

**INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**

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**THE ROLE OF TV IN CHANGING ATTITUDES TO  
PROMOTE EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA**

Supervisor

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## DECLARATION

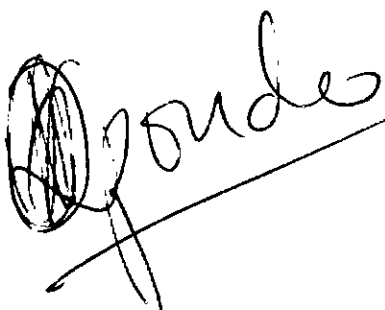
I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Bachelor of Arts in Social Communication Degree. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed: 

Name of Student: Victor Oluoch Anyura

Date: 26/05/10

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed 

Name of supervisor: Anne Nyokabi Gachiri

## **1.0 Background of the thesis**

More than ever information has become the most important resource anyone can have. It is the defining line between the powerful and the powerless. And what is Africa's stake in all of this? According to Owen (2008:133) if we see through the eyes of Salim Amin, the son of the late Kenyan photojournalist, Mohammed Amin, we discover that information is a power that has for too long, evaded the hands of the people of Africa.<sup>1</sup> This is an unfortunate position in this information age. The media is a carrier and disseminator of this information. This makes it a powerful tool capable of defining a society and influencing attitudes. The messages it sends out by different media outlets will most likely have an impact on the opinions of those who come into contact with them. This will lead to a change in attitudes and behavior.

Consequently, good journalism is essential in influencing not just thought processes but also experiences, values and the cultures we hold so dear. Francois (2001:3) helps us understand this further by stating that news or information helps us orientate ourselves and helps us connect with others. According to him, if the media are the system that societies generate to supply news, then journalism is the life blood<sup>2</sup>

And the effects of this information age are at a global scale. Which means the events and happenings in one country can quickly find relevance and make headlines in another country thousands of miles away. This means that the media has become the world stage from which global events can be viewed and understood by a global audience. Consider this example from Francois (2001:5):

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<sup>1</sup> OWEN JOHN, *International news reporting.*, 133

<sup>2</sup> NEL FRANCOIS., *Writing for the media*, 3

“When FIFA, world soccer governing body announced the host nation for the 2010 soccer world cup, millions of soccer enthusiasts around the globe were glued to their radios, television and the internet connected computer screens. As FIFA president Sepp Blatter stepped up to the podium in Geneva Switzerland and announced, 'The 2010 World Cup will be organized by South Africa,' crowds simultaneously reacted from Cape town, to Cairo and beyond”<sup>3</sup>

Such a powerful media effect cannot be underestimated especially when a country's image is at stake. Kenyan events much like other events around Africa are played out to an international audience by the major news organizations and agencies and often with negative consequences. This is a blow to the Kenyans' confidence because when image is tarnished, self doubt may creep in.

The seeds of self doubt are planted by any wrong information fed to Kenya and the world about Kenya. It's like an information war and Africa is on the losing end. Her image has been twisted and bended on the international stage by what's supposed to be fair coverage of events throughout the continent by the international media. A classic example of what harm distorted information is capable of can be found in the case of Rwanda genocide. Allimadi (2002:1) reminds us that the constant tribal tagging of the conflict by the media led to the Clinton administration blocking any significant intervention by the U.N because it came to believe that 'tribal wars' are 'intractable and irresolvable'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> NEL FRANCOIS., *Writing for the media*, 5

<sup>4</sup> MILTON ALLIMADI, *the hearts of darkness.*, 1

The 2008 post election violence in Kenya also stands as a grim reminder of how an African story, relating to real people with genuine concerns could be viewed through stereotypical lenses of the western media giants like CNN (Cable News Network), The New York Times newspaper, The Daily Mirror newspaper and BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation)

A peaceful country that had never known large scale conflict before was suddenly flocked with the international media who dispatched tales of 'yet another failed democracy in Africa' complete with the additional sensations of war and tribalism. The journalists were flown in at short notice to relay events to their audience back at home. How they packaged their stories left a lot to be desired. Saying this only scarred Kenya's image in the eyes of the world would be an understatement.

What this has done is establish a trend where for western readers or viewers to be drawn towards African stories then they have to be negative. It has encouraged journalists to dwell on long and old stereotypes that sensationalize African problems of war, tribal conflict, disease, and famine. While these problems are real, they are still blown out of proportion and subjected to unprofessional coverage.

And so most of the positive stories that ever make it out of Kenya and out of Africa for that matter shows Africans doing very little to amend their situation. If its not European aid groups feeding hungry population, then its western politicians teaching our politicians the rules of democracy just like an old colonial master teaching his African subjects how to toe the master's line.

Distorted images can encourage the negative images Kenyans hold against themselves hence battering their confidence and belief in their potential. In view of this, it is of great importance that the local media should find it necessary to educate Kenyans about their own values. This can not only serve as much needed confidence boost but also provide people with information that they can use to challenge long held stereotypes about Kenya and the continent at large.

### **1.1 Its important to tell our own stories**

If the events of the 2008 post election violence in Kenya are anything to go by, Kenyan journalists and all stakeholders within and beyond the media industry need to take a long and hard look into themselves. For how long shall local stories be told by foreigners? This poses a great danger to the unique identity of Kenyans. As the west continues to believe the stereotypes about Kenya fed to it by its own media, the Kenyan media consumer is also starting to believe the lies about him or herself. Being labeled stereotypical titles for so long, it's almost possible that they begin to stick. The local media should not stand aside and watch as negative messages from the west about Kenya are fed into the mind of the populace.

This problem stems from the fact that a good number of foreign journalist are usually flown in for short periods in parts of Africa to cover stories in a 'touch and go' fashion. They show up during an event, scratch the surface for news and quickly disappear to file their reports.

A classic example of what foreign correspondents flown in at short notice can do to a story is Angola, the host nation of African Cup of Nations 2010. This is a

prestigious football tournament that comes every two years in different parts of the continent. For Angola to have hosted it, it took years of resurrection from one of the bloodiest civil strife on the continent. Angola currently boasts one of the fastest growing economies in the Africa. Its capital Luanda is once gain rejuvenated and better looking than before and its crown jewel was the opportunity to host one of football's biggest tournaments. None of these success stories that are almost comparable to a miracle make top headlines in the worlds leading news media.

Just before the tournament started, a team of Togolese football players were attacked by an armed separatist group North of Angola. The players were traveling for a football match in the Angolan province of Cabinda. Suddenly Angola was making world headlines for all the wrong reasons just like in its civil war past, the very past it had struggled to shake off. The coverage of the attack even started to cast doubts on South Africa's ability to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup, an even bigger football event just south of the Angolan border.

This is the sad story of Africa news coverage by foreign correspondents flown in at short notice. They seem to have these negative perceptions about Africa stamped in their thinking and this is evidenced in the type of skewed coverage they accord different parts of the continent.

This explains why real life of diverse areas and regions in Africa is underrepresented in the dominant western media. Coups and diseases replace the vibrant growth of cities, in place of economic growth, education and political changes,

all we get are reports of famine and corruption. Clearly, Kenya and the rest of Africa are victims of biased information.

The decades of foreign correspondents crowding crisis spots in Africa, scratching the surface for stories and then flying off to another spot has got to change. They no doubt highlight the problem but fail terribly to put the stories in their proper context hence don't give a wholesome view. These journalists are ill equipped to cover most of these stories because they lack an appreciation of the culture, language and even history of the local population which deal they with. These aspects are crucial in determining how the subjects covered interact with each other and what may have led to a conflict.

The locally based journalists are better placed to uncover events and dig deeper to come up with an in-depth coverage. The doom and gloom picture about the continent has to come to an end. Given the chance, the international media audience would like to get some positive stories from Africa told from an African perspective. A Kenyan voice is better placed in telling a Kenyan story

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Close to five decades after attaining independence, Kenya like most of its African counterparts continues to languish on the peripheries of development. The

dreams of our independence are nothing but silent echoes as they remain elusive. Why after almost fifty years is this case?

The widespread lack of meaningful development all across this country could actually be pointer to the poor attitude and self-doubt that Kenyans hold against themselves. We seem to lack a proper concept of our own identity, a matter cemented by a sad inferiority complex thanks to years of unchallenged biased information about the continent and our country.

Through colonization, questionable education system established to serve the interests of the colonizers, and emergence of the dominant homogenous western media and agencies, Kenyans have for long been conditioned to trust the west much to their own demise. We have lost confidence in ourselves and capacity to independently achieve on our own and instead adopted purely western ideas into all aspects of our lives. How many times for example have we adopted western economic blueprints alien to our own circumstances and failed terribly?

### **1.3 Objectives of the thesis**

The objectives that this thesis will seek to investigate include:

1. To find out what role the media has played in facilitating the negative perception of Kenya
2. To uncover what role a free and independent local media can play in unlearning stereotypes about Kenya

3. To explore the place of the local media in creating a better environment for socio-economic growth from the bottom up in Kenya

#### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

The structure of this thesis work is divided into three comprehensive parts. The first chapter presents in detail the content of this research and draws reference to earlier literatures of authority written about this subject. Within this first chapter, the significance of the subject of this thesis to society will be thrown into sharp focus. As a follow up to the long essay research, possible solutions to the problems identified will be discussed under sociological analysis of the topic

The second chapter will mainly deal with the research results collected from the field. The results will be closely analyzed and deductions made about the responses gathered. These results will be analyzed against the backdrop of audience's need and what they stand to benefit from a subsequent project.

The third chapter will be dedicated to the justification of the communication strategy within the light of the research findings. Relevant communication theories are employed in this section to give more weight to the communication strategy and highlight its significance. Thereafter, a general conclusion follows. This conclusions briefly but clearly summarizes the whole thesis emphasizing on the practical benefits of the communication strategy to its intended audience.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **2.0 Sociological analysis of the topic**

#### **2.1 Is this negative image affecting Kenya's confidence?**

The constant representation of Africa in a negative light seems to serve the historical racism visited on the continent. It almost dehumanizes the population and devalues their culture. It portrays events and the people across this continent as not making any contribution to human advancement.

This battering of Africa can also be viewed as an attack on its confidence and identity of the unique countries such as Kenya. This attack is like an infectious disease that eats away at the people's confidence and belief to achieve any meaningful development on their own. It can be argued that some Kenyans especially the young majority have accepted this sense of worthlessness at the back of their minds. This is manifested in ethnic violence, economic underachievement, impunity in politics and many more antisocial behaviors affecting Kenya. How Kenya relates to the world is affected by an inferiority complex which is cemented by the media.

There is a strong connection between development and the history or culture that informs the attitude of a group of people. A good understanding of one's history, values and the appreciation of the same is a basic ingredient for achieving meaningful development. B.A Ogot observes that at Kenya's independence, the new African government recognized this.

This draws attention to the immense power of history, culture and values in mobilizing Kenyans' minds, thoughts and attitudes into a new national identity. An

identity that embodies first and foremost, the appreciation of oneself, the people around him and secondly a gain in confidence in what he can achieve. For Kenya to advance or push ahead then this elements have to be incorporated into our daily lives and there's no better tool of mobilizing of minds than the media. B. A Ogot (1995:138) saw with this decades ago after Kenya attained independence. Consider his words:

“With the achievement of ‘Uhuru’ came the recognition that as an independent ‘nation,’ Kenya needed to develop a national culture as a means of promoting and enhancing national unity, pride and patriotism. Moreover, there was a need to assert the utility of African cultural traditions which had been subjected to a multifaceted assault under colonialism, denigrated by colonialists and missionaries alike as ‘primitive’ African customs, beliefs and ways of life had been thoroughly bruised by the colonial period” <sup>5</sup>

And this is not just about Kenya because a deeper look into the countries that have experienced advancements in their society reveals that there pre-existed a great change of attitudes in the people. They grew more conscious of their unique history, values and culture. They developed a deep sense of love for their country and this made them achieve what they previously thought was unachievable.

For Kenya to get on the track to real development a sense of ‘Kenyaness’ has to be born. This is something that has eluded this country for a long time. A sense of

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<sup>5</sup> Ogot B.A, *Decolonization and independence in Kenya*, 138

historical values and achievements is heavily lacking. This goes beyond commemorating our independence heroes for the injustices they endured.

We have to embark on reflecting on the indigenous values and achievements of our forefathers. This arguably is Kenya's closet of shame as is the case in the rest of Africa. Our western conquerors labeled anything indigenous to Africa as negative and even made us feel ashamed of them.

Every civilization and culture has its ugly side; Jensen (2002:3) agrees that Europe had its own fair share of witchcraft and astrology. He contends that 15 century Europe was full of superstitious parishioners in England who often danced around the graves in churchyards in hopes of protecting themselves from the plague. In the meantime, the skulls of plague victims peered quizzically at them. While In Germany, they were burning an average of two witches a day.<sup>6</sup>

This is where the sad story of Kenya like many African countries begins. That the entire culture and civilization of a community built over several years could be wholesomely written off as barbaric. If you take someone's pride in his or her identity be it dressing, food, language or behavior, then you would have dealt a sad blow to his confidence and we need confidence to achieve and beat challenges.

## **2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.2.1 A battered confidence is the bedrock of dependency**

As mentioned above, the pride and identity that an individual holds is vital to his development. And this identity is built over time, therefore memories and experiences by the individual and the whole community at large becomes an invaluable element to

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<sup>6</sup> KLAUS JENSEN, *A handbook of media and communication research.*, 3

forging a successful future. The media comes in as an important holder and disseminator of a community's shared experiences because it basically gathers news and information about people.

Kenya, much like the rest of African countries which had attained independence in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, was trying really hard to build a sense of national identity among its citizens but with very little success. For a start, the political borders that lumped Kenya's population together was a result of an alien process and agreement thanks to the colonizers. A Kenyan state was in place but not a Kenyan nation. This is what has come to be referred as the nagging question for African countries by Gyekye (1997:77) as they faced the daunting task of how to weld the ethnic groups into a new, certainly larger form of sociopolitical association for the welfare of all groups or rather create unity out of plurality.<sup>7</sup>

Building a sense of 'Kenyaness' between groups of different ethnic groups who did not choose to be under the same flag or border in the first place is bound to be an effort in futility if not taken seriously.

This problem was compounded by the fact that most of the elite who took up leadership roles in their countries, and some who are still in charge of politics as 'old guards' like here in Kenya were products of a questionable education system. The education system forwarded a Eurocentric view of everything including African events and culture. It praised the accomplishments of the rulers and cast doubt over any significant African achievements.

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<sup>7</sup> KWAME GYEKYE, *Tradition and modernity philosophical reflection on the African experince.*,77

The elite who underwent this education system had their confidence in anything African ripped apart. They lost their confidence in who they essentially were and learned how to despise their own 'primitive' background. At the dawn of independence, these individuals were to rise to positions of power. Alienated from the history of their own people by the education system, it can be argued that they were even ashamed of anything to do with an African identity.

These elite and their newly born countries were therefore at what Jensen (2002:5) through the opinion of Mazrui sees as a war of cultures between indigenous Africa and the forces of western civilization. Mazrui further observes that the characters of the war are inefficiency, mismanagement, corruption and decay, persistent problems still with us today. But most importantly, Mazrui's take on the modernization ambitions undertaken by the governments of Africa like Kenya, is what he calls a process or a form of unnatural dis-Africanisation.<sup>8</sup>

In essence what all these meant is that the events leading to what has come to be called Kenya's dependency for aid were well set in the education system. Educated by the west about themselves, these elites were to run their countries by taking cues for development entirely from their colonizers whom they were trained to view as having superior ways. They adopted development blueprints made by their former masters through the IMF and Worldbank resulting in what Artz (2007:36) views as an increase in unequal power relations in both politics and economics leading to negative effects

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<sup>8</sup> KLAUS JENSEN, *A handbook of media and communication research*, 5

across the continent.<sup>9</sup> And these have failed Kenya's chances of rising to its full potential.

The western media and thinkers have cemented this state of affairs by exploring events in Kenya just like the rest of Africa on a biased framework. Very few achievements by Africans were considered worth a mention. For western thinkers, Northern Africa, known to have had some of history's earliest civilization couldn't have been black Africa's product. This even prompted them to develop a concept of 'sub-Saharan Africa or 'Africa proper' if you will. It seems there is an unofficial policy to keep African countries on the periphery of human civilization

But all these can change if the media in Kenya can wake up and take up its role as an education tool. The country needs to unlearn some of the stereotypes and prejudices it holds against itself. Kenyans need to learn that a great injustice was done to us by the colonization of this land but not end there.

Crying foul over colonialism is not going to redeem our confidence and neither is romanticizing the past going to help. Milton (2002:3) agrees that Africa's past should not be romanticized. He reflects that it would be wishful thinking to think of Africa as ever having been a paradise. It has conflicts and despotic regimes, yet, those do not diminish Africans' claim to humanity.<sup>10</sup> And so Kenyans need to be educated to appreciate the good and positive about their diverse indigenous background. This can

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<sup>9</sup> LEE ARTZ, *The media globe.*, 36

<sup>10</sup> MILTON ALLIMADI, *the hearts of darkness.*,3

lead to more innovativeness especially among young people. But if the reality check is taken, questions of media ownership at the world stage stands between these noble aims and journalists in Africa or Kenya for that matter who wish to achieve it.

### **2.2.2 Media ownership at the global stage**

Bottlenecks in terms of media ownership and policy have always informed the way Kenya is covered in the news. The major news agencies and media companies in the world are western owned. They play the critical role of transmitting news and information to the world because major news agencies like AP (Associated Press), AFP (Agence France Press), and Reuters have a big say in what news content circulates around the globe. And that's not all, according to William (2007:109) the media has taken a very capitalistic nature. They have become money making entities increasingly concerned with their ability to compete and make a profit in a media-saturated society. This, to him is a major contributor to media bias.<sup>11</sup> These agencies are old players in the news game and exercise some kind of monopoly in the market. Their shareholders are mainly western businessmen.

A visit to the AP (Associated Press) website ([www.ap.org/pages/about.html](http://www.ap.org/pages/about.html)) reveals that the agency according to its own records was established in the 1840's and boasts of being the largest news organization in the world. AP serves close to a billion news hungry audience everyday through provisions of videos, pictures and news articles. Their subscribers include thousands of radios and TV stations across the U.S.A and the world which means they serve a multinational audience.

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<sup>11</sup> WILLIAM DAVID, *Media bias finding it, fixing it.*, 109

A similar script can be read about Reuters and AFP story. They too command a large global audience that subscribes daily to their information and news. Reuters has its roots in Britain while AFP traces its origins in France back in the 1830's. Their correspondents are spread far and wide in different continents.

And so the reality is, these agencies virtually control and set the news topics of the day. They determine what will reach their audiences back in their home countries and vice versa. Their policies have a huge impact on what is to be deemed as newsworthy and deserving of being published or heard and what's not. And so any news or events emerging from Kenya will be tailored to fit into their policies and audience expectation.

### **2.2.3 Can local journalists challenge this status quo?**

It is a good idea that to counter bias and unfair reporting, local correspondents or journalist have to be included in the collection of information in their own locale for the leading news organizations. While this is true and critical as a countermeasure to imbalanced reporting, it still doesn't fully address the issue.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has been one of the most successful news organizations in the world to have employed this model. According to Yahya (2007:16) BBC has thirty two FM stations on the African continent and they range from BBC Antanarivo, Madagascar 82.2 FM to BBC Zanzibar, Tanzania 94.1 FM. <sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> YAHYA R.K L.A, *The media globe trends in international mass media.*, 16

They have deployed the services of local correspondents across Africa and have radio frequencies in different languages including Kiswahili here in Kenya. Their reporters are local journalists with necessary background knowledge of the news and events.

A great deal of good has come out of BBC's coverage of Africa. In countries with despotic rule, their programs have served as a stage on which critics of government and policies can be heard. This is good news for democracy because it means opposition is given a voice in an otherwise difficult environment that can't tolerate dissent.

A good example of the BBC effect according to Allen can be seen in Somali where there is an environment very much devoid of accurate and verifiable information. Allen(1997:18) sees the BBC as a beacon of reliable news both on contentious internal events as well as linking Somali to the events of the world at large. The BBC has therefore earned a high level of credibility and become one of the most influential, most important and recognized source of news and information in the Somali speaking horn of Africa.<sup>13</sup>

But there is a flip side of the coin to this. Though a Kenyan voice can be given a chance to air local opinions about the topic of the day, senior editors of the BBC based in London will always have a hand on what can be aired or published. The local voices can be allowed to say and write criticisms about their government, leaders and events, but can they do the same about Britain? And if they do will it be aired or published?

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<sup>13</sup> CHRIS ALLEN, *Africa bibliography*, 18

Even Yahya argues that BBCs programmes originate from London and are produced from an unmistakable British perspective. In addition is the ironic position most Africans find themselves in when they apply for broadcast licenses. They are denied for political, financial and other reasons. Yahya (2007:16) points out that the only major African broadcast organization that features in this competition is the Pan African, French language commercial station, Africa No. 1 which has FM stations in a number of African capitals and in Paris, France. But this only came about after bilateral talks and diplomatic arguments between African governments and these international broadcasters or their government.<sup>14</sup>

#### **2.2.4 How can local journalism change?**

The western news organization dominates the transmission of news from Kenya to the rest of the world. And their ownership of the largest news organizations in the world gives them a monopoly of the market place of ideas. But how can it be kept under check?

The best way local journalism can start to institute change for the sake of Kenyans is by first make a start to avoid the sensationalism witnessed in the western news organization. Sensationalism is a product of technological revolution in the media sector and cut throat business competition. Now events from any part of the globe can be transmitted live to audiences anywhere. This has given birth to newer heights of

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<sup>14</sup> YAHYA R.K L.A, *The media globe trends in international mass media.*, 16

sensationalized news to draw in more audiences and the local journalists are sadly picking up on this trend.

It is common to turn on CNN and witness live pictures of war from Kabul in Afghanistan or Iraq. The stories lack depth and usually only entertain the senses. There is very little difference between them and a Hollywood movie. The impact of this is felt right here in Kenya. Media houses are fast picking up this kind of news reporting that sensationalizes the subject in a bid to win audience approval. News worthy reports that are of real consequence are left out and puny events blown out of proportion. The following words of Amin as supported by Owen (2008:133) should inspire the kind of journalism that would be more beneficial to Africans:

“News should present the real Africa as a place of good and bad, honesty and corruption, economic vibrancy and poverty, eager entrepreneurs as well as those who still rely on foreign aid. It should empower Africans with knowledge to help them decide who they want their political and social leaders to be, where they want to invest their hard earned money and how they want to move forward in their own continent. This should be the social purpose that the media should aim to achieve.”<sup>15</sup>

The Kenyan journalist owes it to him/herself, the local audience and the international audience too, to change negative perceptions about the country and develop the peoples' way of thinking about matters to do with Kenya. This will have a

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<sup>15</sup> JOHN OWEN, *International news reporting*, 133

direct impact on both social and economic interactions between Kenyans themselves and the rest of the world. Imitating western standards of news and news products isn't a healthy practice. It only exposes us to more harm as we can't develop an identity and much needed belief in our own abilities to chart our own course.

Once they take initiative to improve the local news content and programming, then the rest of the world will be ready to hear and learn that apart from the lions, forests and conflicts, Kenya has a vibrant political system, well educated citizens, modern structures like roads and buildings. That here, there's a civilized community. When this happens, then we can claim to be on the road towards development.

#### **2.2.5 Media and development**

If Kenya is ever going to engage the world as a respected equal partner in all spheres of life, then the media has to be wide awake and make this happen. The country's media industry is under an experience that can be termed as its 'season of plenty.' Democratic space for free expression has grown and media houses are springing up at a remarkable rate.

The World Bank (2002:1) sees a strong a co-relation between the media and development. In a report in 2002, the finance institute proposed that 'the media industry, whether public or private, plays an important role in any economy by garnering support or opposition for those who govern, by highlighting or failing to do so the views and/ or

sins of industry, by providing a voice for the people or not doing so, and by simply spreading economic information.<sup>16</sup>

A continental broadcaster in the form of a radio and TV covering the whole of Africa is seen as a perfect solution to attend to Africa's image crisis. This need is no means new. Zeleza (2003:444) informs us of the fact that after independence, many African countries set up national news agencies, and the richer papers subscribed to international news services, such as Reuters, AFP and AP. By the 1970's however there was widespread dissatisfaction with the domination of the international agencies in reporting Africa to the rest of Africa.<sup>17</sup>

However, the condition for such an idea to take off has not always been conducive enough in most African countries. African leaders in power resisted it as they started to mistrust the media, seeing it a challenge to their hold on power. Yet it was these same early African leaders that were most active in the 'underground' press that fought colonial rule. They understood what power the press held to bring people together towards a goal. But when they rose to power, instead of harnessing this power, they sought to destroy it. And so there's no doubt a free media, in the form of underground press, led to most of the issues the freedom fighters fought for to gain limelight. Most of the leaders at independence had actually been very pro active writers for some of the papers.

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<sup>16</sup> WORLD BANK, *the role of the media in economic development.*,1

<sup>17</sup> TIYAMKE ZELEZA, *Encyclopedia of twentieth century African history.*,444

But independence according to Zeleza (2003:444) only maintained and enhanced attempts by governments to control the press. They drew inspiration from and perfected the rich colonial repressive laws to keep the press and civil society in check.<sup>18</sup> Across the continent, the story remained the same. Governments exercised a heavy hand on the media in their countries. Gudykunst(2002:335) observes that this continues to hamper effective operation of news exchange mechanism because it undermines credibility by encouraging dependence on government for patronage, and\ or revenue, excessive 'protocol' news, lack of facilities and training and what he calls inappropriate editing for international markets as well as invisibility in developing world media and very little play in developed world media.<sup>19</sup> And all these sadly sealed the fate of the continental broadcaster for a while.

Kenya is in an exceptional position currently because of freed media environment and needs to embark on planning at a national level to make this dream of a continental broadcaster a reality. For example, the media in Kenya should undertake on a serious and more effective role of informing the public of all government activities. A representative democracy to the media should mean that Kenyans are made aware of the excesses of government, electoral events. Careless political sycophancy by the media can lead to the kind of conflict that embarrassed Kenya to the world. The international media exposed our dirty linen to the world.

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<sup>18</sup> TIYAMKE ZELEZA, *Encyclopedia of twentieth century African history*,444

<sup>19</sup> WILLIAM GUDYKUNST, *Handbook of international and intercultural communication*,335

This happened partly because our local media had failed to explore Kenya's diversity and sensitize the people on the need to cherish diversity. Diversity can be a source of inspiration and creativity in a society but it can also spark suspicion and hate between different groups. Politicians knew this and used diversity as a weapon. The media played along and therefore did not live to its positive role. If we desire to develop Kenya and reverse negative perceptions and opinions about this country, then it has to begin with shedding these kinds of careless media practices.

The Kenyan media needs to be more effective in bringing about much needed economic change in the country. The birth of a strong and advanced economy has its umbilical cord attached to the media. Advertising and spread of innovative business knowledge is a catalyst for a strong economic environment. Entrepreneurship especially among the youth who make the largest chunk of the population has to be increased.

This means the media should not just dwell their business stories around the environs of the major urban centers like Nairobi but should dig deep into the upcountry regions of Kenya. Interesting stories about business ideas lie in wait all over Kenya, just waiting to be dug up by efficient and effective journalism. This can spark meaningful development and possibly break the cycle of dependency on aid for Kenya. Local industries and the potential they hold should be highlighted by the media as they can serve the local needs and generate some income for the population. By highlighting this opportunities, the media would be creating a vibrant economic environment.

The vast natural resources in the country can also feature in the media. The media should expose any wasted opportunities that leave an otherwise blessed and rich country acting like a nagging beggar. The more we shamelessly beg, the more our self confidence is eroded and ability to invent new ideas. A good case in point is the food crisis that persists in Kenya. One of the worst affected areas happens to be the Eastern province of the country.

Kitui is a town within this Eastern province and a visit to the town reveals the kind of devastation the drought has had on the land. Common here are hot Dusty winds blow through the area to reveal cracked patches of dry land. Within the cracked ground you see very thin and sparsely populated maize crops just hanging loosely as if about to drop and die. Next to the maize crops are very emaciated cows with ribs sticking out, a very sad sight indeed.

But there is another side to the Kitui story that is yet to make it to the media. A seminar held in the town by an NGO called 'Bio diversity international' in mid 2009 revealed so many solution to Kitui's problems. The NGO carries out research in the area about Bio-diversity. Those who attended were mainly local farmers, nutritionists and hoteliers. Kitui's solution lies in the re-introduction of indigenous crops known to perform very well in the area's climatic conditions.

A visit to the 'Bio diversity international' website (<http://www.bioversityinternational.org/>) reveal the nutritional value of these indigenous crops as researched on by experts in the field. They have been discovered to be not only very nutritious and cheap to produce but are also drought resistant and even hold some medicinal values. If Kitui and other Kenyan regions affected by the drought take the step to start planting these crops again, then we could wave the problem of food shortage goodbye.

The government insists on supplying the local farmers with maize at expensive prices. The maize fails to grow and the people go hungry again and depend on aid and assistance when they can be self-reliant if given the right information. And the media holds a special place in the long term development of the country to inform the public of the ways in which they can become self reliant.

Another role the media can take to shape the development of Kenya is in building a unique Kenyan identity. The media is a mirror of the society to see itself and think about its image. If what it sees is ugly corruption, ethnicity, and dependency on foreign aid, there is no way it can be proud of itself. But you cannot force through people's throat a national identity. It has to be earned through the gradual acceptance by the majority.

An example is the recent 'national dress campaign.' This effort was dismissed by a majority of Kenyans because it did not win over their minds and hearts. In a diverse country like Kenya, its very difficult to forge a national understanding of issues unless the varied opinions are married. What this means is that the media has a great role to play in researching on Kenya's diversity as well as what we have in common.

To build a national identity, then history and events must have been shared and differences not hidden but discussed freely in order to strike a common ground. If you share an experience with your neighbor, then it's easy to understand each other. The media needs to remind Kenyans of the shared experiences that they all have, including the good and the bad, achievements and losses and so on. It should also provide a platform for differences to be constructively discussed by all. And before you know it, a sense of pride to be Kenyan or 'Kenyanness' would be born.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

This 'Kenyanness' within the media can start or should be reflected in the programming and content of the Television channels. The larger population of Kenya resides in rural communities. To Komben(1995:84), 'these rural communities are held together by indigenous values and modes of interaction. Therefore any introduction of foreign values through the media, trade or industrialization would distort the existing fabric of an indigenous culture and thereby weaken interaction among rural people. Hence foreign values disseminated through African TV stations may have had a

negative influence on rural people, since these stations don't appear to have enough locally produced programs.<sup>20</sup>

Why for example should the media landscape in Kenya be to a good extent free of the government interference and yet choose to air more foreign content than local? This dependence on foreign content does not help in any way in changing attitudes about our own productivity and development if we see very little reflection of it if any.

There is a danger here that lies largely undetected but not to Rinnawi(2006:3). He states that the 'media/ cultural imperialism' approach has come to embody the view that globalization, which has enabled the spread of largely American media content, has resulted in the obliteration of local cultures. This approach gained momentum in the 1960s and it argues that American aid programmes to developing countries and U.S sponsored free flow of information policies actually help the American media industry achieve international domination. This brings to question the so called modernization of developing countries. He contends that it leads to a system of dependency within an exploitative system of global homogenization rather than promoting self sufficiency.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> KOMBEN EMMANUEL, *Communication efficiency and rural development in Africa.*,84

<sup>21</sup> KHALIL RINNAWI, *Instant nationalism.*, 3

## **Chapter two**

### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the data collected from the field research and provides a detailed analysis of how the respondents reacted. Their feedback, both quantitative and qualitative is thoroughly investigated through the lens of media theories to shed further knowledge.

#### **3.1 Research Methodology**

To achieve the goals of this research, questionnaires were developed and distributed to the respondents. The Questionnaires contained both open and closed ended questions. The closed ended questions allowed the researcher to gain exact information as they limited the respondents to just a few answers. The Answers were then coded to represent the different responses for example: on the question of gender, '1' represents male while '2' represents female. This allowed for much easier analysis of the data.

Open ended questions come in handy as they give the researcher an understanding of what the respondents think about, put in their own words. This helps much to support their answers and shed more light to the research.

To get objective and accurate answers, the research also guaranteed the anonymity of the respondents. This, it's hoped, allowed them to express their views and opinions without feeling intimidated or fear.

### **3.1.1 Challenges faced in the research**

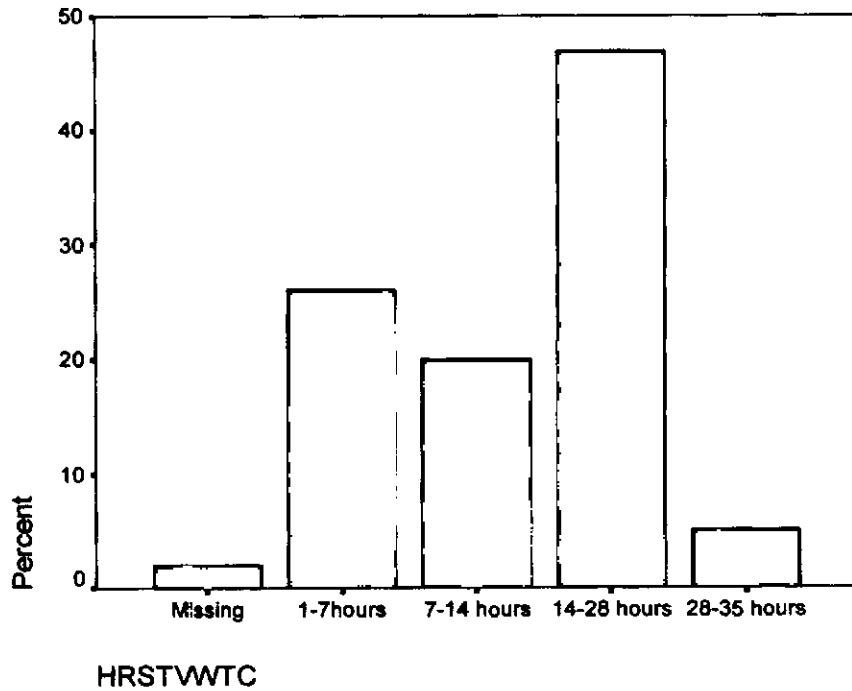
One of the biggest challenges of carrying out this type of research was that it demanded the researcher to keep the questions short and straight to the point but at the same time elicit the correct response. The open ended questions presented a new challenge where some of the respondents lacked good communication ability in writing. This meant it was difficult to comprehend exactly what they intended to communicate. Add to all this, the fact that analyzing open ended questions is very time consuming, and you can get the picture.

Another challenge posed by the research was that some respondents shied away from giving answers to some selective items. They just left them blank. The other extreme of this behavior was that some respondents reacted to the questions by filling in answers which they deemed to be socially acceptable.

The questionnaires were distributed at Nairobi University, one of the major institutions of higher learning in Kenya. This move was justified by the fact that the University has a diverse student population, most of them young because the research found a majority of them aged between 22 and 25 years and emanating from the different regions of Kenya; an important addition in research. 160 questionnaires were distributed and only one hundred and twenty were returned.

### 3.2 Research findings

#### 3.2.1 Hours of TV watch per week



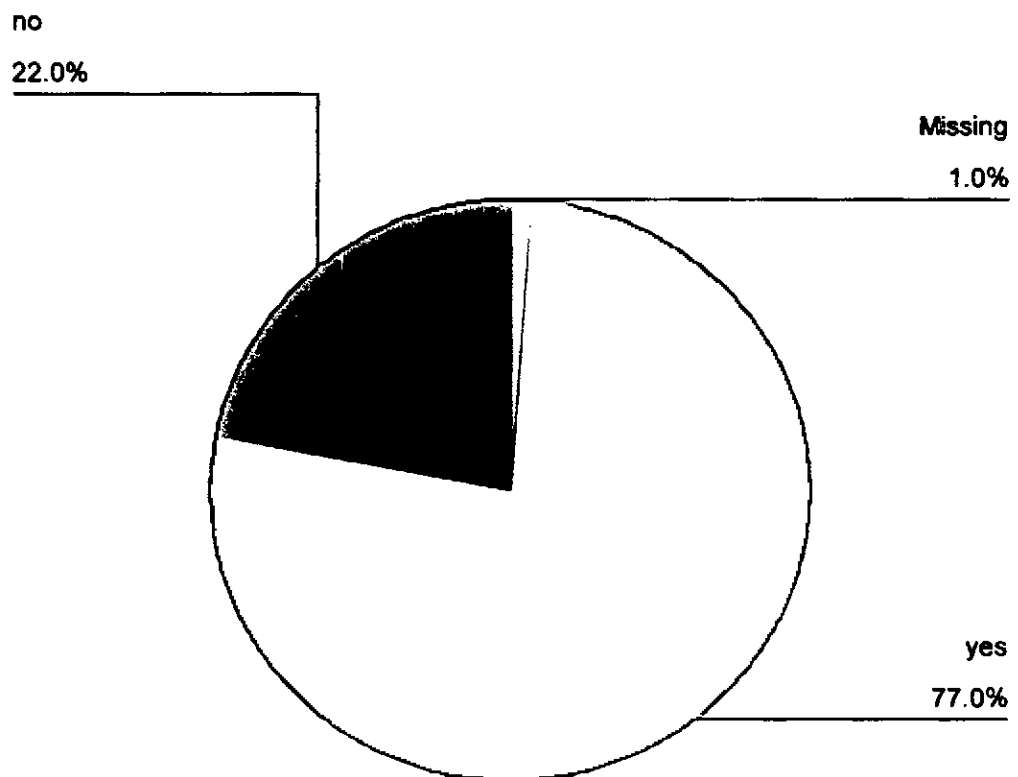
As found out during research, most respondents watch TV for between 14 to 28 hours per week. This means that the respondents interact with their TV sets and the content shown for at least 2 to 4 hours on a daily basis. This is significant as it attests to the popularity of TV as a medium of communication for a majority of the urban youth.

But that is not all, the reason why their engagement with TV content can be seen as an interaction is because with increased exposure to TV for these young people also comes the learning of behavior and attitude. This can best be explained through

Bandura's work on the 'social learning theory.' He states that that actors and events within the media are so attractive that the audiences want to emulate.<sup>22</sup>.

This therefore means that media actors and events can influence audiences simply by existing because of their attractive nature. The respondents who watch TV the most, upon observation display a lot of acquired behavior in the form of their dressing, eating and even accent.

### 3.2.2 Do the respondents watch any foreign news broadcasts?



<sup>22</sup> L. GROSSBERG, *Mediamaking: mass media in a popular culture*, 304

A majority of the respondents according to the above finding actually watch foreign news broadcasts like CNN and BBC. This means that within their hours of watching TV, they also make the effort to catch up with what is happening not only around them but around the globe too. But this also presents some serious concerns to do with the kind of content carried in these foreign broadcasts. Much of it is actually American. The reason why these young Kenyans get access to these foreign news broadcasters is due to the rapid global expansion of multinational media corporation which in Vijayalakshmi (2005) opinion, represents the expansion of America's popular culture especially to the third world. America's popular culture has become USA's second biggest export after the aircraft industry<sup>23</sup>.

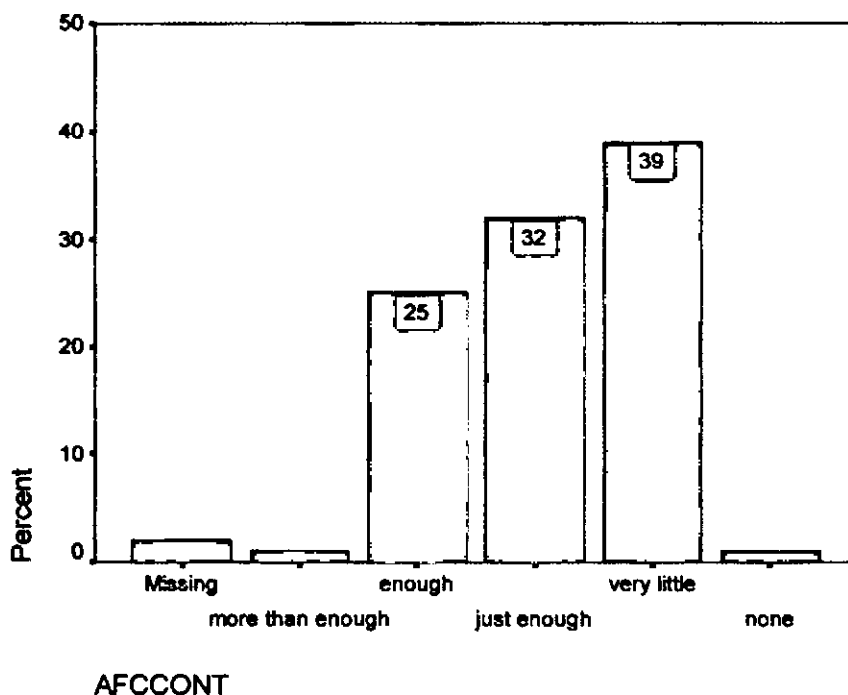
But the most significant deduction to be derived from this finding is the fact that these foreign news broadcasters play the role of agenda setting. Crafted by Mc Combs and Shaw, this theory posits that the media does not tell us what to think, but what to think about. In the context of these respondents, Keren (2002) helps us understand that events taking place in a foreign land, often geographically and psychologically remote, can only be brought to our attention via the media. Without this critical step, nobody would know about it and nobody would care about it.<sup>24</sup> This means that news of global events and what to think about these events are controlled by the foreign news broadcasters. In essence, this means that how Kenyans relate to the rest of the world is actually controlled by these foreign news broadcasters.

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<sup>23</sup> P. Vijayalakshmi, *Foreign television and Indian youth: changing attitudes*, 35

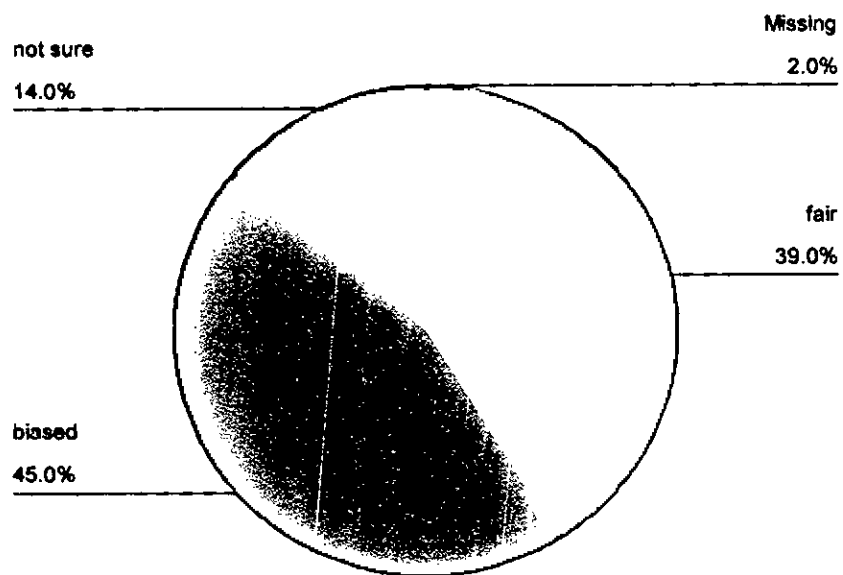
<sup>24</sup> M. Keren, *International intervention: sovereignty versus responsibility*, 83

### 3.2.3 How much African content is carried in the foreign news broadcasts?



When asked how much Kenyan or even African content they witness in the foreign news broadcasts, a majority of the respondents (39%) were of the opinion that very little is shown. Queried further about their opinion concerning the coverage, it was almost a split decision between 'fair' and 'biased' with those believing it is biased taking a slight upper hand in the final result as shown in the next pie chart (figure 3.2.4):

**3.2.4 What do the respondents think of the coverage of the foreign broadcast?**



What the above related findings reflect is a severe imbalance in the global flow of news. The respondents could be knowingly or unknowingly displaying frustration at the flow of information between the North and South and this is not a new concern. The New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) led by UNESCO in the

late 70s towards the early 80s saw the birth of a movement toward solving the discrepancy of information flow between developed countries and the less developed ones as they call countries such as Kenya.

Though much can be argued has improved, very little effect is still felt. Mohammed (1997) reminds us that the media's concentration in the hands of a few transnational corporations from a few advanced countries has led to imbalances in reporting whereby the less developed countries are often stereotyped as places where natural and man made disasters are rampant. All the while, the genuine efforts of these countries such as Kenya aren't recognized.<sup>25</sup> The respondents of these research are therefore concerned about a real issue that has been in existent for quite some time.

But these findings also mean that different audiences will interpret or understand what they view differently. They therefore engage and interact with the media actively and not passively as some may believe. That's why they are able to form opinions regarding the coverage. In this light, Kenya media practitioners should understand to treat their audiences as active participants to events on TV not just passive TV viewers.

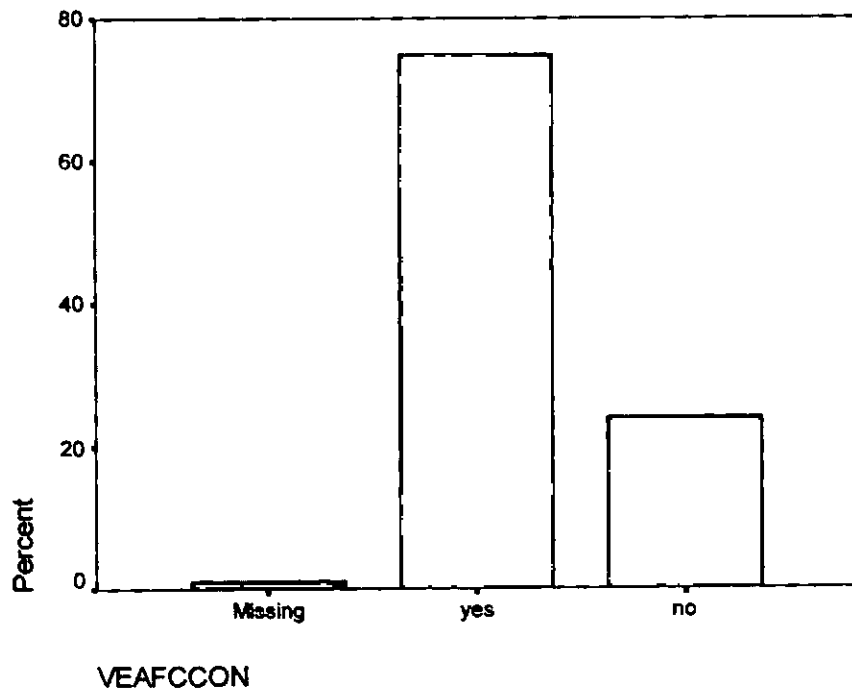
Its possible for this young Kenyan TV audience to be caught up in the media's social construction of reality because if 'very little' Kenyan/African content is carried in the content of the foreign news broadcasts, then that means their construction of Kenya in the news is built by merging scant stories and images to create a reality for their

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<sup>25</sup> A. MOHAMMED, *International communication and globalization: a critical introduction*, 124

audiences at the end of the day, and that includes their local audiences. This is better captured in Kellner's (2003) observation of how some TV viewers regularly live in the world of media hyper reality, and the media spectacles periodically appear to focus audience attention and take over every day life.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.2.5 Can negative projection about Kenya by the international TV news media affect Kenyans' self- confidence?



As the above result shows, most of the respondents felt that indeed negative projections about Kenya can affect the self confidence of the population. 74% of the

<sup>26</sup> D. KELLNER, Media spectacle, 102

respondents thought that this was possible. Which led to the question 'why?' Diverse answers were given:

A large number of the respondents like the 100<sup>th</sup> respondent thought that 'the information they (foreign broadcast) give on TV does not reflect the truth in most cases and that hurts.' Others like the 95<sup>th</sup> respondent felt that 'they still have colonial attitude which reflect in their stories hence belittle the Kenyan audience'. The 75<sup>th</sup> respondent opined that 'they tend to undermine the positive side of Kenyan as a whole and that can affect self confidence.' The 23<sup>rd</sup> respondent was even more blunt by stating that she 'won't be proud to introduce herself as Kenyan.' These are just samples of the responses received from those who thought that the self confidence of Kenyans can be affected by negative projections by the international TV news media.

Diverse opinions were also received from those who thought that the self confidence of Kenyans could not be affected by negative projections in the international TV news media. The 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent for instance felt that 'it doesn't matter what the international media says as long as the local media presents unbiased news.' To this respondent, the local media is working just fine and foreign news organizations should not cause any concern. The 8<sup>th</sup> respondent was of the opinion that 'Kenyans are resilient and are not easily swayed by what the outside world thinks.' The 10<sup>th</sup> respondent however believed that 'negative projections can challenge Kenyans to improve on their

weakness.’ Respondent number 42 on the other hand was of the strong opinion that negative projections actually ‘promote openness/democracy.’

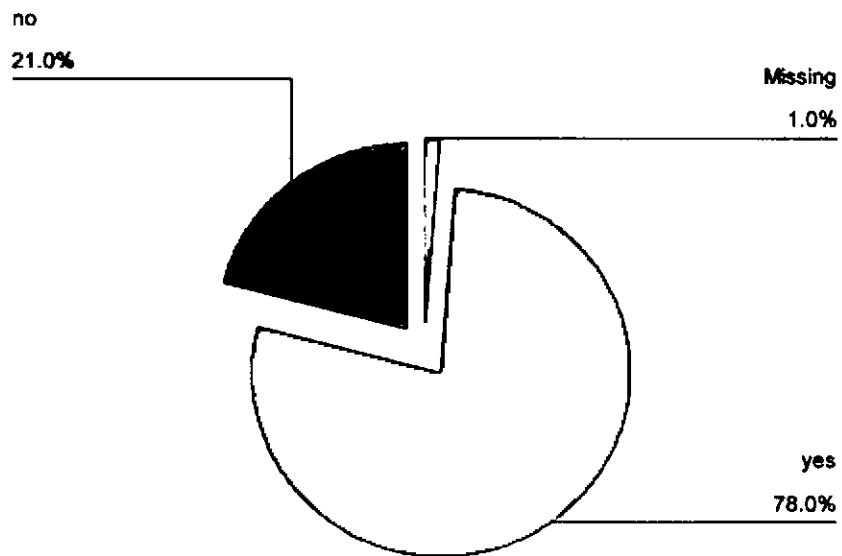
Here, an argument can emerge of whether the media really does influence audiences or that is just a misled belief. The idea of media impotence as developed by Lazarsfeld comes in here through Stanley (2008) who argues that studies conducted have found audiences to be resistant to persuasion and extremist manipulation.<sup>27</sup> This belief was supported by the idea that people were influenced by other people and not the media. This could actually explain the findings of this research in which some people were convinced that negative projections could not affect their self confidence. But at the same time, these same research findings couldn’t side step the possibility of negative consequences of the media in the long run. Stanley later admits that active audiences can still be misled by poorly constructed or inaccurate media presentations.<sup>28</sup> This explanation sheds light on the opinion of the other group that felt they could actually be affected by negative projections.

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<sup>27</sup> J. STANLEY, *Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future*, 129

<sup>28</sup> J. STANLEY, *Mass Communication Theory: Foundations, Ferment, and Future*, 231

### 3.2.6 Connection between Kenya's underdevelopment and the country's lack of self confidence?



According to the research findings above, 78% of the respondents felt that there was a connection between self confidence of Kenyans and the country's state of development. This led the researcher to ask them why which led to different answers.

Respondent number 76 sees a link between self confidence of Kenyans and development. He goes on to state that 'the lack of self confidence emanates from politicians.' The 81<sup>st</sup> respondent also shares the same sentiments and says that 'we keep

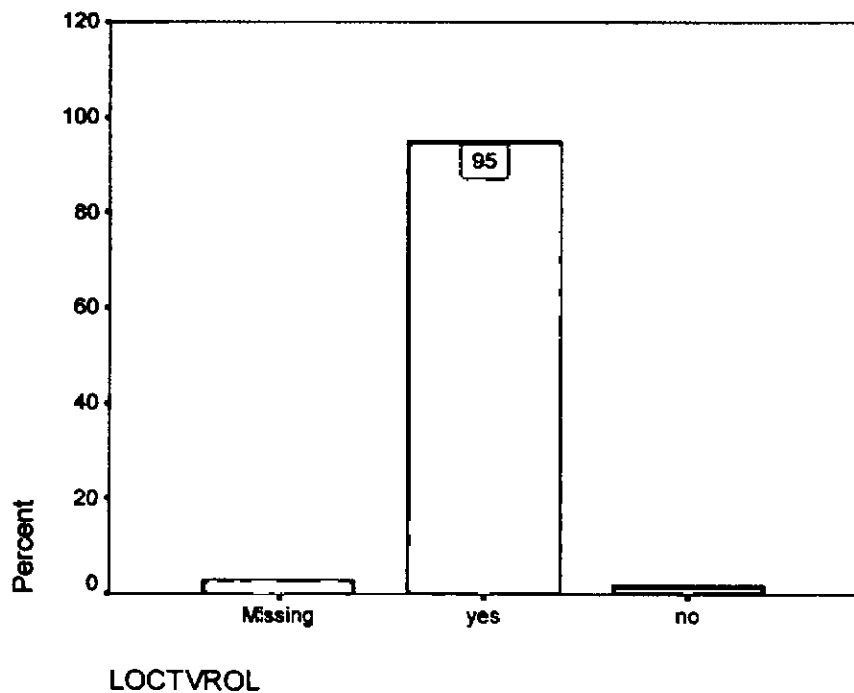
on relying on foreigners instead of our own resources.' She gets further support from the 56<sup>th</sup> respondent who blames the Kenya government 'lack of will to champion development.' Respondent 42 sees 'an inferiority complex in Kenya compared to other countries which are developed.' The 24<sup>th</sup> respondent is not impressed by politicians, she says 'the citizens are determined and confident but the leaders aren't.' Her opinion is again supported by respondent number 74. He states 'poor governance and corrupt leaders are to blame.'

From the findings above, it was clear that most respondents blamed politicians and leaders for much of the poor development standards in Kenya. Most acknowledged that self confidence has something to do with development but still felt that Kenya's leaders have to shoulder the blame for most if not all national failures. This view, prevalent among the respondents is arguably the reflection of the opinions of most Kenyans. Blaming the politicians is a well accepted trend in Kenya. The media has made politicians the center of the country's everyday life. News content is largely politics. Its no wonder Kenyans such as these respondents can easily find who to blame for their problems.

But where is personal responsibility? While its true politicians in Kenya have fallen short of the public's expectation, the media in Kenya may well be encouraging the habit of blaming the other without regard for your own responsibility in the matter. Young Kenyans need to realize that the largest responsibility for the prosperity of

Kenya lies with each individual making the effort to achieve that and not just politicians.

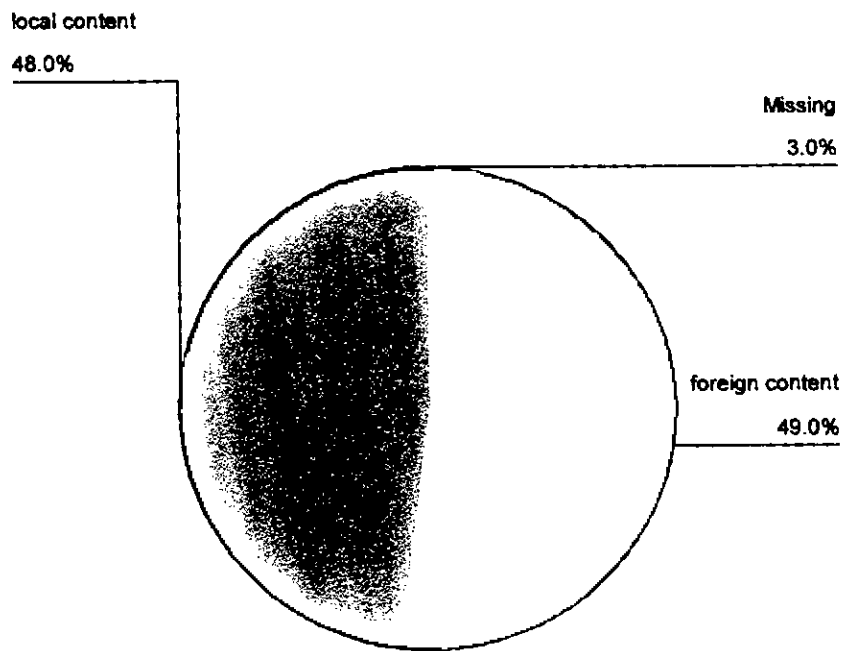
**3.2.7 Do local TV stations have a role to play in changing Kenya's perception both locally and abroad?**



An overwhelming majority of the respondents felt that the local TV stations have a role to play to change Kenya's perception both locally and abroad. Such a high figure could mean that the respondents want to see more positive local stories which led to the question of what they prefer to watch on Kenyan TVs between local and foreign

content. As the pie below shows (figure 3.2.8), the findings revealed a split decision between a preference for local content and foreign content

### 3.2.8. Preference between local content and foreign content on Kenyan TVs



These findings are very interesting because they could mean a number of things. The very first idea that speaks loudly from the above figures is that a good number of the Kenyan youth watch and love foreign content and programming. Some prefer them even over their own local programmes. Why is this the case? Most TV stations in

Kenya air more foreign programmes and content like music, TV series, movies and news than local. The reasons for this are diverse. But the main argument for this trend is that it costs more to produce programmes locally. Some also argue that local productions are just not up to standard (the foreign standards that they are used to).

A concern arises from the preference of foreign content in the form of 'media imperialism.' This was a theory born in the late 60's which argued that the call for 'free flow of information' by western countries, especially the USA, was actually a move to assist American media industry in its drive to achieve international domination. The foreign content have the ill potential to promote American capitalist values and interests, and erode local culture in a process of global homogenization writes Curran and Park (2000).<sup>29</sup>

To put the above view in the context of this research which is concerned with development, then it has to be understood that a dependency on the foreign content can occur. When that happens, an assumption can develop that an African country such as Kenya can only develop when it takes in western ideas and technology. What this does in the words of Senyo (1995) is to create a deep and extensive degree of subordination of African countries, thereby significantly hampering and distorting their development.

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<sup>29</sup> C.f. M. PARK – J. CURRAN, *De-Westernizing media studies*, 5

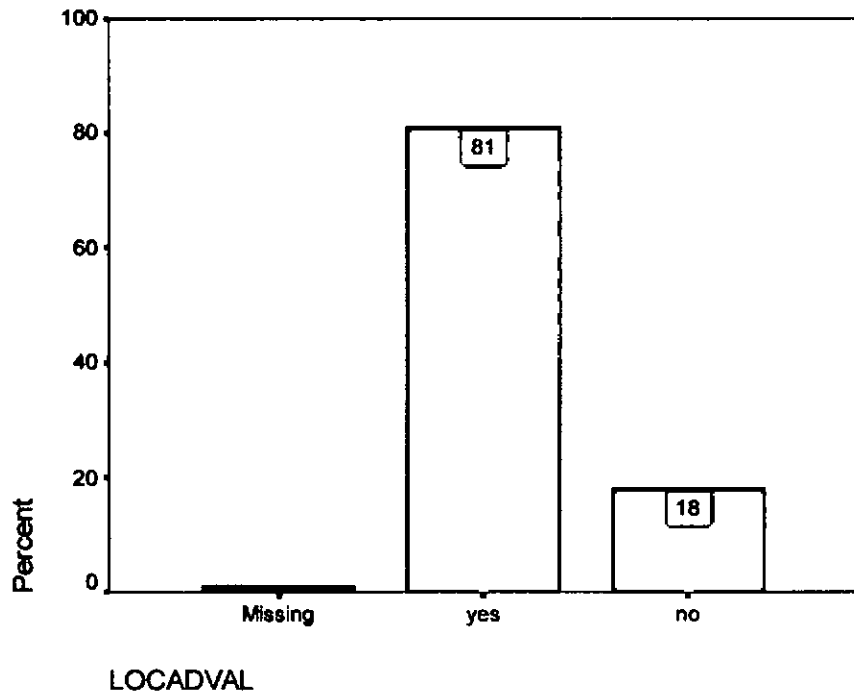
<sup>30</sup> C.f B. SENYO, *The significance of the human factor in African economic*, 42

The other thing that these findings reveal is that among the youth, there are those who prefer local programming over foreign content. Such a group needs to be catered for through increased local programming that also adds value to the society. Its even possible that if the production is creative and of real substance, loyalty could change. To fully comprehend this argument, one has to consider the responses of the subjects when asked why they preferred foreign content.

The 1<sup>st</sup> respondent for instance states that ‘the quality of production and talent are better.’ Her sentiments are echoed by the other respondents like the 96<sup>th</sup> who finds the foreign content ‘more entertaining.’ Respondent number 83 also believes the local programmes are ‘not too interesting.’ He adds that ‘the local productions lack originality as they attempt to copy from the West.’

The above sample of views and many more collected from the respondents reflect areas in which the local media need to grow in order to win over these converted audiences. A building of more expertise is therefore in order so as to produce local programmes that would attract an audience because this same audience believes that local programmes can add value to the society as the bar graph below reveals.

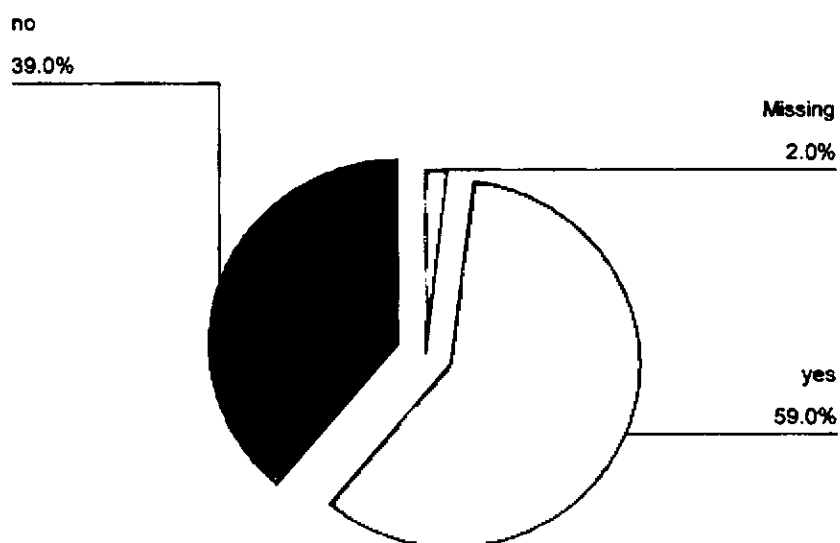
### 3.2.9 Do local programmes shown on Kenyan TVs add value to society?



Such a great response toward this question justified a subsequent question ‘why?.’ Respondent number 99 felt that ‘they can promote local talent.’ She was supported by the 87<sup>th</sup> respondent who thought that ‘they can build originality.’ Respondent number 71 was of the opinion that ‘they can effectively speak to the population because they use the language most can relate to.’ The 56<sup>th</sup> respondent was convinced that ‘they can focus on the development aspects that are changing the country.’

Such views and many more reflect an appreciation of local content by the respondents. They value the potential of local programming. However they are concerned as revealed in the earlier findings, about the poor levels of production. Much needs to be improved and consolation can be taken from the fact that there is a ready and willing audience out there.

### 3.2.10 Are Kenyans patriotic?



Asked whether Kenyans are patriotic or not, 59% of the respondents answered 'yes' while 39% 'no.' on inquiry about their answers, most of the respondents were

again quick to blame politics and political leaders for patriotism or lack of it. Again, here we see an over reliance on politics as a point of reference for decisions and lives of young Kenyans. This is a trend that has done Kenya very little good. There is clearly a need for change here.

## **Chapter 3**

### **4.0 Introduction**

The research discovered so far the power that the TV wields and its potential to influence attitudes. The discussion in the previous chapters has pointed to the fact that TV content especially the one directed to Kenya from foreign news organizations contain more often than not biased information about Kenya. Some of the audiences tend to believe the information and even those who don't, get frustrated. Their self confidence is suppressed by being bombarded with too many negative stories about themselves. The local TV stations aren't out of blame either. Most are yet to take the necessary steps to combat this situation, a fact evidenced in their kinds of programming which have a fairly foreign orientation hence adding little or n value to the local setting. To make this discussion clearer, functional theory of the media can help.

### **4.1 Functional theory**

A useful approach to comprehending the role of the TV as a medium is rooted in functional theory. Functional theory understands the media as an agent of socialization. For functionalists, all the aspects of life depends on each other in a symbiotic relationship. The idea of a harmonious social relationship is of significance to them. They argue that each society has needs which must be satisfied one way or the other. It

is this argument that makes them concerned with the diverse contributions that each part of the society makes to meet the needs.

The view of a functionalist on the society is like a human body. The human body has many related parts that always function together so as to guarantee the well being of the whole body. Emile Durkheim is one of the leading functionalists and he drew an example of how society works by comparing it to a living animal. He talked about how the various parts of a living thing work together to keep the whole body in good health. According to him, this is not much different from society and its various institutions that work in unison to maintain social order that we so much need.

A functionalist holds the opinion that order exists in society because there exists some conventional values that are common to all members of that society. This means that functionalism aims to look at the ways in which parts of the society play roles to propagate and keep the common values when promoting social order.

In Kenya, elements of Television such as the journalist or film maker can be viewed as functional because they gather and disseminate news while at the same time spread strong information like political democracy, social justice and issues of human rights or even just entertain. This meant the media serves the function of explaining to the audience and making them understand social and cultural issues such as race, politics and economy of one group of people to the other like Kenyan ethnic relations to one another and to the rest of the world.

But how can the media be dysfunctional? There are times when the media fails to represent the opinions of all members in different societies. In such an event, the

media can be said to be dysfunctional. Consider this example that has become widespread: Contemporary media practice amongst Kenya's privately owned TV stations is very preoccupied with selling their products, making quick profit and sparking more demand for their goods. They are a chip off the old block or western broadcasters. For the aim of meeting these commercial goals, they may very well over-generalize or fail to reflect a certain segment of society or group of people because much of what they air is foreign or in a format. There's very little local content that sparks genuine debate that can bring people to a much needed understanding. And when it happens, politicians as it was established in the findings dictate the tune of play. So the questions still begs: Are the TV stations in Kenya performing their functional role as media to Kenyans? The following programme (project) proposal is a step towards the solution however minimal.

#### **4.2 Current situation**

Kenya has become a country that lies to itself about its own self. The country lacks enough meaningful values and ambitions that can make it stand as unique on the world stage. Kenyans continually convince each other that they are one nation and united as such, but the problem is the message is not communicated or perceived by individuals internally. It is no wonder that many events in this country always spark a trend of people running back to their ethnic cocoons. There's no doubt that every

society has problems but the plight of Kenyans being unable to genuinely work as a united nation has reached crisis proportions. The local TV stations have a role to play to challenge all these negative trend and start making Kenya dialogue with itself to find out not only what we are doing wrong but discover the way forward.

#### **4.3 A programme called 'Kenyanness'**

It is in the light of the above that the researcher would like propose a TV programme that would be called 'Kenyanness.' The idea behind this particular title was born out of a question: 'what makes us Kenyan?' it's a simple question yet can mean so much. Most people who consider themselves Kenyans do so based on a number of reasons like they hold a Kenyan national I.D or passport, were born within this piece of land called Kenya, live here or just because they can vote in elections every five years. But is that enough? The title will therefore provoke the audience into thinking deeply and inwardly about what values they hold an share with others around them that can identify them as Kenyans.

#### **4.4 Target audience**

The target audience for this TV programme will be largely the 18 to 35 age bracket. This group, conventionally referred to as the youth make up the bulk of Kenya's population therefore, grabbing their attention is essential. This particular group also happens to be most 'modernized' meaning they subscribe to more foreign values form the food they eat, to how they dress or even talk. Most do this blindly and are unaware of the consequences of their lifestyles. They happen to be more at risk of

falling prey to the whims of foreign control. Worshipping most foreign ideas, products and services without asking any questions has also left this group rather disillusioned because they have very little they can lay claim to as their own.

The pre independence generation of Kenya had a common goal that upon which their dreams and aspirations gravitated. They were united against a common enemy, the colonizer. This gave them a sense of cohesion and was reflected in the shared values they felt at the time. They were proud of standing up together on the foundation of their commonly held beliefs and this enabled them achieve their dream of self rule. At independence, this generation felt proud to be Kenyan. At that time, arguably more than any other time in Kenyan history, it felt good to be Kenyan. But the ultimate question was next? Subsequent generations took the mantle from this generation but somewhere along the line, they faltered and fell. And this has led to the state of affairs we witness today. The youth of Kenya need to dream again about building this country. They need to re discover the joys of genuine unity and how it can be achieved, not just lip service to love and building one's country. That is why 'Kenyaness' as a programme will target this group of young Kenyans.

#### **4.5 Communication objectives**

The objective if this programme will be to spark debate and conversations among the youth about their role in the success or failure of Kenya. Each country has dreams and goals that it wants to achieve. But to do so it requires the population to lend its full support both in hearts and minds to the course. The ideas and values that drive a

country and make it unique and stand out are born out of the passion of the people. After all, the best resource a country can be found in its people.

Given this fact, this programme will challenge the Kenyan youth to rethink about the values he/ she holds and whether they are of benefit to those around him irrespective of ethnicity, political opinion, social class and so on. The process of national cohesion that is necessary for a country's advancement has to be born out of a broad consensus from Kenyans of all walks of life. The programme will pose questions aimed at making the audience think about what values we share to create convergence of ideas. At the same time differences will be explored but with the aim to improve relations between Kenyans.

The questions will be clear and precise while at the same time hard hitting, not to shy even from controversy. For example, the audience will be challenged to think about whether patriotism is real or a just a façade in Kenya. While it implies unity, the audience will be called upon to think deeper about the ties that bind Kenyans. Are they real? Kenyans seem to be caught in a lie that they are one country. Rhetoric from politicians and civic leaders seem to cement this. But why is that when push comes o shove, people ran back to their ethnic cocoons and sing the 'my people' song . So what is it? Is someone a Kikuyu first, Luo first, Pokot first, before he/she is Kenyan? Such debates and discussions will be explored by the programme to make the audience think about how they relate to one another as Kenyans.

And to contextualize the discussions, issues bedeviling Kenya such as grand corruption and negative ethnicity will be feature in the running of the programme. The

show will present discussions on positive role models that the youth can look up to. Politics and politicians have taken the centre stage in Kenya's media and hence most of the discussions surround this. But has it done any good? There is need for good local role models from different spheres of life that the youth can emulate and gain proper values.

And so when carefully executed, this programme will systematically raise the consciousness of young Kenyans to ponder more deeply about what separates them as members of one country under the same flag, but at the same time what they have in common from which they can build understanding, confidence, and unity. They will have to face the ugly truth of the divisions between us while at the same time seek to find what can bridge these differences.

#### **4.6 Programme format**

For this programme to fully succeed, it will have to adopt a both a documentary format and debate involving live audience. This will coalesce well considering the topics it will attempt to cover. The documentaries will feature interesting human stories in line with the programme's objectives while the debate will bring in insightful and provocative discussions with the audience.

The programme should run for about 40 minutes on a weekly basis on any of the mainstream TV channels like KTN (Kenya Television Network), NTV (Nation Television), Citizen TV, KBC (Kenya Broadcasting Corporation), or even K24 (Kenya 24). These mainstream TV stations have a great appeal to a general audience of diverse

backgrounds. Therefore they make the ideal path to reaching out to the target audience. The allocated time of 40 minutes is also ideal to communicating effectively to a young audience. It is arguably not easy to have a captive youthful audience for long periods of time, especially when the topic involves serious matters. But to give the programme a much needed appeal to the youth, there will be live performances by various local musicians and comedians on different episodes of the programme. This will draw the young audience in and tie their attention to the programme.

Should the programme grow and draw in more audiences, the shoot of the different episodes could be shifted from the studio setting to on location shooting whereby each subsequent episode will be shot on location in different parts of Kenya. This will give the youth in other cities and towns across Kenya to participate in the programme, gain insight and share knowledge. The different locations could be institutions of higher learning spread over Kenya. This will be an act of bringing the debate closer to the young people. By listening and challenging each other, they can exchange values necessary for national cohesion.

Before the debate, the audience will encounter the documentaries in the form of short stories. The short stories will captivate the audience by telling the stories of unknown ordinary people, going through the challenges facing Kenya today, their lives will be followed on camera and each of their encounters used to portray these challenges. It could be a survivor of the post election violence in Kenya of December 2007 to 2008, an innovative young man who's technological creations go unfunded or

un noticed, a high school leaver who is disillusioned about his career prospects, or even a Kenyan trying so hard to apply for visa to look for greener pastures in the west etc. All these and more seemingly ordinary stories represent a story within a story. They carry symbolisms of common practices and occurrences within Kenya, most with negative repercussions for all Kenyans.

#### **4.7 Funding**

As for the funding of this programme, it could either be an in-house production or funded by an foreign source. With an in-house production, the willingness of one of the mainstream TV station to take up the full production will be key. If they see the programme as a valuable addition to their in house production then they can cater for the funding provided it pulls in viewers who in turn would attract advertisers necessary for the station's survival.

As for out sourcing for funds, various organization could be approached like N.G.Os (Non Governmental Organizations) that are interested in civic education on issues such as gender, justice, media literacy, peace, culture and so on. Government organizations could also be of much assistance. An ideal funding partner for this project could be 'Brand Kenya Initiative.' The project was set up by the government barely after the post election violence of 2007/2008. It was noted that Kenya had suffered a huge blow to its international image. At the same time, divisions among ethnic groups were at an all time high. The country needed to come together and brand itself as one nation with proper values. Different sectors of the country and especially the media

have been engaged by this process to generate content that can positively serve the campaigns of Brand Kenya Initiative. This programme idea could be a welcome idea to the process of branding Kenya as country.

#### 4.8 Budget of the programme

The following is a tentative budget for the programme. Costs may change due to the market forces at the time of execution.

<b>Personnel on Studio</b>	<b>How many</b>	<b>Cost per shooting session of 3hours(KSH)</b>
Director	1	23,000
Video Recorder Operator	1	12,000
Assistant Director	1	13,500
Technical Director	1	22,000
Floor manager	1	15,000
Camera Operator	3	60,000
Light Director	1	10,000
Sound Director	1	10,000
Grip	1	5000
Set designer	1	6,500
<b>Personnel on field</b>		
Boom operator	1	7000
Videographer	1	18,000
Lighting Director	1	7000
Sound recordist	1	7000
Researcher	1	10,000
<b>Post-Production Personnel</b>		
Editor	1	15,000
Assistant Editor	2	20,000
Script writer	1	10,000
Narrator	1	15,000
<b>Travel</b>		<b>Total</b>
Transport		150,000
Per Diem		250,000

<b>Licenses and Rights</b>		<b>Total</b>
		<b>50,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>686,000</b>

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[www.ap.org/pages/about.html](http://www.ap.org/pages/about.html)

<http://www.biodiversityinternational.org>

Appendix

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

TANGAZA COLLEGE  
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa  
Institute of Social Communication

Dear friends

I am a student of from the above institute. As part of my academic work, I am conducting a research on “the role of the TV in changing attitudes to promote effective development in Kenya.” I therefore humbly request you to read through carefully giving your personal views. This research is for academic purpose only and the views expressed will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

1. Age (years)  
 18-21  22-25  Above 25
2. Gender  
 Male  Female
3. Where do you live? (in Nairobi)  
.....
4. Do you watch TV  
 Yes  No
5. How many hours do you watch TV in a week  
 1-7hrs  7-14hrs  14-28hrs  28-35 hrs
6. Do you watch any foreign news broadcasts? (e.g CNN, BBC, SKY NEWS etc)  
 Yes  No
7. How much Kenyan/African content do think are carried in their news content?  
 More than enough  Enough  Just enough  Very little  None
8. What do you think of their coverage?  
 Fair  Biased  Not sure
9. Do you think negative projections about Kenya by the international TV news media can affect self- confidence of Kenyans?  
 Yes  No  
Why?.....  
.....
10. Do you think there’s a connection between Kenya’s under development and the country’s lack of self-confidence?  
 Yes  No  
Why? .....  
.....
11. Do you think local TV has a role to play in changing Kenya’s perception both locally and abroad?  
 Yes  No

12. Are Kenyans patriotic?

Yes  No

Why? .....

13. Between foreign content (programmes) and local content on Kenyan TVs, which one do you prefer?

Foreign content  Local content

Why? .....

14. Do you think the local content (programmes) shown on Kenyan TVs add value to society?

Yes  No

Why? .....