, it might be wise to preface the program by requesting these chief editors, program directors etc to participate in short seminars where basic issues are covered – especially pertaining to stigma creating issues. For if they are convinced that they must modify their attitudes, the actual reporters will have more latitude to better conduct their assignments. In the absence of this, the producers will have to learn to pitch their stories so that their
editors, sponsors, funding agencies etc. will support their productions. So the pitching exercises in the workshop were quite necessary and useful to the participants.

There were group interactive awareness building exercises, programmes screenings and field visits – in particular with NGOs, CBOs, Professional Health Care Providers working on HIV and AIDS; Government Agencies and Ministries. The need to pool together the inputs from the four poles for producing balanced and fair account of HIV issues was stressed during the workshop. The field visits gave the participants insights into grassroot realities related to HIV and AIDS.

The workshop provided a large amount of printed handouts. Besides handouts based on the contents of the workshop, a large amount of research and resource materials were collected together and put into a DVD for future use by participants. These DVDs were distributed to all participants.

The participants were divided into three teams and each team went through a production exercise consisting of story planning, shooting and postproduction during the workshop itself. Feedback was given on each of these productions so that the mistakes and errors would not be repeated in future productions.

The report from the lead trainer, Mr Scott Rawdin is attached as annexure 2. The report from Ms Moneeza Hashmi who doubled up as the executive producer later is attached as annexure 3.

**Phase II of the project: Distance training, scripting, production**

After the workshop, the trainees went back to their respective countries. But the training continued in the distant education mode. E-mails relating to the nuances of HIV communication, e-mail attachments of important documents etc. were sent to the trainees. The trainees in turn, sent their story outlines, scripts etc. seeking comments and suggestions. So in a way, the training extended to the month of December.

A deadline was given to the producers for sending the productions – 15 January 2007. All except the trainees from Afghanistan could finish their mini-documentaries in time. The case of Afghanistan was quite understandable, given the conditions and environment for production. So some leeway had to be given to the producers from there. Soon there were 13 mini-documentaries. All the trained producers from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Iran contributed. The producers from Syria who had attended the workshop on self funded basis did not contribute to the series.

**Phase III of the project: Compilation into a series**

Given that all the productions from different countries were to be put together as one series, the producers were instructed not to put subtitles or supers in their video. The translations were to be provided to the Executive producer. This allowed some editing of language and uniformity in the use of font style and size across productions when they were put together.

In spite of the training and repeated reminders on the use of language, the ethics of HIV communication etc. producers did make mistakes. Some further editing had to be done by the Executive Producer before they were compiled into a series. This also delayed the final product by a few days.

There was a lot of variation in the quality of different mini-documentaries. The Executive producers arranged the programmes in the order of descending quality in the final master beta tape.

1. The Silver Lining  
   Samar Minallah  
   PAKISTAN
2. HIV & AIDS  
   Farrukh Afzal Malik  
   PAKISTAN
3. STOP AIDS  
   J . I. Saadatmand  
   IRAN
4. Awareness and Attention  
   Ali Dadkhah  
   IRAN
5. Promise  
   Rao Shahid Mahmood  
   PAKISTAN
6. Live & Let Live  
   Gity Mahmood  
   IRAN
7. Society's Pain  
   Parvina Juraeva  
   TAJIKISTAN
8. Beyond Judgment  
   Rakshinda Parveen  
   PAKISTAN
Phase IV of the project: DVD production

The final phase of the project was to convert them into DVDs. Though in the Beta version, there was a linear progression from one programme to the next, DVD technology allows non-linear access to the different mini-documentaries in the series. To make this possible, some programming had to be done before the copies were made. 500 copies were made of the series in DVD.

The last programme in the compilation had too many digital artefacts due to very high compression. Given that the programme also lacked content and style, it was dropped when the master DVD was produced. The DVD copies will thus not have the last programme above.

The presentation of the DVD is an important component for acceptability by the viewers. So a cover and a booklet that gave a brief description of the project and the programmes, were designed and printed. Copies of the DVDs are dispatched to the member countries of AIBD in the Asia Pacific region.

Outcomes:

- As immediate outcome, 15 TV producers from Broadcasting organisations of 5 countries were given adequate background details to be able to cover HIV and AIDS issues – (Scientifically Exact and Socially and Ethically Just Information – SE&SEJ). They also went through exercises designed to improve their production skills.
- 13 participants from 4 countries - Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan - produced short programmes on HIV and AIDS.
- These short films compiled into a beta tape, with appropriate subtitles is available for broadcasters who might wish to telecast them.
- The mini-documentaries are available in DVD form for wider distribution and use by activists and NGOs.
**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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<th>AFGHANISTAN</th>
<th>MR ABDUL MAROUF AZIZPOUR</th>
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Report on the workshop by Scott Rawdin

Objectives:

The programme for the workshop was intentionally designed to be open to all requests the participants might formulate pertaining to HIV & AIDS. More than one hundred pages of information specifically relating to HIV & AIDS AND more than one hundred pages of printed material covering various aspects of the producer’s role – budgeting, marketing, scriptwriting, pitching, potential international markets, developing the “right side of the brain” – were distributed to the participants on the first day of the workshop.

A DVD of several relevant books and articles in .pdf files was also distributed to each participant. This included the most recent UNAIDS/WHO country AND region specific information about HIV & AIDS.

The intention was that by reading the handouts (as was the case in previous workshops), the participants would formulate “enlightened” requests for the development of specific topics, either from this material or any other related subjects.

Everyone expressed a desire to broaden both their knowledge of HIV & AIDS and their screenwriting, directing and producing skills.

In order to have common references for analysing the writing process, we screened several films (related to HIV and AIDS). We then discussed the various aspects: scientific, social, ethical, structural, technical, creative, etc.

We visited three HIV & AIDS sites outside the PTV Academy in and around Islamabad. We also received the visit of ten resource persons, specialized in HIV & AIDS in Pakistan: Ms Nighat Rizvi and Mr Faisal Shafiq (NGO AMAL), NGO Nai Zindagi (field trip), NGO SACHET (field trip), VCT Center (field trip), Dr Asma Bokhari (National Program Manager NACP), Dr Farah Naureen (NGO TAMA), Dr Naseer Nizamani (NGO FHI), Ms Shukria (PLWHA UNAIDS), Mr Pervez Tufail (NGO TB PI). They were pertinent and creative. Everyone appreciated their sincerity and insights. They gave excellent guidelines to the TV Producers on how the Media should proceed to make TV Programs about HIV & AIDS.

Dr Shankar Choudhury (HIV & AIDS specialist UNESCO), Ms Gulan Kapilani (UNDP) and Ms Moneeza Hashmi (HUM TV) participated in the workshop, each offering very pertinent and thought provoking information and exercises. I am personally extremely grateful to them for their contributions.

Mr K.P. Madhu (AIBD) played an important role for this workshop by sharing his excellent interventions in both HIV & AIDS specific issues and TV Production skills. This contribution was in addition to his role as a perfect facilitator.

Each participant is supposed to produce a 5 minute program, in their culture and language and send the copy with English subtitles to Moneeza for final compilation by 15 January 2007. Daily, we emphasized the importance of developing a project using the “right side of the brain” (see handouts; “mind-mapping”, “fishing”, etc). They were also informed daily that their films must be Scientifically Exact and Socially and Ethically Just, or their films would be unequivocally disqualified.
It was a great pleasure for me to participate in this workshop. Most of the participants were warm, active, enthusiastic, creative, generous, joyous and rich in ideas…

The PTV Academy organization was perfect, the supportive staff generous, present and pleasurable. I will certainly miss such delightful working conditions. A special mention should be highlighted for Ms Bushra Rafiq who was completely dedicated to creating the perfect environment for all the participants.

Of course, the time passed too rapidly. We could have spent much more time working on the individual projects to guarantee quality productions. As it stands, there are a few promising young producers who should definitely continue in any future programs and productions on HIV/AIDS.

I have added all these “new members” to the “network” so they may continue to communicate by email with each other and the previous session’s members. I will continue the email networking with information specific mailings.

**Conclusions – Lessons Learned**

The candidates should be interviewed individually prior to their acceptance to determine their competencies and motivations. There were a few participants that were not “cost effective investments.”

Though language may hinder the participant’s capacity to participate, that should not be an eliminating factor. Language barriers are not impossible to overcome.

However, laziness and intolerance and lack of personal commitment in HIV related productions are determining factors. I would suggest that in the future, during the first week, the participants receive daily testing of their learned knowledge specific to HIV transmission, gender awareness and “HIV Media Guide Rules” taught in the workshop and distributed on the first day in the handouts. After one week, those who have not learned them we should consider sending them home. Perhaps a “Don’t come” speech should accompany the application form: “Don’t come” if you don’t intend to study every day and learn the basics of HIV & AIDS; “Don’t come” if your intention is to go shopping and fool around instead of learning; etc.

As I alone cannot implement such a radical decision without AIBD’s accord, we should discuss this before the next workshop so the participants are aware of this prerequisite for their continued participation. Perhaps they should sign a paper that states specifically that if they do not learn these basic facts and skills about HIV & AIDS during the first week, they will be “returned to sender.”

The experience of this workshop is that the lazy participants inhibit the growth of the group, disturb the learning process, and generally they waste the valuable time of other participants. The lazy participants create frustration amongst the devoted participants. This is unfair to the sincerely dedicated participants and the funding agencies. Lazy, uncommitted producers should not make films about HIV & AIDS: they will do more harm than if they do nothing. There are other areas of production where they may reveal their talents.
One participant spent most of their time: souvenir shopping, “internetting”, “visa hunting”, “airline ticket shopping”, arriving systematically late (when that person did come), obliging me to repeat everything for that person and wait while the translations were completed (that participant spoke no English upon arrival and on the last day announced that they had learned one word in English: “Finished”). When I asked that participant why they were there, that I had no clue why they had come, the participant responded, “Scott asks me why I am here… I don’t even know why I am here…”

Several producers presented biases and attitudes of intolerance incompatible with producing films on HIV & AIDS – refusing to respect certain realities of social conditions of women and/or men and especially children. Their attitudes will most likely taint their programs and are absolutely unacceptable for HIV & AIDS TV Programs. Such biased programs have proven over the past 22 years to be detrimental for HIV & AIDS information, education and communication about care & support. Such attitudes can only foster programs of stigma and discrimination that must be prevented from seeing the light of day.

This is a crucial issue. Pandemics – such as HIV, TB, etc. – thrive on such unacceptable social attitudes. If we, as Media Professionals, want to help stop the pandemic and provide care and support for those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, we should attempt **first to change behaviours of the messengers or choose qualified media professionals from the start.**

Time is the key factor here: if we don’t have sufficient time to change Media Professionals’ attitudes, then we should only accept those who DO have attitudes that ARE compatible with the desired result as a prerequisite. (Tolerance, acceptance, care & support as opposed to, to only cite a few, judgemental condemnation and punishment for “bad behaviour”.)

When working with “Young TV Producers” who have very little or NO experience with HIV & AIDS, a lot of time has to be spent to **UNLEARN** the “garbage baggage they come with.” Their misinformation and misconceptions of scientific facts and prejudiced attitudes hinder their social and ethical barometer. Once they have unlearned their “garbage baggage” THEN AND ONLY THEN can they **LEARN** what is **Scientifically Exact and Socially and Ethically Just.** This is a prerequisite for EXCELLENT HIV & AIDS TV Program Production.

Based upon the experience of this workshop, I propose we be more demanding of the participants in acquiring the basic **SE&SEJ** knowledge from the trainers and from the handouts and that those who do not have this personal commitment to learning about HIV and AIDS be sent home. The results will be much more effective – cost-effective and production-effective. We will also avoid the unpardonable risk of producing stigmatizing and discriminating TV programs on HIV & AIDS (and Hepatitis B & C – that as you know, are also **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED** – and TB and…)

Two participants were not TV Media Professionals. Their desires were not the same as the other members of the group who are TV Media Professionals. They wanted very basic production training that could not be provided in this workshop as the workshop was determined to be about HIV and AIDS first, and then producing TV programs about HIV & AIDS. They did not have any experience in Professional TV Production which necessarily implies teamwork. Their approach was very “egocentric”. This caused several disturbances that had to be dealt with, created difficult situations that should not be part of this workshop.
In my humble opinion, it is absolutely necessary to accompany the productions in the respective countries so the producers may learn to identify and meet the “key actors” in HIV & AIDS: Government agencies specialized in HIV & AIDS; PLWHA, NGOs and CBOs working on HIV & AIDS; Professional Health Care providers working on HIV & AIDS; and the private and religious sector working on HIV & AIDS. The producers should be accompanied for their preparation.

If we want quality productions, a professional crew and equipment – executive producer, cameraman and sound engineer – must accompany the producers for their productions. Each film may be edited in-country, accompanied by the executive producer. Extra funds should be sought to ensure quality productions. Donors, especially in the private sector, are always keen on being “associated” with such initiatives.
A 3 week training was held in Islamabad Pakistan at the PTV Academy in November 2006.

The participants were TV producers from Pakistan, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

I was the local consultant from Pakistan along with 3 other trainers. Two were from India Dr. Shankar Chowdary and Gulan Kirpalani and the third from France, Scott Rawdin.

The participants had been nominated by their own TV organizations and were mature media professionals in their own countries but with no practical knowledge of HIV and AIDS either in theory or in practice. Therefore for all of them whatever the training offered was new information which first and foremost they had to understand, digest and comprehend before planning strategies which they would later implement in their own home country and execute through their respective organizations.

The first week was spent almost entirely by the lead trainer Mr. Scott Rawdin on informing and educating the participants about the virus, its transmission, the prejudices that were part and parcel of the issue and how to ensure that they would be making productions that would be ethically and morally just as well as scientifically correct.

In the beginning the group as a whole faced certain problems and issues of simply coming to terms with the sexual aspect of the whole exercise. Since all the participants came from Islamic backgrounds it was at times quite obvious that the women especially were having certain reservations in even discussing the sexual and moral aspect of the transmission of the virus and particularly use of terminology such as “condom” or “sexual intercourse” or “homosexuality” etc in the presence of their male colleagues.

Another problem that was faced by the participants was in the understanding and the expression of their own ideas in English. Some of them especially from Tajikistan and Afghanistan were not conversant in English. Therefore it was my responsibility at times to do a simultaneous translation into Urdu. One participant from Kabul would then translate into Farsi/Dari for the Tajikistan lady and so we continued.

In my opinion some essences of the lectures were lost in translations.

Valuable time was also at times stretched so as to complete the translations before we moved ahead to the next item on the schedule.

However, there were many valuable and productive contributions made by resource persons especially invited to share their views and expertise with the participants.

The participants were informed and made aware of so many facts and figures in contrast to myths and disinformation about the disease and virus which they had been previously exposed to.
Scientific and ethically correct information was given to them in the form of hands outs. Viewing of TV programmes about the virus and its transmission were also held followed by intensive discussions.

Group exercises were conducted where case studies were provided and the groups were asked to brainstorm and provide solutions or options.

Field trips to HIV and AIDS centers where NGOs were working in providing assistance and advice to suffering patients and their families was also undertaken.

Field trips to VCCT centres, low income localities where NGOs were working at the grass root level were also conducted. The participants were encouraged to question and seek more information from people actually working in the field as well as patients themselves. Some filming was also done in some of these areas to give the group a “hands on” experience of working in the field itself.

Role playing was conducted as class exercises to give the group an opportunity to express their own views about questions that they were asking.

The arrangements made by the PTV Academy were exemplary and more than adequate. The staff deputed for the training was both helpful and friendly providing all types of assistance to the group from medical aid to shopping advice.

The group was taken on excursions on the off days so as to give them a real sense of feeling welcome and at home.

The boarding and lodging arrangements were also more than satisfactory. Transport was provided to the group from their hotel to the venue of training. Lunches and refreshments provided on a daily basis were of a high quality and appreciated by all.

However the final productions from the participants can be further improved both in their content and certainly in their production quality.

In my opinion the participants probably did not get the assistance and support from their broadcast organizations as would have been required to create a short film on the subject. This is visible certainly in the productions from Afghanistan and Tajikistan. One can understand that both these countries are still trying to grapple with massive problems of security, economic stability, health and education. Therefore the focus of the authorities would no doubt be on those issues rather than on HIV and AIDS. Most Islamic countries are also in complete denial of the problem anyway so for these producers to be able to secure resources to make a short film would probably have been difficult. Nevertheless, as a final product their programmes are weak in both content and production value.

It is my considered opinion that other such trainings would be far more beneficial if technical training is made a part of the activity also. This would enable the person to not only actually practically do the exercise himself but also learn from their faults along with critiquing the work of others.
More creative exercises in learning should be a part of such trainings. Each participant must be encouraged to think and develop programming ideas creatively given certain case scenarios. This would develop their thinking skills as well as their own communication skills.