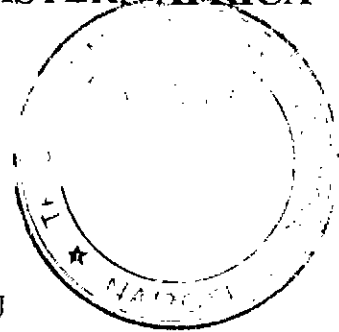


**INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**

**TANGAZA COLLEGE**

**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**



**GITHINJI M. WANJIRU**

**CREATING AWARENESS ABOUT CANCER IN CHILDREN  
THROUGH TV**

Supervisor

**Francis Chishimba**

A Full Scale Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Bachelor of Arts in Social Communication

**NAIROBI 2009**

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all the children who are suffering from cancer, those who have survived it and their parents and guardians who face the reality of childhood cancer each day of their lives. To all the children of Kenya, God has a special plan for each and every one of you.



**Every Child is a Sign of  
God's Love,  
A Child is  
The Greatest  
Of God's Gifts**

Mother Theresa'

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

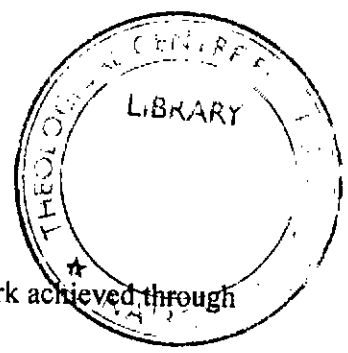
In a special way, I would like to acknowledge and salute my mother for all her support in my journey through Tangaza. She has been and will always be my pillar of strength and my inspiration in life. Mum, thank you for always being there for me.

To the rest of my family, Dad, Mush and Davie, I thank each and every one of you for the individual assistance you have offered me in one way or the other and for all your prayers.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor Francis Chishimba for his guidance, support, assistance and patience throughout this journey. Thank you.

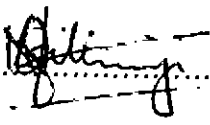
To all my colleagues and friends, thank you for your assistance. To all of you, thank you and May God bless you abundantly!

## STUDENT DECLARATION



I, the undersigned declare that this project is my original work achieved through personal reading, critical reflection and scientific research.

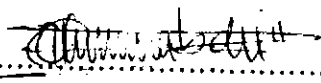
It is submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Social Communication. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been fully cited and acknowledged.

Signed:  .....

Name of Student: GITHINJI M. WANJIRU

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2009

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

Signed:  .....

Name of Supervisor: FRANCIS CHISHIMBA

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2009

## ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
DFID	Department of International Development
HIV	Human Immune Virus
IDP's	Internally Displaced People
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TB	Tuberculosis
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UICC	International Union against Cancer
WHO	World Health Organization

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# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

When you watch their bright faces as they play around, ambition and the hope of a bright future written all over their young faces, one cannot tell of the agony and pain these children endure every single day. Their little giggles and laughs disguise what the little ones have to go through at such tender ages. For some, the tumors can clearly be seen protruding from their faces while for others, their tiny wasted bodies tell it all. Childhood cancer is a reality in our Kenyan society affecting many children across the country.

For ages, cancer has been known to affect only the middle aged and the aged in society but then children as young as five years and below also suffer from different types of cancer and such cases are more prevalent than in the past. This is as a result of various factors discussed in this study as well as lack of awareness amongst the public. Childhood cancer is indeed a matter of great concern.

A cancer is a cell that has lost its normal control mechanisms. It develops from the abnormal and uncontrolled division of cells which then invade and destroy the surrounding tissues. Cancer cells spread in the body through either the blood stream, lymphatic channels or across body cavities which eventually set up secondary tumors in areas distant from the original tumor.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Berkow, R. (1997) *The Merck Manual of Medical Information*, New York: Merc & Co INC, 789.

Childhood cancer is not a one disease entity. It's a spectrum of different malignancies which vary by the type of history, the site of disease origin, race, sex and age. The most common cancers in children are leukemia, lymphoma and brain tumors.<sup>2</sup>

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

It is deeply touching to see young children confined in a ward and in so much pain at an age when they should be cuddling dolls, building mud houses and learning how to kick footballs. For these little angels, every dawn represents another long day of pain and misery.

A lot of campaigns have been carried out to create awareness about various cancers affecting adults through the media. These campaigns have proven successful where for instance, during campaigns for breast cancer awareness, many women turn up for tests and learn how to carry out self breast examination and how to identify cancer symptoms. The same case applies to cervical cancer for which several campaigns have been instituted across the country in public hospitals and health centers to encourage women to go for regular checkups to ensure early detection. As for childhood cancer, there is a general lack of knowledge among the public.

In the first part of this research, a survey was carried out to find out if the public knew about childhood cancer. It was revealed that a majority of the population have no idea that children can get cancer.

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<sup>2</sup> Walter. A., [http://kidshealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/cancer/cancer\\_kinds.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/cancer/cancer_kinds.html), (21/3/2009), 2-3.

This revelation creates a need to come up with a program aimed at creating awareness amongst the public to encourage them to take their children for regular checkups so that in case cancer strikes, it can be detected early enough since most childhood cancers are treatable as long as they are detected early.

The world over, children are taken to be the weaker members of society who unfortunately undergo so many challenges which they have nothing to do with and being so vulnerable, they can only depend on adults to protect them and provide answers.

## **OBJECTIVES**

According to a study carried out by the researcher to find out how much the public knew about cancer in children, it is evident that there is a general lack of awareness about the existence of the disease amongst the public. The aim of this study is to come up with an effective TV program which will highlight on issues surrounding the disease so as to inform and educate the public. Through its visuals, TV is an effective communication tool which can easily compel people to act on important issues. This will therefore be an effective tool in reaching the communication objective targeted by this program.

## **SOCIAL RELEVANCE**

Matters of ill health are very sensitive in any society. When a disease strikes, it not only affects the person who is sick but also causes physical and mental stress to the family and community as well.

Children are regarded as the future generation and it's the joy of any society to watch its children grow into healthy adults as this symbolizes the success of that particular generation and society as a whole. When a disease of this magnitude strikes children at such tender ages, many are the questions it raises. Why a child? How can this happen? How much time will he or she have? Cancer is largely viewed as a death penalty because very little is known about it and in most cases, it is detected at a very late stage when it has already reached an advanced stage and spread out through the entire body.

For young children, the situation is much worse because unless a child is in pain or discomfort, an emerging ailment will not be detected easily. Unfortunately, in the initial stages, cancer is not painful so it is not easy to detect when a child is suffering.

By carrying out this research, the target is to come up with a viable communication program which will serve to provide information to the public concerning the disease. As a communicator, my ambition in life is to try and tackle issues that affect children in any way that I can as my contribution in making society a better place for children.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology to be used is carrying out research from books and the internet as well as conducting a field research through a structured questionnaire for quantitative data analysis.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

- TV is the best medium for airing a documentary on childhood cancer.
- People have access to TV therefore a TV documentary on childhood cancer will be effective.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE PROJECT**

Carrying out a study on such a sensitive matter can be very challenging where people do not feel free to talk about their experiences. It is even more difficult if it is about a child where guardians feel extremely over protective.

In carrying out the field research, finances can be a major limitation. This may also be experienced in the production process where equipment is hired, transport is needed and several accessories are bought such as tapes.

Ensuring that the communication objective is achieved can also be a big challenge where results are only achieved if the audience gets the message and is compelled to act.

## **A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS AND PROJECT**

The research work has three chapters. In chapter one, the background of the issue, literature review, definition of terms and the social significance of the problem have already been discussed in the first part of this research. The information gathered serves as a basis for the second part of this study which will be a build up developing further on the work done in the first part.

In chapter two, the research work will contain an analysis of the quantitative data and qualitative data collected in the field research which will be aimed at determining the likelihood of the program to make an impact and the public's views on how the program should be presented. This is substantiated by the relevant communication theories.

Chapter three elaborates the communication strategy based on two communication theories applicable to the problem under consideration.

The entire project will be centered on a production project which will be a small documentary program focusing on the issues concerning cancer in children. The purpose of the program will be to provide relevant and educative information to the public concerning this disease so as to help combat it.

The research ends with a summary of the entire research process and an analysis of the success of the communication strategy used in tackling the social issue at hand.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

For years, cancer has widely been known to be a spectrum of cancerous malignancies affecting the middle aged and the aged members of society. On the rare occasions that the disease has been associated with children, it is easily dismissed as a pure case of heredity. In recent times though, there are various cancers that are only found in children and many more children are being diagnosed by the day. Cancer develops when a change in a cell's genetic material causes the cell to become cancerous. This change is brought about by agents called carcinogens such as chemicals, viruses, radiation or sunlight in a process called initiation. In the process through which the normal cell becomes cancerous, its DNA undergoes change which is hard to detect.<sup>3</sup>

It is a disease that is widely taken to be a death penalty because in most cases it is diagnosed in the later stages when it has already spread to other parts far off from the site of the original tumor. Although most childhood cancers are curable, the situation is much more complicated because for children, unless they feel pain, it is hard to detect when they are not well.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 789.

Many are the times a child falls and gets bruises but as long as there is no pain, the wound is forgotten only to be discovered accidentally by the parent several days later. Unfortunately for cancer, its initial stages are not painful and most symptoms start showing later on as the disease has eaten further into the body.

The world is striving to decrease poverty levels in developing nations and modernize the world. Development is necessary for improving standards of living for all people of the world but, there are counter effects of this development. Many countries have seen reduced poverty levels and increased industrialization over the years however, this has led to changes on the environment through pollution, the lifestyles people have adopted and diets that are more conducive to cancer such as fast-foods, lack of activity and exercise and increased tobacco usage.<sup>4</sup>

## **1.0 BACKGROUND HISTORY**

The word cancer came from “Hippocrates” the father of medicine who was a Greek physician. The term describes a crab which tumors resemble. Though he named “cancer”, he did not discover the disease. The oldest documented case of cancer was from ancient Egypt in 1500b.c where eight cases of tumors were recorded. The Egyptians removed surface tumors surgically in a manner similar to how they are removed today. It is not a disease of our modern industrialized age.

In olden age, it was said to be caused by excess black bile in parts of the body while the Egyptians believed it was caused by the gods.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Arjuman, T., [www.dcp2.org/news/74](http://www.dcp2.org/news/74), (23/3/2009), 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Williamson, R., <http://www.rare-cancer.org/history-of-cancer.html>, (30/1/2008), 3.

## **1.1 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **1.1.1 Cancer**

A cancer is a cell that has lost its normal control mechanisms and thus it has unregulated growth. Cancer cells develop from normal cells when a change in the cells genetic material makes the cells become cancerous and as they grow and multiply, they form a mass of cancerous tissues that invade adjacent tissues and spread around the body.<sup>6</sup>

### **1.1.2 Child**

A child is in most cases defined as every human being below the age of puberty.<sup>7</sup> The United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as anyone below 18 years. For the purpose of this study, the word child refers to a young person below 13 years who is totally dependant on his/her parents. This age group is vulnerable to cancer.

### **1.1.3 Childhood**

Is a development phase in humans between infancy and adulthood. In the study, it will be used to relate cancer to children that is "childhood cancer".

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<sup>6</sup> Drake, P., (n.d.) *American cancer society, You Are Not Alone*, n.p, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Bantam, (1990) *The Bantam Medical Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Bantam Books Publishing Company 1982.

### **1.1.4 Leukemia**

Is a cancer which affects white blood cells which are the body's defense against infective organisms and foreign substances. Leukemia occurs when the process of the white blood cells developing from stem cells in the bone marrow goes wrong and produces a cancerous change which involves the rearrangement of cells complex genetic material-chromosomes. Leukemia's are the most common childhood cancer.

The most common leukemia in children is acute lymphocytic leukemia and acute myelogenous leukemia. Acute means rapidly developing. It is mostly recognized by bone and joint pain, fever, weakness and bleeding.<sup>8</sup> Leukemia commonly occurs in children between 2 and 8 years old although its peak age is in 4 year olds. Children who have inherited genetic problems such as Down's syndrome and Fanconi's anemia as well as children receiving medication for suppressing their immune system after organ transplant are at a higher risk of developing leukemia.<sup>9</sup>

### **1.1.5 Brain tumor**

A malignant brain tumor is any cancer in the brain that has the potential to invade and destroy neighboring tissues or that which has spread to the brain from elsewhere through the blood stream. Most brain cancers in children involve the cerebellum or brain stem. The most common are metastases which start from other parts of the body and spread to the brain like leukemia and lymphoma.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Hart, K., <http://www.childhood-leukemia.com/category/childhood-cancers>, (28/1/2008), 1-3.

<sup>9</sup> Walter. A., [http://kidshealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/cancer/cancer\\_kinds.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/cancer/cancer_kinds.html), (21/3/2009), 1.

<sup>10</sup> ACS, [www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI\\_2\\_4\\_1X\\_What\\_are\\_childrens\\_braid\\_spinal\\_cord\\_tumors\\_4](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI_2_4_1X_What_are_childrens_braid_spinal_cord_tumors_4), (2/2/2008), 1.

### **1.1.6 Hodgkin Lymphoma**

These are cancers of the lymphatic system which carries a specialized type of white blood cells called lymphocytes through the lymph vessels throughout the body.

Lymphoma occurs when a lymphocyte begins to multiply and crowd out healthy cells. The cancerous lymphocytes create tumors that enlarge the lymph nodes.<sup>11</sup> The cancer starts in lymph nodes and can spread to the bone marrow and other organs causing fever, weakness and swelling of lymph nodes in the armpit, neck and groin.<sup>12</sup>

### **1.1.7 Wilms' tumor**

Is a cancer of the kidneys which may result from genetic abnormalities like birth defects such as excessive growth of one side of the body and may affect one or both kidneys? It is mostly found in children of 3-5 years of age and may be recognized by a swelling or lump in the stomach or abdomen. In most cases, wilm's spreads to other parts of the body.<sup>13</sup>

### **1.1.8 Neuroblastoma**

It is the most common -outside of the brain solid tumor in children. This tumor can appear anywhere but mostly occurs in the abdomen (stomach) as a swelling.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Walter, A., [http://kidshealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/cancer/cancer\\_kinds.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/cancer/cancer_kinds.html), (21/3/2009), 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> Hart, K., <http://www.childhood-leukemia.com/category/childhood-cancers>, (3/4/2008), 2.

<sup>13</sup> Berkow, R. (1997) *The Merck Manual of Medical Information*, New York: Merc & Co INC, 1283.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1284.

### **1.1.9 Rhabdomyosarcoma**

The tumor originates from the same embryonic cells that develop into voluntary muscles and is the most common soft tissue sarcoma in children. It occurs in the head, neck, groin, arms and legs causing pain and swelling.<sup>15</sup>

### **1.1.10 Retinoblastoma**

Retinoblastoma is a cancer of the eyes. Although it is rare, it accounts for 5% of childhood blindness and usually occurs in children under the age of five.<sup>16</sup>

### **1.1.11 Bone Cancers**

These are cancers that start in the bones and are very common in children. Primary bone cancer is different from metastatic bone cancer, which is cancer that has spread to the bone. Metastatic bone cancer is named for the place the cancer came from and is more common than primary bone cancer because many types of cancer spread from elsewhere to the bone. The two types of primary bone cancers found in children are Osteosarcoma and Ewing sarcoma.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Hart, K., <http://www.childhood-leukemia.com/category/childhood-cancers>, (28/1/2008), 2-4.

<sup>16</sup> Berkow, R. (1997) *The Merck Manual of Medical Information*, New York: Merc & Co INC, 1284.

<sup>17</sup> Hart, K., <http://www.childhood-leukemia.com/category/childhood-cancers>, (28/1/2008), 2.

## 1.2 LACK OF INFORMATION

Childhood cancer is a problem shrouded by lack of knowledge and information about it. Many people know nothing about it and those who know have very little information. Research carried out in the first part of this study shows that only 45.7% of the sampled population knows of the existence of cancer in children. Of this number, the majority know about it because they either know or knew of a child suffering from or who suffered from cancer. This shows that there is a problem in society which has to be addressed.

According to the respondents, the media fails to give medical issues as much importance as it deserves. To them, the media concentrates on other issues such as politics, politicians and controversy. The respondents felt that the media through its power and impact in society should be at the forefront to give people all the relevant information about important issues that affect them directly such as health.

People depend on the media to inform, educate, entertain and even set their agenda's for them. With the kind of influence it has over the masses, the media is an influential agent of social change therefore it can and should be used to create awareness amongst the public about childhood cancer with the aim of combating it. Information is power and lack of it is dangerous because children continue to suffer and die of a curable diseases.

According to the My Child Matters Organization, childhood cancers are curable if detected early and medication is administered immediately.<sup>18</sup> The problem here is bigger than early detection. People simply do not know that children can get cancer. Because of this, children are only taken to hospital when they fall sick or show symptoms of sickness.

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<sup>18</sup> UICC Website, in <http://www.worldcancercampaign.org>, (24/3/2009), 2.

Unfortunately, at its onset, cancer is not painful and in most cases, its symptoms only start showing when it reaches advanced stages. This therefore complicates the problem further creating an urgent need to create awareness.

In dealing with this kind of problem, the weapon is knowledge. The first part of this study proved that childhood cancer is a problem which needs to be addressed therefore creating a need for a program which will educate and give the public all the necessary information about this problem.

### **1.3 MEDICAL CAMPAIGNS**

In Kenya, unlike HIV/AIDS, malaria, immunization, TB and Sexually Transmitted Illnesses (STI's) which have ongoing campaigns throughout the year, cancer awareness is not anywhere in the top Ministry of Health list of priorities.<sup>19</sup>

When HIV/AIDS was declared a top most killer in East Africa and a national disaster in Kenya in 1999 by the then President Daniel Moi, many campaigns were carried out to create awareness, educate and fight its spread. At the time, the prevalence rate was 13%.

Through the media, the Government and many other stakeholders launched massive campaigns throughout the country with enough funds being allocated for the cause both from international and local donors. With all the commitment and efforts towards the fight, some level of impressive success can today be felt.

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<sup>19</sup> [www.inctr.org/publications/2007\\_v02\\_n01\\_ws08.shtml](http://www.inctr.org/publications/2007_v02_n01_ws08.shtml), (10/2/2008), 1.

By the end of 2005, the prevalence rate had significantly gone down to 7% while infection rates have impressively reduced, care for the sick has greatly improved, stigma continues to reduce and the disease is getting under control.

Malaria has been a leading cause of death amongst expectant women and children under five years in Kenya. In the past five years, massive campaigns with both local and international funding have been ongoing to promote the use of treated bed nets as an intervention measure.

The Government together with other stakeholders like the Department for International Development (DFID) started projects to promote the use of treated mosquito nets through health centers educate the public through baraza's on how to use and treat the nets and environmental hygiene to keep away mosquitos.

The Government also distributes treated mosquito nets free of charge in health centers to mothers with children below 5 years and to those in prenatal clinics. With all these efforts, the rate of malaria deaths has started going down.

A large scale factory for new generation anti-malaria bed nets is in the pipeline in Arusha Tanzania. The project which is funded by the multinational Japanese Sumitomo chemical company and Tanzania's A-Z Textile mills is aimed at boosting malaria fight in the East African region.<sup>20</sup>

In the recent past, campaigns have been launched to fight Tuberculosis (TB). In every Government hospital and health center, testing and treatment is free of charge to encourage people to get treated since it is highly contagious.

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<sup>20</sup> All Africa, <http://allafrica.com/comments/list/aans/post/post/cat/malaria.html>, (8/3/2008), 1-2.

On cancer, a lot of emphasis has been put on breast cancer. Many awareness campaigns have been launched to encourage women to go for regular checkups to ensure early detection. There has also been a massive campaign to educate women on how to conduct their own personal home tests so that they can be on the look out for any abnormalities to ensure early detection, diagnosis and treatment.

October is the breast cancer awareness month in which hospitals offer free checkups, medical guidance and treatment with an aim of controlling the disease. In late 2008, the Government started a project to encourage women to go for regular Pap-smear tests. This is a test carried out on women to check for cervical cancer. The campaign is being carried out in public hospitals at subsidized rates.

In the past, the test has been unaffordable to many so people only took the test under doctor's instructions after falling ill. With this project, many women have turned up for the test and many have been diagnosed.

As for cancer in children according to the World Health Organization (WHO) 40% of all cancers can be prevented and 75% of childhood cancers are curable if and only if, they are detected early.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, not many people know about it. The major problem is lack of awareness about it.

Although February the 4<sup>th</sup> is marked as the world cancer day, not much is known about it.<sup>22</sup> The day organized by the International Union against Cancer (UICC) is marked worldwide to raise cancer awareness amongst the public through communication and to encourage its prevention, detection and appropriate treatment.

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<sup>21</sup> Othieno, A., [http://www.inctr.org/publications/2007\\_v02\\_n01\\_ws08.shtml](http://www.inctr.org/publications/2007_v02_n01_ws08.shtml), (10/2/2008), 1.

<sup>22</sup> [www.en.wikipedia.org/world-cancer-day](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/world-cancer-day), (10/3/2008), 2.

In 2008, UICC launched a campaign dubbed "*Today's Children, Tomorrow's World*". The first part of the campaign was launched on world cancer day that year. The theme was, "*Give your child a smoke free childhood*". The campaign aimed at informing the public that smoking exposes children to cancer through second hand smoke. Second hand smoke is the smoke emitted by a smoker and it poses a lot of danger to those around him/her. It is worse, where carcinogens are believed to be in a far much more dangerous form as compared to the smoke inhaled by a smoker.<sup>23</sup>

Besides leukemia in children, second hand smoke also causes asthma, respiratory tract infections sudden infant death syndrome and inadequate lung function due to insufficient oxygen in the lungs. Children are at a greater risk of getting infected because, at the tender age, their immune system is still growing and they breathe in more air so they take in more toxins. Smoke is absorbed by all kinds of fabrics including curtains, seat cushions, clothes as well as beddings. So unless the environment is 100% smoke free, children are at a risk of developing cancer and other respiratory diseases.<sup>24</sup>

In 2009, the theme of the world cancer day was '*I love my healthy active childhood*'. This was the second year of the "*Today's Children, Tomorrow's World*" campaign. The aim of the campaign is to raise public awareness worldwide of the irrefutable link of diet, physical activity and obesity with the development of cancer and to encourage children to incorporate a healthy diet and regular exercise into their daily lives to reduce the risk of getting cancer.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.medindia.net/patients/childhealth.asp>, (2/2/2008), 2.

<sup>24</sup> Manicom, C <http://medical.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/316/21451.html>, (23/3/2009), 1.

<sup>25</sup> UICC Website, in <http://www.worldcancercampaign.org>, (24/3/2009), 1.

According to World Health Organization (WHO) obesity in the world is rising to alarming levels. One out of every ten school-age children is overweight. Of these, around 30-45 million children, that is 2-3% of children aged 5-17, are obese.<sup>26</sup> This campaign was necessitated by the fact that being overweight or obese has been shown to increase the risk of cancer among adults. Today the prevalence of overweight and obesity is rising dramatically amongst both adults and children around the world.

On celebrating world cancer day on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009, the UICC started a year long campaign to work with parents, teachers and decision makers across the world to create awareness about the link between overweight, obesity and cancer and to encourage children to eat a healthy diet, be physically active and maintain a healthy body weight. Since health habits start early in life, the campaign calls on families, health professionals, educators and policymakers to help children eat a healthy diet and be physically active, so that they can maintain a healthy body weight setting them on the right path to reduce their risk of cancer.<sup>27</sup>

#### **1.4 ROLE OF THE MEDIA**

With the freedom the media has, a media house decides what to cover and what to ignore. As much as the core function of the media is to educate and inform, the media is first and foremost a business and just like every other business, its driving force is making profits.

In Kenya, apart from the state owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) all the other media houses dwell on making maximum profits.

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. BBC Website, in <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7942479.stm>, (17-03-09), 1-2.

<sup>27</sup> [www.worldcancercampaign.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id, \(24/03/09\), 2](http://www.worldcancercampaign.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id, (24/03/09), 2).

The first priority is profit and other interests come later because the media is a business whose success largely depends on advertising revenue therefore, unless a program makes profits, it is not viable to air it. This applies to programs on medical issues as well.

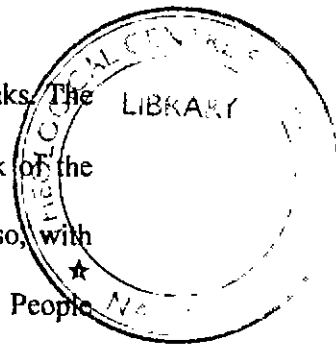
The media will always go for the juicy stories which sell and regardless of any criticism this has been and will continue to be the trend. As the media continues to shun medical issues, it is the public who end up not being sensitized.

Unfortunately, the general public largely depends on the information that the media gives so unless the media first highlights an issue to trigger public interest the public never gets to be informed.

Occasionally, the media does highlight some medical issues when there is a crisis or when there is an outbreak. HIV/AIDS is the only medical issue that receives much attention. It has over the years received a lot of media coverage since the pandemic was declared a national disaster. With many donors to sponsor various projects, a lot of sensitization has been done and the results of these efforts have been seen in the reduction of infection rates and the numbers of people who go for tests to know their status.

On other medical issues unfortunately, lack of sponsors hinders awareness creation and an issue is only highlighted when there is an outbreak. Malaria for instance is only tackled when a report about it has been released by the Ministry of Public Health or when there has been an outbreak. Even then, the coverage is sponsored by pharmaceutical companies and the Health Ministries.

Water borne diseases are also highlighted when there are risks of outbreaks. The media is at the moment concentrating on Cholera since there is an outbreak of the disease in parts of the country especially in areas around Lake Victoria. Also, with thousands of Kenyans still living in camps for the Internally Displaced People (IDP's), the media has been highlighting on the impending danger of disease outbreaks due to congestion and the living conditions in the camps.



Besides profits overriding the social responsibility of the media, lack of training for journalists on how to cover medical issues is also a major problem. Many of the journalists who venture into medical issues lack understanding of the subject thus instead of focusing on and analyzing the social economic and causal factors behind medical problems they just dwell on statistics, details about funding and governance.

Lack of specialized knowledge in the medical field and training by the media also leads to misinformation and sensational coverage. In the absence of sponsors and funding, the media fails to cover medical issues because advertisers who greatly sustain the running of media houses prefer to sponsor programs that the consumers want to watch.

The public also determines what the media airs. The audience chooses what they want to consume thus influence the material the media produces. It is the audience who dictate what the media should air or publish. There is no media text if there is no one to consume it.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Mwangi, J. (2007) "Mass Media Theories", Class notes, Tangaza College -- Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi.

When it concentrates on controversies, it is because controversy sells and that's what people want to read and watch. The media industry is a business just like any other out to make profits and it cannot survive on losses airing programs that nobody wants to watch. In most cases, the audience prefers exciting programs, politics and controversy and not stories on grim matters such as health.

The state of media coverage of medical issues is a crisis in Kenya. There is no coordination between the media and the health providers to have information flow to the public. If so little coverage is available even for a pandemic such as HIV/AIDS and sporadic outbreaks such as Malaria which is bound to hit after every rainy season, what about little known diseases such as childhood cancer?

## **CONCLUSION**

Lack of awareness is the biggest hindrance and a major problem in combating childhood cancer. Without awareness creation, the public cannot get informed and the media is the only known major player of this role as it has the capacity and capability to reach masses at a go.

It is only through awareness creation amongst the public that early diagnosis can be improved through regular checkups and thus prevent mortality out of a disease which is rather curable.

TV is the best tool in creating awareness about childhood cancer because with its audio and visual effects, it has the power to capture the masses as they see the reality, that this problem is in society.

People need to be sensitized first if war against childhood cancer is to be won. In the second part of this study, the researcher embarks on a project to create a program which will serve to provide the necessary information which is lacking.

This project is based on the identified need in society that people lack information about childhood cancer. From data collected in the field research in the first part of this study, people don't know that children can get cancer. This creation awareness program aims at informing the public so that incase cancer strikes, it can be detected early enough and medication is administered in time. If this trend is cultivated, then many children will be diagnosed and treated thus reducing mortality rates.

For this problem to be tackled, first and foremost people need to know what they are dealing with and how to go about it. Then, they can deal with it. In creating this awareness program, this project serves to take the first step in tackling the enormous task of combating childhood cancer.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents an overview of the research process. It analyses the research process carried out and its findings. The questionnaire that was used sought to analyze the respondent's views on the logistics of the proposed program.

### **2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A structured questionnaire is used for quantitative data analysis. The questions are structured such that the respondent gets choices to choose from and then explain further their answers or give their opinion in others. This is aimed at getting a better perspective on how the respondents think the program should be.

### **2.1 COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES**

This study seeks to create a TV documentary program aimed at achieve the following communication objectives.

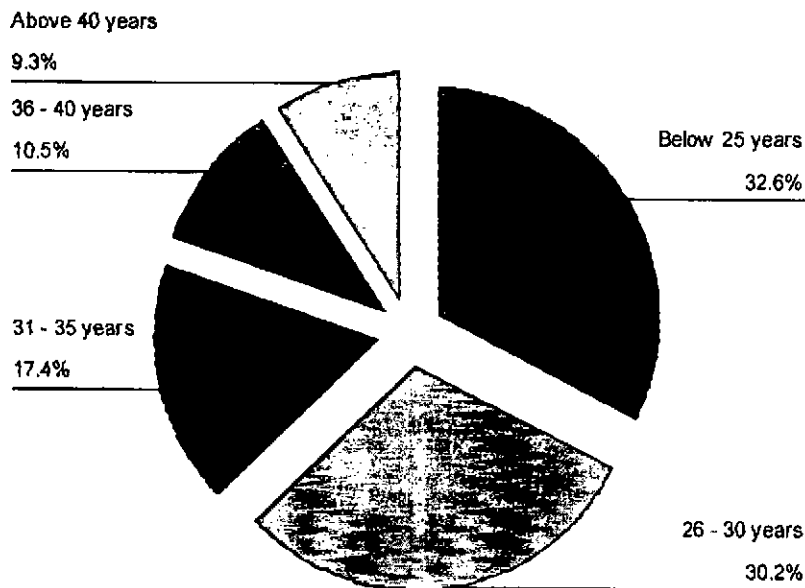
- a) To create awareness amongst the public about the existence of childhood cancer.
- b) To educate the public on all important factors surrounding the disease.
- c) To encourage the public to take their children for regular medical checkups  
so as to improve on early diagnosis.

## 2.2 DATA ANALYSIS

The research was carried out using a structured questionnaire which was distributed within Nairobi in February 2009. Out of 120 questionnaires distributed, 86 questionnaires are keyed in as valid for analysis. Data analysis for this research is carried out using the Statistical Program for Social Scientists (SPSS) software.

### Pie chart I

Distribution of respondents by age

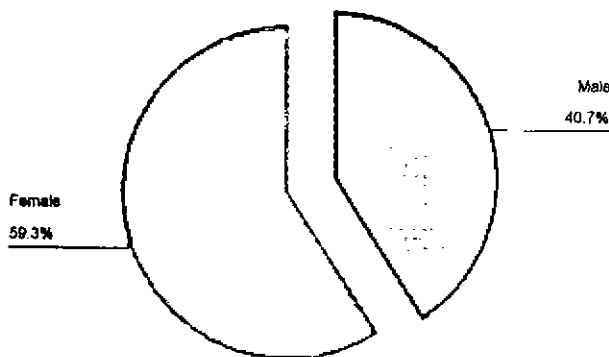


This data gives an outline of the respondents according to their ages. The study, carried out within Nairobi involved respondents ranging from around 25 years to about 40 years old. According to the data, the survey captured respondents across the age bracket.

Respondents below 25 years were the majority at 32.6% while those between 26 and 30 years old are 30.2%. Those above 40 years were the least at 9.3 % of the respondents. This data gives an insight on the age bracket of the sampled population.

### Pie chart II

Distribution of respondents by gender



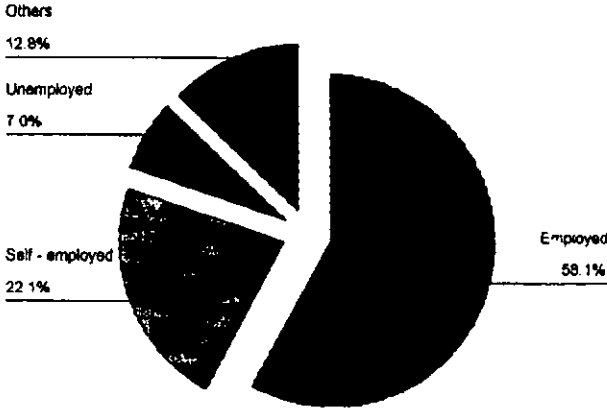
This data outlines the respondent's representation according to gender. In the study, the researcher found out that there were more women than men willing to participate in the study. 59.3% of the respondents are women while men are 40.7% of the respondents.

The researcher tried to balance the gender in the distribution of the questionnaires however, men were less willing to participate in the study. The researcher found out that, where issues touching on children are concerned, men tend to keep off.

When asked why they were unwilling to participate, majority of the men said that they had nothing to do with children. Men also claimed that they are too busy to have the time to know much about children and that naturally, women know more about children since they spend a lot of time with them.

**Pie chart III**

**Distribution of respondents by occupation**



This data defines the respondents according to their occupation. According to the sampled population, many Nairobi residents are employed as compared to those who are self-employed and unemployed. 58.1% of the respondents are employed and 22.1% are self-employed. The unemployed respondents are 7% while those doing something else other than the above cater for the remaining 12.8%.

**Table I****Distribution of respondents by if they have children**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	57	66.3	66.3	66.3
	No	29	33.7	33.7	100.0
	Total	86	100.0	100.0	

**Table II****Distribution of respondents by their children's age bracket**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 5 years	24	27.9	27.9	27.9
	6 - 10 years	22	25.6	25.6	53.5
	11 - 15 years	4	4.7	4.7	58.1
	Above 15 years	8	9.3	9.3	67.4
	None	28	32.6	32.6	100.0
	Total	86	100.0	100.0	

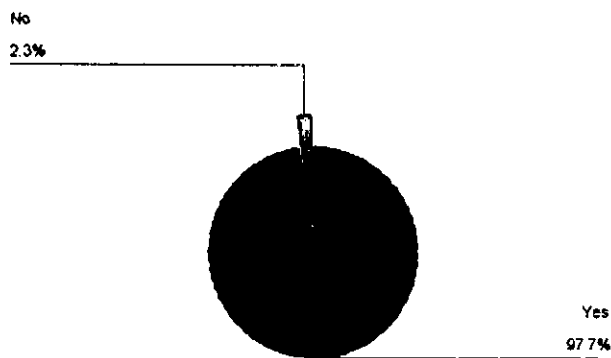
**Table III****of respondents by if they have children \* Distribution of respondents by their children's Crossfabulation**

Count		Distribution of respondents by their children's age bracket					
		Below 5 years	6 - 10 years	11 - 15 years	Above 15 years	None	Total
Distribution of respondents by if they have children	Yes	24	21	4	8		57
	No		1			28	29
	Total	24	22	4	8	28	86

The primary target audience of this study is parents with young children of age 10 years and below who are most vulnerable to childhood cancer while the secondary target audience is the general public. In the sampled population, 66.3% of the respondents are parents. Out of these, 34 respondents had children aged 10 years and below. 19 respondents have children aged 5 years and below while 16 respondents have children aged between 6 – 10 years. Those with children above 15 years are 8. 26 respondents do not have children.

#### Pie Chart IV

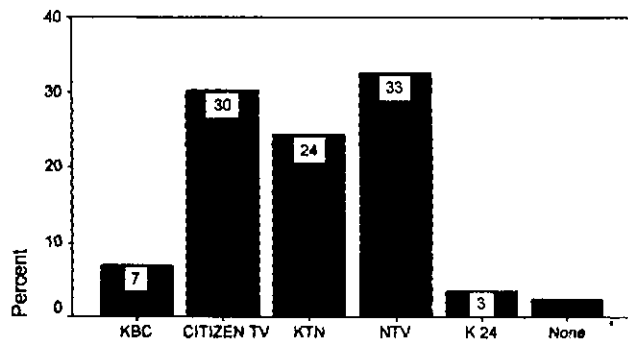
Distribution of respondents by their access to TV



The project aims at making a TV documentary program to create awareness about childhood cancer. Access to TV is therefore a key point in this project. In the study, 84 respondents had access to TV representing 97.7% of the respondents while 2 respondent representing 2.3% had no access to TV. This shows that virtually everyone in this sample area has access to TV therefore the targeted program will succeed in reaching a majority of the population.

## Graph I

### Distribution of respondents by their preferred TV station

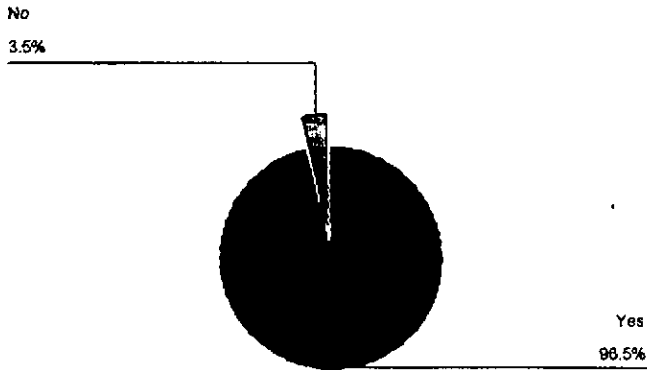


Distribution of respondents by their preferred TV station

A majority of the respondents at 32.6% prefer NTV as compared to other TV stations. 30.2% prefer CITIZEN TV, 24.4 % prefer KTN, 7% prefer KBC while only 3.5% of the respondents prefer K24. This shows that within the sample area, many people prefer watching NTV.

## Pie Chart V

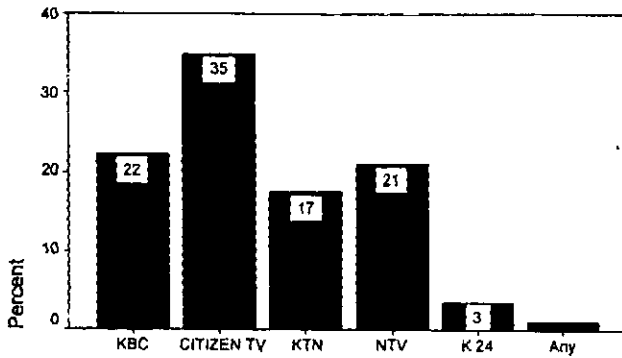
### Distribution of respondents by if TV can create awareness



This data analyses the respondent's views on whether TV can be used to create awareness about childhood cancer. 96.5% of the respondents think that it can while 3.5% of the respondents think it cannot. Only 3 out of 86 respondents think that it cannot. Most of the respondents said they think TV can be effective in creating awareness about childhood cancer because it has both visual and audio elements. Some said that TV is best because through visuals, people can get to see the reality of what is being discussed so it will make more impact. The three who don't think it cannot argue that it cannot because it is not everybody who has access to TV so the program would leave out those who have no access.

## Graph II

Distribution of respondents by TV they would like to watch the program



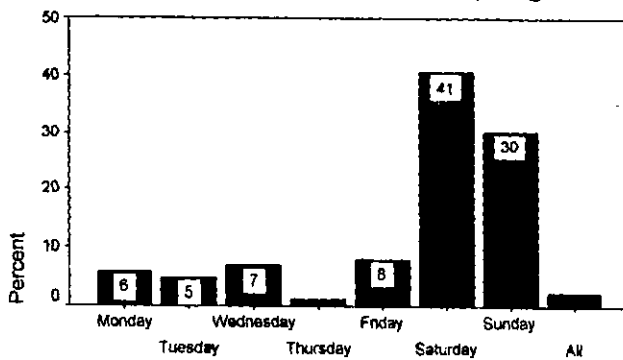
Distribution of respondents by TV they would prefer to watch the prc

The purpose of this data is to find out the most appropriate station for airing this program. Although majority of the respondents at 32.6% chose NTV as their most preferred TV station, it was not the TV of choice for airing this program. 35% of the respondents chose Citizen TV as compared to 21% who chose NTV.

On this question, there were actually many more people who preferred KBC at 22% as opposed to NTV. 17% of the respondents chose to watch the program on KTN while only 3 respondents chose to watch it on K 24. The respondents said that due to its local content, Citizen TV attracts a larger viewer ship across the country so the program on childhood cancer will reach many viewers.

### Graph III

Distribution of respondents by day  
they'd like to watch the program

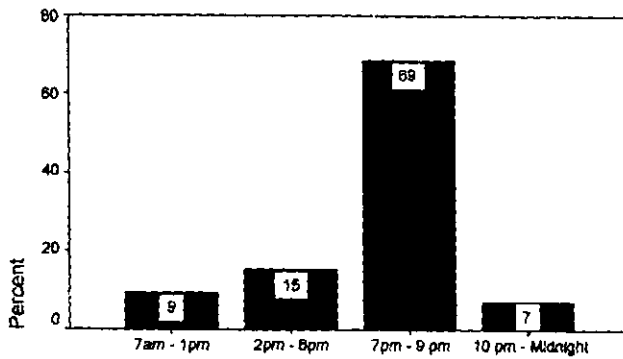


Distribution of respondents by the day they would like to watch the p

40.7% of the respondents would like to watch the program on creating awareness about childhood cancer on Saturday while 30.2% would like to watch it on Sunday. 8.1% of the respondents would like to watch it on Friday, 7.0% on Wednesday, 5.8% on Monday, 4.7% on Tuesday and only one person would like to watch it on Thursday. Two people had no particular preference and they said they would like to watch it on all days.

## Graph IV

Distribution of respondents by time they'd like to watch the program



Distribution of respondents by the time they would like to watch the

This data analyses the respondent's preference of the time of the day when they would like to watch the program. A majority of the people at 69% would like to watch it at night between 7pm and 9pm. A majority of these respondents said that they prefer this time because they are at home relaxing watching TV. 15% of the respondents chose to watch it between 2 pm and 6 pm, 9% at between 7 am to 1 pm and 7% at 10 pm to midnight. This shows that night time between 7 pm and 9 pm is the most preferred time for airing this program. The respondents who chose this time said that at this time they are at home relaxing and watching or waiting for news which many said they hardly miss.

**Table IV**

**Distribution of respondents by the day they would like to watch the program \* Distribution of respondents by the time they would like to watch the program Crosstabulation**

Count		Distribution of respondents by the time they would like to watch the program				Total
		7am - 1pm	2pm - 6pm	7pm - 9 pm	10 pm - Midnight	
Distribution of respondents by the day they would like to watch the program	Monday			4	1	5
	Tuesday	1		3		4
	Wednesday		1	4	1	6
	Thursday				1	1
	Friday	1		6		7
	Saturday	5	3	25	2	35
	Sunday	1	9	16		26
	All			1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>86</b>	

This data analyses the respondent's trends on the day and time they would like to watch the program. A majority of the respondent's favored Saturday and Sunday as the days they would like to watch the program. 21 respondents chose to watch the program on Saturday between 7 pm and 9pm while 16 respondents chose to watch the program on Sunday at the same time. 9 respondents chose to watch the program on Sunday afternoon between 2pm and 6pm. This group of respondents said that this was the time and day when they were free at home relaxing after a long week. Those who chose Saturday and Sunday night say that it is only on these days that they are at home relaxing therefore are available to watch the program.

**Table V**

**Distribution of respondents by TV they would prefer to watch the program \* Distribution of respondents by the time they would like to watch the program Crosstabulation**

Count		Distribution of respondents by the time they would like to watch the program				Total
		7am - 1pm	2pm - 6pm	7pm - 9 pm	10 pm - Midnight	
Distribution of respondents by TV they would prefer to watch the program	KBC	3	5	9	2	19
	CITIZEN TV	1	1	25	3	30
	KTN		5	10		15
	NTV	1	2	14	1	18
	K 24	2		1		3
	Any	1				1
<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>86</b>

This data analyses the respondent's preference on the channel they would like to watch the program depending on the time they would want to watch it. Majority of the respondents chose to watch it from 7pm – 9 pm. 23 respondents chose to watch it at that time on Citizen TV, 12 on NTV, 10 on KTN, 9 on KBC and 1 on K24. This shows that there is a general consensus on the time of day people want to watch this program regardless of the channel. Compared to other stations, majority of the respondents would like to watch the program between 7 pm and 9 pm on Saturday on Citizen TV therefore this will be the best time and channel in achieving its objectives.

**Table VI**

Distribution of respondents by the day they would like to watch the program \* Distribution of respondents by TV they would prefer to watch the program Crosstabulation

Count		Distribution of respondents by TV they would prefer to watch the program						
		XBC	CITIZEN TV	KTN	NTV	K 24	Any	Total
Distribution of Respondents by the day they would like to watch the program	Monday	2	2	1				5
	Tuesday		1	1	1	1		4
	Wednesday		3	2	1			6
	Thursday	1						1
	Friday	2	3		2			7
	Saturday	7	16	3	7	1	1	35
	Sunday	6	5	7	7	1		26
	All	1		1				2
<b>Total</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>86</b>

This data analyses the respondent's preference on the TV channel they want to watch the program on depending on the day they would like to watch it. The respondent's preference was distributed across the TV channels although Citizen TV was most preferred. Out of the 30 respondents who chose Citizen TV, 16 chose to watch the program on Saturday while 5 chose to watch it on Sunday.

Of the 19 respondents who chose KBC, 6 respondents preferred to watch the program on Saturday and 6 on Sunday. On KTN, 7 respondents preferred to watch it on Sunday and 3 on Saturday. As for NTV, 7 respondents prefer to watch it on Sunday and 5 on Saturday. This shows that a majority of the respondents prefer to watch this program over the weekend across the board in all the channels. This therefore means, to reach the programs target, it will be aired over the weekend.

## 2.3 ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

This study has established that the public in the study area have access to TV. It has also established that a majority of the respondents think that TV can appropriately be used to create awareness about cancer in children. Most of them said that because of its visuals and audio, it can make a bigger impact on the audience especially if they get to see those suffering from the disease.

The study also established that the public would prefer to watch the program over the weekend at night between 7 pm and 9 pm. There was a general consensus among the respondents that this was the appropriate time because many are free at this time and at home relaxing and watching TV. For some, the time is appropriate because many watch news so they are likely to be watching TV at this time as they wait for the news.

These results therefore show that according to the public, the program on childhood cancer will best reach its target objectives by being aired on weekend nights between 7pm and 9 pm. Although those who chose to watch the program on Saturday are more than those who chose to watch it on Sunday, the difference is only two people so both days would be appropriate for airing.

Citizen TV is the channel of choice where the respondents said that they like it because it is clear and has a wide coverage. Many felt that its focus on local content in its programming makes it appealing to many. Some felt that it is organized, transparent, has good presenters and its frequent use of Swahili widens its reach.

There was a general consensus that doctors, other medical practitioners and those affected by the disease should give this information since they know much about it and are in a better position to give this information.

There was a wide range on the choice of presenters. Robert Nagila, Esther Arunga, Mambo Mbotela, Julie Gichuru, Louis Otieno and Daniel Ndambuki who is popularly known as Churchill. Some respondents also felt that any trained presenter can do it or a medical doctor. Ndambuki was the choice of many who said that he was a natural crowd puller therefore he would easily pull the audience to watching. It was also said that he is funny, entertaining and creative and can easily make anyone watch and listen to him. These factors According to the respondents make him the best person to host this program because he has already made an audience for himself and can easily appeal to people to watch any program even of such a serious magnitude. It was said that with his creativity, he can make this program interesting and appealing to the audience in spite of being a health issue.

## 2.4 COMMUNICATION THEORIES

This section seeks to dwell on communication theories in relation with the social analysis of the topic at hand. It also looks at various theories that explain the relationship and effects of the media and the fight against childhood cancer.

Communication theories are there to find out or establish media effects on the people and, the associations that are there between what is watched and the effect that one has after consuming a particular media.<sup>29</sup> Mass communication affects people by shaping their attitudes and opinions. It transmits culture and generates meaning in people.<sup>30</sup> Mass communication is a powerful tool in effecting change in society since it reaches many people at the same time.

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Dominick, R. (2007) *The Dynamics of Mass Communication: Media in the Digital Age*, 9th ed., New York: Mc Graw-Hill 1983, 415.

<sup>30</sup> Berger, A. (1995) *Essentials of Mass Communication Theory*, London: Sage Publications, 21.

We use communication theories daily as we run our normal day to day activities. Theories are directly relevant in our lives as they guide us on how we act and relate with others as well as how we make sense of everything around us.

Theories are an attempt at making sense of everything around us and they describe what things are, what they do and how they work and represent ones point of view.<sup>31</sup> The purpose of theories is to describe, understand and explain situations. They also explain how mass communication functions and how it affects people as individuals and as members of a society.<sup>32</sup> In this case, this chapter will look into communication theories that take a critical look into this subject of combating childhood cancer. The main theories identified in line with the topic are agenda setting theory, and cultivation theory.

#### **2.4.1 Agenda setting theory**

The ability to effect cognitive change among individuals is an important aspect of the power of mass communication.<sup>33</sup> McCombs and Shaw in their agenda setting model of media effects argue that the agenda capacity of the media makes it very influential in shaping public perception of the world.

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<sup>31</sup> Wood, T. (2004) *Communication Theories in Action: An Introduction*, 3rd ed., Belmont: Thomas Wadsworth Publishing, 1982, 30.

<sup>32</sup> Berger, A. (1995) *Essentials of Mass Communication Theory*, London: Sage Publications, 32.

<sup>33</sup> Watson, J. (2008) *Media Communication: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, New York: Palgrave Mc Millian, 1998, 152.

This theory is about the media focusing our attention on certain aspects of life thus telling the audience what to think about. It tells us what to think about and not what to think.<sup>34</sup> Media content shapes what the public discusses and talks about.

The media gives the audience food for thought, the subjects or topics for discussion by concentrating on issues it deems as important. From the findings of the first part of this study, it was established that there is a need to create a program to create awareness amongst the public about cancer in children.

In the research carried out in this study, it has been established that TV is appropriate in creating awareness. The media has been accused in the past of setting the agenda on negative and irrelevant issues which do not serve to help the well being of the public. It is also accused of concentrating on politicians and politics more than on issues which benefit the public directly. By creating a viable program which educates and gives the public all the necessary information about childhood cancer, the media sets an agenda for the audience. It can turn the public's focus from the daily politics to a sensitive issue which needs to be addressed. Media's focus on particular issues creates interest in the public who enormously consume it.

Creating interest by airing the program and the intensity of the information it has will trigger the audience to think about it, see its importance and urgency and be compelled to act. In this case, the appropriate action is to take children for medical check ups. If this happens and the trend is replicated all over, the projects target will be achieved.

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<sup>34</sup> Berger, A. (1995) *Essentials of Mass Communication Theory*, London: Sage Publications, 63.

TV ignites interest amongst the public about important issues like governance, crime, controversy and politics. The same way it creates this interest, it should do the same on childhood cancer through the emphasis created by the program.

#### 2.4.2 Cultivation theory

This theory is about media effects. It's about how TV influences our visions of reality through emphasis. By repeating an issue, the public is influenced to realize it and eventually they develop a habit or culture of doing what is recommended. It's about how TV's images cultivate the dominant tendencies of our cultures, ideologies and world views.<sup>35</sup>

Theories support our ability to make critical judgments, good choices and proper lifestyles as consumers of the media.<sup>36</sup> For instance, putting children on a healthy diet could lessen chances of getting cancer as shown by a study carried out by British scientists. (People who eat meat especially red meat have a higher tendency to have cancer than vegetarians and those who eat fish).<sup>37</sup> The study recommends that people eat five portions of fruits and vegetables a day to reduce their risk of getting cancer and other diseases.

It also recommends that people eat fish instead of meat. If this kind of information is given to the public and is emphasized through repetition, the public will change their children's eating habits and learn to feed them on healthy foods.

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<sup>35</sup>Watson, J.(2008) *Media Communication: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, New York: Palgrave Mc Millian, 1998, 80.

<sup>36</sup> Mc Quail, D. (2000) *Mc Quail's Mass Communication Theories*, New York: Sage publications, 7.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. BBC Website, in <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7942479.stm>, (17-03-09), 1-2.

With its visual and audio ability, TV has the potential to create an impact on the public since it is able to capture the audience. The same way it creates beliefs and cultures about its programming amongst the public, it can create a culture of people taking their children for medical checkups. Just like it creates perceptions of people by over glorification, it can also influence the public to create a culture on tackling cancer in children. In his study on the relations between heavy TV viewing and perception-cultivation, George Gerbner says that audiences use TV to confirm fears and prejudices about how things are.<sup>38</sup>

Although his studies focused on portrayal of violence on TV and how people visualize it in real life, the influence is not just about violence. This kind of TV influence can also be positive in influencing people to react to childhood cancer.

This study seeks to create an awareness creation program to tackle lack of adequate knowledge about childhood cancer. Through repetition, people will be bombarded with the relevant information about cancer in children.

When they watch this program frequently, it is bound to attract interest and attention and eventually, people will get the message and take their children for medical checkups.

In the study, the public picked out the appropriate time and date for airing the program citing the impact this particular choice will have in reaching a large audience. During weekend nights between 7pm and 9pm, majority of the respondents say that they are at home relaxing watching TV after a long and tiring week.

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<sup>38</sup> Watson, J.(2008) *Media Communication: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, New York: Palgrave Mc Millian, 1998, 152.

Even those who work during the weekends are normally at home at this time. Therefore, by airing this program repeatedly on the said days and time and creating emphasis on it, the public will eventually get to watch it, acknowledge it and be compelled to take action.

By creating a tendency to repeat the program its influence will get to the audience and a culture will be built of people heeding the expert's advice and taking their children for regular medical checkups. Such checkups ensure that any cancer cases in children are detected early enough. In case a child is ailing, the checkups will ensure early diagnosis thus allowing prompt administering of medication. Eventually, if this becomes a trend and a culture, then the fight to combat childhood cancer will be won.

## **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of the study in this chapter is to establish an appropriate way of implementing the program on childhood cancer seeking to know what the public would want in terms of airing this awareness creation program. It also seeks to identify the impact of the project in relation to communication theories.

Through the responses from the respondents, the study has established that the program best fulfills the project's objectives by airing over the weekends on Citizen TV between 7 pm and 9 pm with Daniel Ndambuki as the presenter.

Since there is no media without the masses and the success of any media campaign depends on the audience, the project is implemented through these recommendations given by the sampled population so as to maximize on reaching as many people as possible.

For effectiveness, communication theories are used to create interest in the viewers by setting their agenda on the program and creating emphasis through repetition.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

#### INTRODUCTION

A communication strategy is a planned action which is aimed at achieving targeted objectives through various communication methods and techniques. This chapter outlines a communication strategy which will address the problem identified in this study.

From the research findings in the first part of this study, it is evident that there is lack of knowledge amongst the public about childhood cancer. It has been established that a majority of the public do not know that children can suffer from cancer.

The study has also shown that if the onset of cancer is diagnosed early enough and treatment is administered immediately, the disease is highly curable and a child can completely heal and have a normal life. The study further revealed that the biggest hurdle in fighting this disease is the lack of awareness thus this creates a need to educate the public.

A communication strategy is therefore proposed in this chapter to produce an awareness creation program which will seek to give the public all the necessary information in regards to childhood cancer. The aim of the program will be to inform and educate the public on important issues surrounding the disease so as to improve on early diagnosis leading to the administering of early and prompt treatment and eventually help in fighting this disease.

### **3.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNICATION PROJECT**

The project is implemented in a short TV documentary program "*Kids and Cancer*". The program entails interviews where a medical professional talks about everything that is important to know about cancer in children. The feature is complemented by cover shots of pediatric cancer patients so as to emphasize on the intensity and reality of the program. It also includes interviews of those closely related to someone who is or was a childhood cancer patient. This aims at giving a broader picture of the effects of these diseases not only to the patient but to others as well.

#### **Time and day**

The program is to be aired on Saturdays between 7pm and 9 pm and a repeat of the same is aired at the same time on Sundays. This is because, 40.7% of the respondents want to watch it on Saturday while 30.2% want to watch it on Sunday. Although there are more people who prefer to watch it on Saturday, those who chose Sunday are also relatively many so the program will be aired on both days so as to maximize on its reaching the audience.

#### **Channel**

The program is to be aired on Citizen TV. This is because according to the respondents in this study, they like Citizen TV due to its local content and approach to sensitive issues such as health therefore, they felt that if aired on this channel, the program on childhood cancer will reach many people.

## **Presenter**

The presenter of choice is Daniel Ndambuki popularly known as Churchill. Majority of the respondents felt that he should be the presenter because with his creativity and humor, he can influence many viewers to watch thus making an impact on the audience.

## **3.2 VIABILITY OF THE PROGRAM**

The future of any society the world over depends on its younger generation. The input by the older generation in bringing up its children determines the kind of future a given society will have. A major hindrance to realizing that the Kenyan child grows up to fulfill his or her potential is ill health. Today, there are many diseases that affect children below 5 years endangering the country's future.

The idea of this project came about as a result of realizing that childhood cancer is a problem which very little is known about it. Childhood cancer is highly curable yet children still die of it. The death rates are as a result of lack of awareness where, by the time a child is diagnosed, it is already too late for medication to work effectively.

The first part of this study sought to find out how much people knew about childhood cancer. The study established that a majority of the population did not know about it and those who did, knew about it because they knew of a child who was suffering from one of the many cancers that affect children. The program to create awareness about childhood cancer is a viable project as it seeks to answer a need in society. There is a need to have experts inform and educate the public on the subject with an aim of fighting the disease as well as relaying to the audience the reality that childhood cancer is.

Society lacks information on this subject so there is a need to provide this information in a manner that will make an impact on the public so that they can react to the information by heeding the advice provided by the experts in the program eventually helping on combating it. This project is the viable and ultimate answer to this problem which has to be addressed now.

### **3.3 TREATMENT ANALYSIS**

Treatment analysis entails the outline of the program giving details of its layout, what it aims at achieving, its communication objectives, target audience, location, medium and the format of the program.

#### **3.3.1 Focus of the programme**

The focus of the program is on medical professionals to provide all the necessary information regarding childhood cancer. These professionals are the main feature of the program since it is the information that they provide which achieves the program's objective.

There is also focus on children suffering from the various forms of childhood cancer so as to create emphasis on the audience about the intensity and reality of the problem. Focus on these children will provide basis for the program because it gives the audience the real picture of the problem at hand. Those affected by the disease such as parents, guardians and other relatives of cancer patients will also be featured as they share their experiences in dealing with a childhood cancer patient. They will give an account of how life has been for them since the child was diagnosed.

### **3.3.2 Communication Objectives**

- a) To create awareness amongst the public about the existence of childhood cancer.
- b) To educate the public on all important factors surrounding the disease.
- c) To encourage the public to take their children for regular medical checkups so as to improve on early diagnosis.

### **3.3.3 Target audience**

The communication strategy targets parents and guardians with young children of about ten years old and below as the primary target audience. This is because most childhood cancer diseases strike children as young as one year to the age of about ten years old. By targeting this group, the communication strategy aims at encouraging them to take their children for regular medical check ups so that in the event cancer strikes, it can be detected early and medication can be administered early enough. The choice of the target group is because children in this age bracket are under the care of their parents and guardians who have the responsibility to provide medical care for their children.

The secondary target audience is the general public who may be close to a young child or may know someone with a young child. This group also includes aspiring parents who may one day have children. This group will be informed on the importance of being on the look out for cancer in young children and taking children for regular medical checkups. With this information, they can take the initiative to inform others what they have learnt and influence them to take their children for medical checkups.

### **3.3.4 Medium**

In tackling such a sensitive issue, the medium to be used is television. This is because through both visuals and audio, TV can have a greater impact in influencing the targeted audience to take up the initiative to take their children for regular medical checkups. TV has an advantage over radio which only has audio and print where one can only read. As for television, the appeal will be on what the audience will see and also hear.

The TV program focuses on the reality of cancer in children and provides expert information from medical practitioners on what childhood cancer is all about, what to look out for and how to go about it when a child is diagnosed.

### **3.3.5 Program format**

The program is in form of a documentary. This is because the different sources will be reached at different places and not brought out to the same venue. This format allows for a freer and relaxed atmosphere for the sources since the shooting is carried out preferably in their normal day to day atmosphere.

### **3.3.6 Location**

The shots are taken in different locations. The shots of the children are taken in hospital while the interviews take place in a doctor's office. The purpose of these locations is to bring out the reality of the situation and ensure all those featuring in the program feel comfortable in their normal surroundings.

### **3.4 COMMUNICATION METHODS AND TECHNIQUES**

Communication techniques are the specialized ways in which communication objectives are accomplished in this study. This depends on the ability of the communicator to use appropriate technical skills and techniques to effectively use the art of communication in reaching the program's objectives. In this project, a combination of several techniques is used in creating the awareness program on childhood cancer.

#### **3.4.1 Production process**

This entails the implementation of the three production steps. Pre-production stage where there is planning of how the entire production process is carried out from generating the idea to the final material to be aired. The production stage entails the actual shooting of the various sections of the project while the post production process entails editing and putting together the final program to be aired.

#### **3.4.2 Type of shots**

The choice of shots to be used in the program is aimed at bringing out the program in a manner which clearly relays the intended message to the audience. There is use of close up shots for emphasis and wider shots to give the general picture of the situation which those suffering from this disease live in.

### **3.4.3 Camera angles**

Camera angles selected are aimed at ensuring the audience relate with the topic in discussion so that they can clearly get the message being conveyed. Use of eye level angle shots brings out the reality of the issue at hand.

### **3.4.4 Post Production Techniques**

The final stage of the production process includes post production techniques to edit the entire program so as to come up with a systematic flow which communicates the intended message.

Merging the information given by the experts with various shots of affected patients and the use of appropriate music to suit the topic aims at achieving the target of passing a message to the audience. The editing process also incorporates shots of children in different normal circumstances to bring in the contrast posed by the reality of the disease. The entire process aims at bringing out a complete thirty minute documentary packed with all the vital information meant for the audience.

## **3.5 STRONG ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM**

The program is a 30 minute documentary to be aired on television. It airs repetitively on weekends for a month for emphasis on the topic at hand. This ensures that it reaches many people therefore achieving its intended target. The program features interviews with medical experts and close relatives of affected children. It also features various cover shots of children ailing from cancer and cover shots of healthy children playing to create comparison.

The cover shots are used at the beginning of the program and in between the interview so as to create emphasis on the magnitude of the problem to the public. There will also be shots of healthy children in schools or playgrounds to create the contrast brought about by the disease between ill health and being healthy.

### **3.5.1 Beginning**

The program will start with various shots of ailing children with low, slow instrumental music playing in the background. The voice of the narrator will then be heard after some time briefly introducing the topic and explaining to the audience what the shots are all about.

### **3.5.2 Middle**

After the narration, the shots of the children will fade out. Before the doctors interview, the program will feature a few interviews from relatives of ailing children sharing their experiences in dealing with these diseases. The program will then move to the doctor's interview which will be the main feature of the program.

Through the interview, there will be intercuts of shots of the doctor and the host as well as over shoulder shots of both from either angle. In between the interview, there will be use of cover shots of the ailing children.

### 3.5.3 Ending

The program ends with shots of children in a ward playing around together in hospital suits with slow background music. This will be aimed at leaving the audience with a picture of the innocence of children who in spite of being sick still have the will to be children.

### 3.6 COSTING OUT THE PROJECT

Equipment/facilities			
Camera hire 1 Sony PD 170	2 Days	@Ksh 10,000	20,000/=
Mini DV cam tapes	4	@Ksh 500	2,000/=
Sound Equipment	2 Days	@Ksh 5,000	10,000/=
Transport (hire)	2 Days	@Ksh 5,000	10,000/=
Post production	1 Day	@Ksh 10,000	10,000/=
Air time (30min)	8 Days	@Ksh 100,000	800,000/=
<b>Total</b>			<b>852,000/=</b>
<b>Personnel</b>			
Cameraperson	1 Person	@Ksh 5,000	10,000/=
Editor	1 Person	@Ksh 10,000	10,000/=
Voice Over	1 Person	@Ksh 5,000	5,000/=

Host/Presenter	1 Person	@Ksh 50,000	50,000/=
<b>Total</b>			<b>75,000/=</b>
Emergencies			40,000/=
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>967,000/=</b>

### 3.7 FUNDING

To successfully carry out this project, there is need to look for funding because the production process is very expensive. There are expenses for personnel, equipment buying and hiring as well as costs for air time. All these require a lot of money. Funding will be sought from groups which deal with health issues and those which deal with children's issues.

A group such as the My Child Matters Organization deals with childhood cancer projects. This organization was an initiative of the UICC which was launched on World Cancer day in 2006 to support children with cancer and their families and improve on public awareness, early detection, treatment and follow-up care, professional education, and palliative care. It has been trying to promote childhood cancer awareness projects in third world and developing countries with an aim of improving early diagnosis and effective treatment. In Kenya, the organization has been trying to spearhead childhood cancer awareness.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also focuses on children projects to improve child health and survival. Pharmaceutical companies who may gain from the program through advertising can also be appropriate sponsors.

Such companies can agree to sponsor the program since by doing so, they will get a chance to advertise and be seen by those watching the program. By accessing funds from these groups, it will be possible to successfully complete the project and have it aired.

### **3.8 THE PLACE OF THE PROJECT IN KENYA**

In the first part of this study, the researcher established that there is a general lack of knowledge about the existence of childhood cancer. In the study, 54% of the sampled population had no idea that children can suffer from cancer.

It was also established that most of the childhood cancer diseases are curable if a child is diagnosed early enough and medication is administered early. This therefore creates a need to come up with a viable program to create awareness amongst the public. The program seeks to inform the public on all what is important about childhood cancer so as to help combat it.

In the past, the Kenyan public has responded positively to programs on medical issues. Where a medical issue has been highlighted in the media to seek for public assistance such as donations to offset medical bills or help someone access medication, people respond very well by contributing generously. This shows that where health is concerned, people are very keen. Across the country, the Kenyan community values children and holds them with very high regards as their future generation. Issues concerning children are taken very seriously and anything threatening their future is promptly dealt with even where poverty hinders quick and proper remedies for problems like diseases, people look for ways of finding solutions.

The program aims at encouraging or influencing parents to take their children for regular medical checkups. This is because, cancer is not the kind of disease whose symptoms show immediately it strikes.

In most cases, its symptoms start showing when the disease has already advanced to other stages and in this case, it is normally too late for medication to cure the child. Therefore, by encouraging regular check ups, the disease can be detected early enough incase it strikes. This will in turn improve on recovery rates where medication is administered immediately and appropriately.

The major role of the media is to inform, educate and entertain. It acts as the eyes of society. The media wields a lot of power and influence on the public where people tend to believe everything they see in the media. Because of this fact, the media has a duty to use this influence positively and provide information aimed at benefiting the society by embarking on promoting programs aimed at tackling health matters like this one.

In developing countries such as Kenya, there are high infant and child mortality rates due to various diseases most of which are either preventable or curable. Childhood cancer is highly curable where a child can end up having a normal life after receiving medication.

Similar programs like this one will go a long way in reversing child death rates caused by cancer. If such programs are aired regularly, its objectives can be achieved and more children would end up having an opportunity to grow up healthy and achieve their full potential.

### 3.9 ETHICAL ISSUES

Medical issues are a tricky topic to tackle due to the beliefs that people have. Diseases whose causes are not clearly defined or explained tend to cause a lot of speculation. A cancer is a cell that has lost its normal control mechanisms and thus it has unregulated growth.

Cancer cells develop from normal cells when a change in the cells genetic material makes the cells become cancerous and as they grow and multiply, they form a mass of cancerous tissues that invade adjacent tissues and spread around the body.

Unlike HIV/AIDS, cancer is not acquired but starts developing from within the body whether hereditary or not. However, cancer has a lot of stigma associated to it. This is because, when it gets to the advanced stages, its symptoms are mistaken to signal other diseases.

Symptoms such as rapid weight loss, wasting away and hair loss tend to be associated with diseases like HIV/AIDS. Due to the stigma associated with this disease, cancer patients tend to be mistaken for HIV/AIDS patients and they end up suffering due to this perception.

This may in a greater way affect this project because, people don't like appearing on TV for fear of people misunderstanding the issue being discussed or being victimized by those who know them. Use of TV also raises a dilemma if the program will pass the intended message or if it will cause more questions than answers where people don't focus on the purpose of the program but on those featured.

This project is proposing a program for creating awareness amongst the public on childhood cancer. In dealing with children, they are easier to work with since they don't shy away from appearing on TV like adults do however, consent to feature them has to be from their guardians and parents. This should however not overshadow the noble purpose of this project therefore there is a need to emphasize to those watching that cancer is not acquired and it should not be stigmatized.

The rights of these children should be upheld and where showing their faces may violate their rights then other options may be used such as hiding their faces and only focusing on general shots of the children or focusing on those with wounds on other parts of the body such as hands, legs, behind the head and not in their faces.

The purpose of featuring the ailing children and those affected by it such as parents and guardians, is to show that childhood cancer is a reality in our midst and incase people doubt it, then they can get to see firsthand the devastation these children and their families undergo every day of their lives.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

Childhood cancer is not a strange or a new phenomenon in this country, it is a social situation surrounded by lack of knowledge amongst the public. It is a reality in our midst which is destroying the future generations of this country. This entire study has been a long process of research, learning and reflection where a lot has been learnt from the field research, books and data analysis.

The researcher would like to highlight a few points that came out during this study process. The first part of this study has clearly proven that there is a serious lack of knowledge amongst the public about cancer in children and that although, people access the media, they feel that in spite of its significant role in society of informing and educating the public, it does not focus on important issues such as health and only concentrates on politics, politicians and irrelevant controversies which do not help the public in anyway.

The public largely depends on the media and takes any information from the media as the reality of society. To many, what the media says is the ultimate truth and regardless of the facts, what it says is what they believe. Many people felt that the media fails them in as far as medical issues are concerned because this is the one area the media largely ignores.

The study established that people have access to TV and view it as a powerful and influential tool of change due to its audio and visual effects. Many feel that it can effectively create awareness about cancer in children.

It is also established that people have their own preference in terms of the station in which they would like to watch the program on childhood cancer, the time they would like to watch it and the person they would like to present it.

Any medical issue is a matter of great concern not only to the person who is ailing but to the society as a whole. Children are the future generation of any society and protecting their well being is the ultimate duty of not only a child's parents but the entire society. Good health is the backbone of a country's economic growth. The public who wake up early every morning and work tirelessly everyday to make a living are the driving force of the economy.<sup>39</sup> It is the working nation that determines the growth of the economy therefore, if sick, people cannot work and in turn, economic growth can grind to a halt. The future of a society depends on its future generations.

It is upon the older generation in society to ensure that the young ones are well taken care of. It is upon them to ensure that children receive proper medication when sick and to ensure they are not exposed to preventable diseases. They should ensure they protect the well being of their children at all times.

It is therefore necessary that through the media the public are also enabled in sustaining their children's health by availing all necessary information to them. There is a serious lack of information about cancer in children and it is only by providing the public with the necessary information that the media will help in this course. By setting an agenda to the public about this issue and creating emphasis about it through repetition, the media will succeed in triggering change in the public.

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<sup>39</sup> Odipo, D. (2007) "Principles of Economics", class notes, Tangaza College – Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi.

Where HIV/AIDS is concerned, media campaigns have succeeded in forcing people to react. It was the topic in society and there was so much information about it such that one just had to hear about it whether they liked it or not.

This project is the first step in trying to push for a similar result as far as childhood cancer is concerned. People don't know about it and they have to be informed first for any reactions to be effective. This is a serious social issue that has to be tackled. The objective is to create awareness and trigger reactions from the public where they will take their children for regular medical checkups. The social need is lack of knowledge therefore the project is a viable answer.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The media is a significant agent of social change in society. Through the power it has over people in setting agenda's for them and determining their mind sets, it can use this influence positively by focusing on positive and important issues such as health which affect peoples day to day lives. This project on creating awareness about childhood cancer is just the first step in a viable and necessary campaign. To combat cancer in children, a lot more is needed not just a single awareness creation program. A lot more should be done for people to learn to take their children for regular medical checkups.

Besides this project, the relevant authorities with the mandate to oversee the management of health in the country should team up with the media to create more programs and a more intense and sustained campaign in tackling childhood cancer. This will ensure that people are constantly reminded about it.

If people keep hearing about it, they will be compelled to take the necessary action. The issue at hand is serious and it needs a serious effort to tackle it. Childhood cancer is a reality that robs children of the only chance they have of being children.

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# APPENDIX

## Appendix I. Questionnaire

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION  
TANGAZA COLLEGE  
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA  
QUESTIONNAIRE

*Dear Friend:*

I am a student from Tangaza College a constituent of the Catholic University. I am conducting a research to find out if a TV program can be effective in creating awareness about childhood cancer. There are no right or wrong answers, what is needed is your kind and honest opinion/response. *Thank you for your time.*

1. How old are you?

Below 25 years  26-30 years  31-35years  36-40years  Above 40

2. Which gender are you?

Male  Female

3. Where do you live?

.....

4. What do you do for a living?

Employed

Self-employed

Unemployed

Others (specify)

.....

5. Do you have children?

Yes  No

6. Under which age bracket are they?

Below 5years  6-10 years  11-15 years  Above 15 years

7. Do you have access to Television?

Yes  No

8. Which is your most preferred TV station (Please tick one)

KBC  CITIZEN TV  KTN  NTV  K 24

9. Do you think TV can be used to Create Awareness about childhood cancer?

Yes  No

10. What makes you think TV has the potential to be effective in creating awareness?

.....

11. In which TV station would you prefer a program on childhood cancer to be aired?

KBC  CITIZEN TV  KTN  NTV  K 24

Give reason for your preference .....

.....

12. Which people do you think will be appropriate to give information on cancer?

.....

13. Which day of the week would you like to watch this program?

Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday

Friday  Saturday  Sunday

14. What time of the day would you prefer to watch this program?

7am – 1pm  2pm – 6pm  7pm – 9pm

10pm – Midnight  after midnight

Give reason for your preference.....

.....

15. Who would you prefer to be the presenter in this program?.....

.....

16. Why do you prefer this person?.....

.....

## Appendix II. Pictures

(a)



In (a) above, parents and guardians join their children at the children's cancer ward 1E at Kenyatta National Hospital for prayers.

(b)



In (b) above, 3-6 year old children of Fatima Nursery School in Rongai play during the School's closing day.