



# STRENGTHENING THE EVIDENCE TO SCALE UP ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA IN DEVELOPMENT

## A largely untapped but powerful tool for behavior change

Every year, the World Bank and client governments invest millions in campaigns across almost all development sectors to change behavior ranging from risky sexual practices to handwashing. However, many of these campaigns are unconvincing, lack inspiring narratives, and are communicated through outmoded and uninteresting outlets such as billboards and leaflets. Systematic reviews of these campaigns consistently show little or no effect on behavior, especially in the long term.

Entertainment media presents an unprecedented opportunity to change the lives of billions of people, especially in urban areas. Entertainment education, or edutainment, can be a game-changer for development. Unlike traditional behavior-change campaigns that convey abstract concepts and can become repetitive quickly, educational narratives are easier to follow and remember than abstract information. Characters in mass media have the power to be role models, inspire audiences to engage in new thinking about “what is possible,” and change the perception of what is “normal” and socially acceptable behavior.

The evidence base regarding the effectiveness of entertainment media remains thin, especially to advise the scale up of entertainment media as a development tool across different sectors. The DIME Edutainment program aims to fill knowledge gaps, such as the best way to understand its mechanisms and maximize its impact as a tool for development.

## The DIME Edutainment program is well established in global entertainment hubs

DIME launched the Entertainment Education program in 2016 to explore the use of entertainment media to positively change perceptions of social norms and promote behavior change across development sectors. The DIME program is supported by public-private partnerships that involve various World Bank units, development partners, and leading media houses. In its first phase, the program has launched trials in the biggest global entertainment hubs in Mexico, Brazil, Nigeria, Senegal, and India. With a combined population of 2 billion, their entertainment industries produce for their respective regions. Thus, working in

these countries should facilitate translating research evidence into development and industry strategies for global impact.

The program actively works with global media partners, including the MTV Staying Alive Foundation, Discovery Learning Alliance, Cinepolis Foundation, ITVS, BBC Media Action, and the University of Southern California-Hollywood Health & Society program. To reach regional and global audiences, media partners work with leading scriptwriters and celebrities in their entertainment education productions.

## Research focuses on new approaches to change behavior

The DIME program focuses on six development sectors: Sex in the City, Stopping Violence, Empowering Men and Women, Keeping Clean, and Playful Learning. To maximize the effectiveness of program design and delivery, this innovative research is generating evidence in two areas:

1. *Delivery mechanisms*, or the effectiveness of different media outlets (such as radio, television, and social media) and

- content formats (including TV drama, documentary, and games); and
- Social mechanisms*, studying how best to influence social norms and social networks for population-level impacts.

## Fighting HIV with MTV

These studies are at different implementation stages, with a few already completed. Produced by the MTV Staying Alive Foundation, MTV Shuga is a television drama aimed at reducing HIV infections among African youth. The DIME study found that eight months after seeing MTV Shuga, Nigerian youth were twice as likely to get tested for HIV and among female viewers, chlamydia infections were halved. These are substantial impacts, especially in light of the limited effects found in other HIV behavior-change trials. Moreover, the program had indirect or spillover effects on the friends of viewers, highlighting the potential of population-level effects of mass media interventions in development. The policy impact of the study has been substantial. The study has been presented in high-level policy panels (such as the 2017 International Monetary Fund–World Bank Spring Meetings, and the 2018 AIDS Conference) and covered by media outlets, including NPR, TEDx, and *The Hollywood Reporter*. The number of planned seasons of MTV Shuga has rapidly grown in Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond, with new seasons focused on family planning and gender-based violence planned in the Arab Republic of Egypt and India.

## DIME Workshops in the global entertainment hubs

Impact evaluation (IE) workshops are key to DIME's efforts to generate demand for evidence-based policy and to create new IE studies that meet an expressed need from policy makers. The DIME

| Research area                                | Country/Research questions   |
|--|--|
| <b>Delivery mechanisms</b>                   |  |
| Media outlets and content formats            | <p><b>Mexico:</b> What is the relative effectiveness of an edutainment show in preventing addictions when delivered in <b>movie theatres</b> versus in <b>schools</b>?</p> <p><b>Nigeria:</b> Can a <b>TV drama</b> improve HIV and gender-based violence outcomes among urban youth? Does <b>connecting with characters or being immersed in the program</b> improve program impacts on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors? Can a Nollywood <b>movie</b> promote financial literacy and savings among entrepreneurs in Lagos? Can <b>community educational screenings</b> change deep-seated norms around girl education in northern Nigeria?</p> <p><b>Senegal:</b> Do <b>radio spots</b> and <b>printed comics</b> increase attention and promote the adoption of solar lanterns in rural areas? What is the impact of mobile-based gaming and ICT on development outcomes?</p> <p><b>India:</b> Do <b>short-documentaries</b> delivered through <b>social media</b> reduce gender-based violence among urban youth?</p> |
| <b>Social mechanisms</b>                     |  |
| Social norms, social networks and spillovers | <p><b>Nigeria:</b> What is the impact of entertainment education when audiences learn about the prevalent <b>social norms of their friends? Of other peers?</b> What are the <b>indirect or spillover effects</b> of mass media on other community members?</p> <p><b>Brazil:</b> Is a peer-led intervention that includes edutainment more effective when peers are <b>selected by school, by the popularity of the student, or how central the student is within a network?</b></p> <p><b>India:</b> How can social media interventions <b>increase take-up</b> and maximize <b>development impacts?</b></p>   |

Edutainment program has conducted workshops in Mexico (2015 and 2016), Nigeria (2016 and 2017), and India (2018).

The workshops have brought together researchers, policy makers and global media houses in developing the next generation of evidence in the entertainment media sector. These workshops have also served to promote public-private partnerships within and between the global entertainment hubs.

## Going forward

Despite its potential for changing behaviors for large population segments, entertainment media remains a rare development investment. This is largely due to the lack of rigorous IEs. Going forward, the DIME program aims to scale up the number of studies in each of its six development areas. For example, under the Playful Learning area, and with support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, the program is expanding its



Representatives from BBC Media Action, the MTV Staying Alive Foundation, and the Nollywood production company Ultima Limited discussed the challenges and the opportunities in Nigeria. Otomola Ekehinde (first on the left), Nollywood superstar, philanthropist, and one of *Time Magazine's* most influential people in 2013, encouraged policy makers to work with the industry to reach large audiences. The Lagos forum helped launch new impact evaluations on education and gender empowerment.

research on the use of mobile-technologies to improve children literacy, with a special focus on refugee populations.

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