

## Chapter 9

### Entertainment-Education and Health Promotion: A Cross-Continental Journey

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#### Editor's Introduction

Sometimes when you're out of town, the future can go by. That happened to me in Los Angeles. Ev was hosting what would become the first international conference on entertainment-education and social change. I remember looking through the conference agenda on a flight overseas, wondering how this new entertainment emphasis fit into the scholarship of diffusion and social change. Well, many large-scale international projects later, we know. Arvind, in particular, and many of his colleagues worldwide have been instrumental in pushing this research and practice agenda forward and giving it scholarly meaning.

*J.D.*

Ev Rogers was a quintessential storyteller. He had a story for every occasion, and it did not matter if you had heard it previously. Stories, vignettes, and examples were integral to his teaching, writing, and mentoring. He believed in "entertainment-education" (E-E) and was its consummate practitioner -- much before the term E-E was officially coined.

#### First, Get Their Attention!<sup>1</sup>

There is even a story about how Ev got interested in storytelling. Once, when Ev was about eight years old, the Rogers family on their way to Carroll in the family car, encountered a neighbor with his team of mules. The mules, hitched to a heavy wagonload of grain, balked at crossing a bridge over a small stream. The neighbor was beating the mules on their heads with a wooden stick. When Ev's father, out the open car window, asked why he was hitting the mules, the neighbor answered: "Well, first you have to get their attention. Then you can teach them something" (Rogers, unpublished manuscript). This lesson was not lost on Ev. Without fail, Ev began a lecture with an interesting anecdote, or started a book chapter or a journal article with a vivid story.

Appropriately, the present chapter is co-constructed by us – the four authors -- as a series of stories, interwoven, knitted, and patterned in ways to discuss the entertainment-education strategy in health promotion. One of us (Arvind) took primary responsibility for knitting and interweaving our respective narratives, and that's why

sometimes you will hear our voices independently, and sometimes collectively. The “storytellers” of this chapter hail from *four* different countries on *four* different continents, each bringing a unique contextually-situated perspective on the use of entertainment-education and health promotion.

In order to make sense of these E-E stories, perhaps readers may find it useful to learn a bit about (a) the four storytellers, including their connection with Ev Rogers and with each other, and (b) the rising stock of the E-E strategy in health promotion.

### **About the Storytellers**

Arvind Singhal, born and raised in India, was Ev’s doctoral advisee at the USC Annenberg School and, over a period of two decades, collaborated with Ev in studying and writing about entertainment-education health promotion initiatives in India, Peru, Mexico, China, Tanzania, South Africa, Thailand, Kenya, and Brazil (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; 2001; 2002; and Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004).

Kimani Njogu, born and raised in Kenya, earned his Ph.D. from Yale University in linguistics, and collaborated with Ev on the famous *Twende na Wakati* E-E project in Tanzania, serving as chief trainer of the Tanzanian scriptwriting team. Kimani has scripted, produced, and directed numerous E-E initiatives on reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and environmental conservation around the globe -- in Kenya, Uganda, St. Lucia, Madagascar, and several other countries. Kimani hosted the African Soap Summit held in Nairobi in June 2003, and he and Arvind have collaborated on getting E-E initiatives underway in China, India, Vietnam, and Laos.

Martine Bouman, born and raised in Netherlands, earned her Ph.D. from Wageningen Agricultural University in the Netherlands, writing about the difficult collaborative process between media professionals and health educators in E-E. Martine hosted the Third International Entertainment-Education and Social Change Conference in Arnhem, Netherlands in 2000, and presently serves as Managing Director of the Netherlands Entertainment Education Foundation (NEEF) and founder and principal of Bouman E&E Development, an organization that works closely with Dutch media producers to incorporate health storylines in popular drama. In the late 1990s, Martine and Arvind served as advisors to the *Soul City* E-E initiative in South Africa.

Eliana Elias, born and raised in Peru, studied social communications at the University of Lima, and is co-founder and Executive Director of Minga Peru, a non-governmental organization that promotes reproductive health and gender equality in the Peruvian Amazon. Eliana is an Ashoka Foundation Fellow -- a prestigious global recognition for social entrepreneurship. Eliana invited Arvind to serve on Minga’s board a few years ago, and they work closely in framing Minga’s communication and social change initiatives in Peru and South America.

## The Rising Tide of Entertainment-Education

Over the past decade or two, entertainment-education (E-E) has become a major approach to health promotion and disease prevention (Piotrow, Kincaid, Rimon, & Rinehart, 1997; Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). *Entertainment-education* is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members' knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes, shift social norms, and change overt behavior (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; 2002). E-E is not a theory of communication. Rather, it is a communication strategy to bring about behavioral and social change. E-E approaches have tackled a wide variety of social issues, including HIV/AIDS prevention, small family size, maternal and child health, and gender inequality.

The general purpose of entertainment-education interventions is to contribute to the process of directed social change, which can occur at the level of an individual, community, or society. E-E contributes to social change in two ways. First, it can influence audience individuals' awareness, attitudes, and behavior toward a socially desirable end. Here the anticipated effects are located in the individual audience members. An illustration is provided by a radio soap opera, *Twende na Wakati* (Let's Go with the Times), in Tanzania that convinced several hundred thousand sexually-active adults to adopt HIV prevention behaviors (like using condoms and reducing their number of sexual partners) (Rogers et al., 1999). Second, it can influence the audience's external environment to help create the necessary conditions for social change at the system level. Here the major effects are located in the interpersonal and social-political sphere of the audiences' external environment. The entertainment-education media can serve as a social mobilizer, an advocate or agenda-setter, influencing public and policy initiatives in a socially-desirable direction (Wallack, 1990). For instance, the 1999 *Soul City* domestic violence series in South Africa mobilized community action, women's marches, and the speedy passage of domestic violence legislation in South Africa (Usdin, Singhal, Shongwe, Goldstein, & Shabalala, 2004).

In 2005, numerous organizations are involved in utilizing the E-E strategy for health promotion and disease prevention on a worldwide basis, including the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Communication Programs, Population Communications International in New York, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, The BBC World Service Trust, Population Media Center in Vermont, Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication in South Africa, Puntos de Encuentros in Nicaragua, Twaweza Communications in Kenya, Minga Peru in Peru, the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines, the Netherlands Entertainment Education Foundation (NEEF) in Netherlands, and countless others. Departments of communication and public health are now particularly oriented to studying or teaching about the E-E strategy (Singhal & Rogers, 2002).

Today, a map of the world would show E-E almost everywhere – as evident from the *four* stories that follow. Collectively, these stories highlight not only some of the main events in the research documentation of the E-E strategy in health promotion (e.g.

Singhal's Story #1), but also its creative applications in East Africa (Njogu, Story #2), Netherlands (Bowman, Story #3), and the Peruvian Amazonas (Elias, Story #4).

### **Story #1. Planting the E-E Seed: A Journey with Ev Rogers<sup>2</sup>** **Primary Storyteller: Arvind Singhal**

In my first semester (Fall, 1985) of doctoral work at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication, Ev Rogers showed a three minute videotape of the popular Indian soap opera, *Hum Log* (We People), illustrating its purposive combination of entertainment and education as a means of promoting social change. A few months previously, in India, I witnessed first-hand the effects of *Hum Log* on Indian audiences. A hush fell in our living room when Ashok Kumar, a highly respected Indian movie actor (akin to Burt Lancaster), delivered the 30-second epilogue at the conclusion of each episode, summarizing the intended social message, raising rhetorical questions for the viewers to ponder, and providing viewers with guides to action. Animated discussions about *Hum Log* were common in social gatherings as India was gripped by a *Hum Log* fever.

Ev first became aware of entertainment-education television soap operas in 1975, when a Mexican television official doing graduate work at Stanford told him about *Simplemente María*, a 1969-71 Peruvian television soap opera, which influenced its viewers to enroll in literacy and sewing classes, modeling their behaviors after María, its protagonist (Singhal, Obregon, & Rogers, 1994). Through this Mexican student, Ev also learned of Miguel Sabido, a producer-director-writer at Televisa, the Mexican commercial network, who had implemented the unique idea of combining entertainment with education in telenovelas. Only in-house evaluation research on the effects of Sabido's telenovelas had been conducted in Mexico, and these studies had not found their way into the mainstream of communication science literature. However, when the Mexican soap opera experience was transferred to India in the form of *Hum Log* in 1984-85, it presented a unique opportunity for scholarly research. Within six months of that Fall, 1985 class session at USC, Ev and I had secured a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation in New York to conduct an evaluation of *Hum Log* (Singhal & Rogers, 1988)

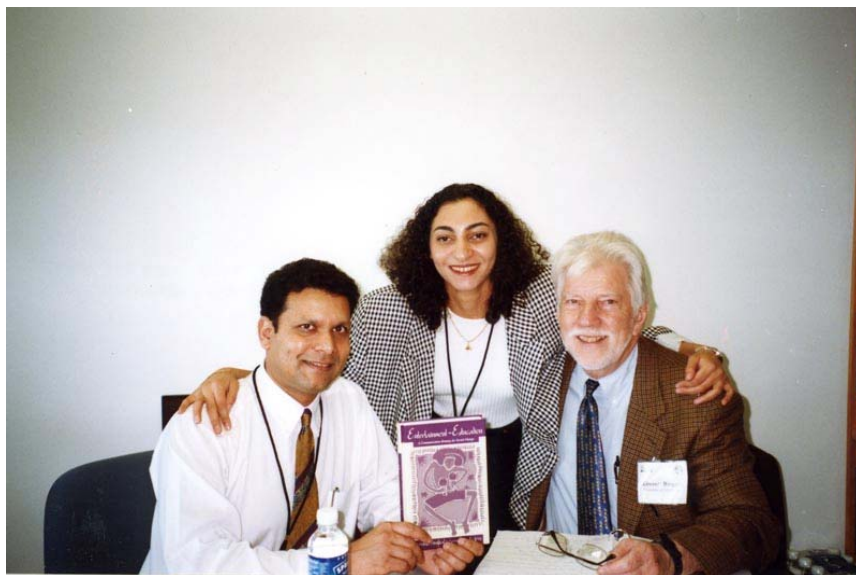


**Photo 9-1.** Ev Rogers with the *Hum Log* survey research team in Pune, Maharashtra, India in 1987. Standing left to right are Arvind, Bill Brown (at that a doctoral student at USC), and Dr. K.S. Nair. The women in front were all students of the University of Pune.

Source: Personal files of author Singhal.

Such were the beginnings, some two decades ago, of our collaborative journey on the path of entertainment-education. With colleagues at USC, University of New Mexico, Ohio University, Michigan State University, and other institutions, Ev and I studied entertainment-education initiatives in India, Peru, Mexico, China, Tanzania, South Africa, Thailand, Kenya, and Brazil. In 1997, seven years after I finished my doctoral dissertation on entertainment-education (Singhal, 1990), and after two highly effective entertainment-education conferences at USC (in 1989) and at Ohio University (in 1997), we sensed that the time was ripe for a book on the topic. By this time, scores of entertainment-education initiatives were underway in dozens of countries, and the stock of entertainment-education as a health promotion strategy was on the rise.

On a bumpy bus ride in Costa Rica in 1997, while driving toward San Jose, the capital city, Ev pulled out his signature purple pen and a notepad and initiated our book's outline. A few months later, at the International Communication Association 1998 convention in Jerusalem, Israel, we met with Linda Bathgate, the Communication Editor for Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (LEA), and a contract was signed. In mid-1999, *Entertainment-Education: A Communication Strategy for Social Change* (Singhal & Rogers, 1999) was published. A year later, it was honored with National Communication Association's Distinguished Scholarly Book Award in Applied Communication, and was widely adopted as a text in communication and public health courses at various U.S. and overseas universities.



**Photo 9-2.** Ev Rogers (Right) and Arvind Singhal (Left) Holding a copy of *Entertainment-Education* at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida in 2002. In the center is Rasha Abdullah, an Egyptian scholar of communication studies.

Source: Personal files of author Singhal.

In 2002, with the encouragement of Professor Michael Cody, the then editor of *Communication Theory*, Ev and I edited a special issue of the journal on entertainment-education (Volume 12, Number 2) (Singhal & Rogers, 2002). As there were several excellent submissions, and we could only accommodate six articles in the journal issue, we broached the idea of edited volume on E-E, once again with LEA. This 22-chapter volume -- representing multiple E-E projects from across the world and signifying multiple theoretic and methodological approaches to E-E -- was published in 2004 (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004).

### **In Closing**

In retrospect, back at USC in Fall, 1985, Ev Rogers had clearly grasped the potential of the entertainment-education strategy in health promotion. Once the seed was planted, and nurtured, a tree would follow.

### **Story #2. The “Mother Hen” of Radio Soaps in East Africa Primary Storyteller: Kimani Njogu**

In February 1993, in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, I was leading a workshop organized by Radio Tanzania, the United Nations Fund for Population and Development (UNFPA), and Population Communications International (PCI) to plan for the broadcasts of *Twende na Wakati* (Let's Go with the Times), an entertainment-education radio soap opera on HIV prevention and family planning. As I was introducing the notion of the cliffhanger as an artistic device for deliberate suspension of melodramatic action, Ev Rogers and his collaborator Peter Vaughan walked into the seminar room. After taking a quick photograph of the proceedings, Ev joined our discussions and noted: “I like the cliffhanger because it not only hooks audience members but, even more interestingly, opens possibilities for other storylines!” Ev's insightful statement was to resonate throughout the course of this workshop, and I have found myself returning to it repeatedly since then in my design of E-E programs.

After the workshop at Radio Tanzania, we went for dinner to the Kilimanjaro Hotel, where I learned two important things. First, a water tight, pre-post, treatment-control research design was in place for evaluating *Twende na Wakati* (to be led by Ev Rogers and Peter Vaughan), and, second, Ev Rogers had committed to contributing in developing the capacity of entertainment-education research in Tanzania by opening an avenue for Ramadhan Swalehe and Verhan Bakari<sup>3</sup>, both of Population Family Life Education Program (POFLEP) in Arusha, to undertake graduate study in communication at the University of New Mexico. Both Swalehe and Bakari would study aspects of *Twende na Wakati* (TNW) in their respective sojourns in Albuquerque (where Ev Rogers was based), and return to Tanzania to continue work on entertainment-education and HIV/AIDS prevention.

Such inclusiveness, foresight, and intuition came naturally to Ev Rogers and symbolize for us Ev's legacy to the field of entertainment-education and health promotion.



Photo 9-3. Ev in front of the POFLEP headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania in June, 1994. Ev was in Arusha to plan the second national survey for *Twende na Wakati*. Notice the *Twende na Wakati* insignia on the POFLEP vehicle.

Source: Peter W. Vaughan.

### **Theory-Based Message Design in *Twende na Wakati***

The design of *Twende na Wakati* drew upon Bandura's social learning theory (also called social cognitive theory), which states that learning can occur through observing media role-models, and that this vicarious learning usually is more effective than direct experiential learning. Miguel Sabido, a creative Mexican writer-producer-director had adapted Bandura's theories to designing E-E soaps (see Bandura's chapter, this volume), and I was privileged to be directly trained by Miguel Sabido in the mid-1980s in this approach.

Three types of role-models were consciously incorporated in the storyline for *TNW*: (1) those who support the educational value (positive role-models) (2) those who reject this value (negative role-models), and (3) those who change from negative to positive behavior (transitional role-models) during the soap opera's broadcasts. Transitional characters start out as negative role-models, or at least are unsure about adopting the desired behavior. When transitional characters change their attitudes and



behaviors toward the educational value, their transformation is reinforced and explained in the epilogues (which are brief statements by a prestigious individual that connects the episode to an individuals' lives). Each time a positive role-model or a transitional character performs the socially desirable behavior (such as adopting family planning, for example), they are rewarded immediately in the storyline. Each time a negative role-model performs a socially undesirable behavior, he/she is immediately punished. For example, in *TNW Mkwaju* (literally "walking stick") is a negative role model for sexual responsibility; he is a truck driver who is promiscuous, sleeps with commercial sex workers, and contracts AIDS. He is punished by losing his prestigious job, his family, and eventually his life (Rogers et al., 1999).

### **The Effects of *TNW***

The effects of *TNW* were measured in a field experiment in which most of Tanzania was exposed to this entertainment-education radio soap opera (the treatment), while the broadcasts were blocked from a large central region of the country (Dodoma) for two years from 1993 to 1995 (the control, or comparison, area). Multiple types of evaluation data were gathered including before/during/after personal interviews with about 3,000 respondents in the control and treatment area each year for five years, point-of-referral data on family planning adoption at 79 clinics in the treatment and control areas, focus group and in-depth interviews with new family planning adopters in the control and treatment areas, and much more (Rogers et al., 1999).

*TNW* was an audience hit. In its first few years, some 55 percent of Tanzanians listened to the radio soap opera, and about half of those individuals listened regularly (that is, to at least one or both of the episodes that were broadcast each week). The program had strong effects on the adoption of family planning methods in Tanzania, with 23 percent of listeners reporting that they adopted because of exposure to *TNW*. Some 82 percent of listeners reported adopting a method of HIV prevention because of listening to the radio broadcasts (Rogers et. al., 1999; Vaughan, Rogers, Singhal, & Swalehe, 2000; Vaughan & Rogers, 2000). Most of these adopters changed to monogamous sexual relationships, while others adopted condoms, or else stopped sharing razors or needles. According to Vaughan (2003:5): "The most important behavior change that we were able to measure was a change in the number of sexual partners for both men and women....There was a secular downward trend in this variable of about 0.3 partners for men and 0.5 partners for women....and the decline was greater in the treatment than it was in the comparison area." The cost-benefits of *TNW* were also impressive: Less than \$1.00 (U.S.) per adopter of family planning and less than 10 cents (U.S.) per adopter of HIV prevention. These figures are very important in a desperately poor nation like Tanzania, where the per capita income today is only \$150 per year.

Fast forward to 2005. Initially slated for broadcast for two years (1993 to 1995), *TNW* is still being broadcast in Tanzania, some 12 years after its launch. In 2005, the program is broadcast on Radio Tanzania Dar-es-Salaam, Radio Tanzania-Dodoma, Sauti ya Tanzania-Zanzibar, Radio Faraja-Shinyanga, and Sauti ya Injili-Kilimanjaro. By far, it is the longest-running and most popular radio program in Tanzania of all times. Over



the years, *TNW* has won numerous international recognitions, including the Global Award for Media Excellence for Best Radio Program in Population Reporting, and UNESCO's Award for meritorious and innovative programming to improve communication in rural communities.

Moreover, the *TNW* experience has opened numerous avenues for the growth of entertainment-education programs in East Africa, and in other parts of the world. In East Africa, scriptwriters and producers trained for *TNW* were key in initiating *Zinduka*, radio soap on reproductive health and child survival; *Mnazi Mmoja*, a radio serial designed to encourage voter-education; *Vijana Wetu*, a radio serial on adolescent reproductive health; *Bibi Msafiri* on civic education; and *Baragumu la Haki* and *Mambo Bomba* on youth and sexuality<sup>4</sup>. Outside of East Africa, the trainers, scriptwriters, and researchers of *TNW* applied the lessons they learned in Tanzania to launch reproductive health and environmental conservation E-E programs such as *Apwe Plezi* (After the Pleasure) in St. Lucia and *The Coconut Bay* in the Eastern Caribbean Islands (Vaughan, Regis, & St. Catherine, 2000). Other E-E and health promotion projects that directly benefited from the *TNW* experience were *Sarivolana*, an E-E soap opera in Madagascar, *Banadda Twegande* in Uganda, and *Usigo Unake*, an E-E soap in Namibia.

### **In Closing**

So, *TNW* represents a mother hen for the increased proliferation of E-E in East Africa and outside<sup>5</sup>. Further, the research design and publications from the *TNW* project in Tanzania have contributed significantly to our understanding of how and why entertainment-education works as a health promotion strategy.

The invisible hand of Ev Rogers continues to guide the diffusion of E-E practice and research worldwide.

### **Story #3. Turtles and Peacocks: Lessons in E-E Collaboration from Netherlands<sup>6</sup> Primary Storyteller: Martine Bouman**

One morning in June 1991, as I waited in the lobby of a small hotel in the interior of Finland to undertake a tour of the famous North Karelia community health project, I noticed a friendly, distinguished-looking man, sitting in a comfortable chair. I extended my hand and said: "Hello, I am Martine Bouman from the Netherlands. Are you the bus driver?" The man smiled, took my hand, and said: "Very nice to meet you, Ms. Bouman. Yes, we will be travelling together, although I will not be driving." Unsure about what his role would be on our tour, I told him about my interests in health promotion (at that time I worked with the Netherlands Heart Foundation), and especially in entertainment-education (E-E). When I casually mentioned the Indian television series *Hum Log* (We People) as one of the E-E television examples known to me, the man's eyes gleamed and he noted: "Hello, I am Ev Rogers. I know this project very well."

I was very familiar with Ev Rogers' writings on *Hum Log* (Singhal & Rogers, 1988), and not recognizing Ev Rogers in person in that Finnish hotel lobby was embarrassing, to say the least. Over the next few days, we talked about E-E, and I shared with Ev my plans to write a thesis on entertainment-education. When I asked him if he would consider serving as one of my (long-distance) Ph.D. supervisors, Ev grinned about his rapid promotion from bus driver to doctoral committee member.



**Photo 9-4.** Ev and Martine Bouman, after Martine's Doctoral Defense at the University of Wageningen, The Netherlands in 1999. Within a short time of their first meeting in Finland, Ev graduated from being "Bus Driver" to Martine's a Doctoral Committee Member.

Source: Martine Bouman.

The metaphor of the bus driver is especially apt for Ev Rogers. In the driver's seat, Ev guided many E-E journeys, including mine in Netherlands. He was friendly and radiant, welcoming, and inclusive. He introduced me to many E-E fellow travellers, including his collaborator on the India *Hum Log* research project, Arvind Singhal (whom I first met in New Delhi, India in 1992).

As I began my doctoral thesis at Wageningen Agricultural University (WAU), I discovered that Ev's ties with the Netherlands went back several decades. One of Netherlands most respected scholars in agricultural extension at WAU, professor Anne van de Ban, first met Ev Rogers in 1958 at Ohio State University (and later at Michigan State University), when he was studying at the University of Wisconsin. They became good friends and Ev visited van de Ban in Wageningen, prior to the publication of the first 1962 edition of *Diffusion of Innovations* to learn more about innovation diffusion experiences in Netherlands (and, more generally, in Europe). Another Dutch scholar from WAU, Niels Röling, earned his Ph.D. from Michigan State University in the late 1960s when Ev was teaching there, and participated in the famous three country (India, Nigeria, and Brazil) diffusion study of agricultural innovations that Ev spearheaded. When, three decades later, Ev participated on my doctoral thesis committee at WAU, many of these bonds were reinforced and strengthened.

### **Turtles and Peacocks**

In my doctoral dissertation, published as a book, *The Turtle and the Peacock: The Entertainment-Education Strategy on Television*, I examined how health communication specialists and television professionals collaborate in producing E-E programs. My analysis included an identification of the hindering and facilitating collaboration factors, as also how these influencing factors could be managed (Bouman, 1999). I referred to the media-professionals (writers, producers, and directors) as “peacocks”: They are creative, flamboyant, ego-centric, focused on aesthetics of presentation, and interested in gaining attention. Displaying their beauty and artistry, they eschew scholarly oversight of their work, which they believe as being an unnecessary hindrance. In contrast, I labelled the content-driven health educators as “turtles”: They are slow, dull, steeped in both scientific and bureaucratic procedures, questioning, and nitpicking. Interestingly, while most E-E investigations around the globe included audience effects research and/or “reception” studies, our work in Netherlands looked at the front-end, collaborative production processes characterizing E-E (Bouman, 2002; 2004). That is, in order to create entertainment-education, how can the entertainers and the educators come together, and could the problems associated with such a union be addressed.

In the past 15 years, I have been intimately involved in several E-E projects in the Netherlands to foster collaboration between the “peacocks” and “turtles.” The first attempt was *Villa Borghese*, a 1992 co-production purposively designed and implemented to promote a healthy lifestyle, initiated by the Netherlands Heart Foundation (where I was then based).<sup>7</sup> *Villa Borghese* was broadcast on Thursday evenings, in primetime (8:25 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.). The setting is the lavishly decorated interior of Villa Borghese, a health farm in the Dutch countryside. In one scene, for instance, we see Maarten (played by Hugo Haenen), with his new lover, *Villa Borghese*'s dietician Laura (played by Linda de Wolf), dressed in a sexy oversized silk shirt. As they kiss, she pushes him away: "I can smell you picked up smoking again! Why?" Maarten replies: "I'm so sorry. I think it's the stress. I'm really trying to quit." He convinces her of his good intentions, and together they fall in bed, where she begins to undress him (Bouman, 2004).

The lessons from *Villa Borghese* provided understandings of the collaborative processes involved in an E-E co-production (Bouman, 1999; 2002; Bouman & Van Woerkum, 1998; Bouman & Wieberdink, 1993; Wieberdink, 1992; Zandvliet, 1998), including the difficulties when “peacocks” and “turtles” try to come together. Building on the *Vila Borghese* experience, other collaborative television projects followed in Netherlands, including the hospital drama series *Medisch Centrum West* in 1992-1994 (Bouman, Maas, & Kok, 1998), and the television series *Costa!* in 2001 (Van Empelen & Kok, 2002).

*Costa!*, broadcast in Fall, 2001, was the result of in-script-participation initiated by Stichting Soa Bestrijding, the Dutch Foundation Against Sexually Transmitted Diseases. *Costa!* was broadcast on Monday evenings during primetime (9:30 p.m. to 10:15 p.m.). Its setting is a beach club in Salau, on the Spanish Costa del Sol. In one of the scenes, for instance, we see Frida (played by the hottest Dutch actress Katja Schuurman) walking to her apartment after an early morning stroll. Inside, her promiscuous roommate Agnetha (played by Froukje de Both), kisses her previous night’s lover good-bye. As Frida comes in, Agnetha, barely dressed in a white bathrobe, falls back in the bed. "This is the way I like'em best," she sighs, "No strings attached, no address, no other details, I don't even recall his name!" Frida says: "I don't want to interfere in your love-life....but there's something to say about the dangers associated with your behaviors." "Dangers?" Agnetha snaps back, "You needn't bother, I always make love double Dutch!" At Frida's appalled "Double Dutch?" she responds: "Yes, of course: I always use a condom, and I take the pill as well. Double protection, so nothing can happen to me!"

Twenty years ago, E-E programs like *Villa Borghese* and *Costa!* would not have been possible in the Netherlands. At that time, collaborating with scriptwriters of popular television programs was problematic, because national health organizations had strong reservations about using a popular medium like a tabloid, a soap opera, or other drama series to communicate serious health messages (Bouman, 2004). Apart from their unfamiliarity with popular culture, health organizations feared losing their respectable image.

Our work in Netherlands suggests that in an E-E collaboration there is always tension between following systematic plans, as health communication professionals are trained to do, and following creative impulses, as comes naturally to television professionals (Runco & Albert, 1990; van Woerkum, 1981, 1987). A health communication professional stated, “Brainstorming for television professionals [involves]....acting out every wild fantasy, although there is a limited budget...and some of the ideas are not at all feasible” (Bouman, 1999, p. 188). Health communication professionals often become annoyed (although some are also thrilled) with how television professionals indulge in fantasies and how they let their imagination run wild.

While both health communication and television professionals want a television program with high entertainment value and high viewer ratings, they focus on different

goals (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). Health communication professionals want to influence the audience's knowledge, attitude, and behavior, while television professionals want to entertain the audience and satisfy commercial sponsor-revenue ambitions as well as their professional standards (Bouman, 2004). Health communication professionals usually have scientific training in which matters of objective information, truth, balancing of values, and standardized protocols and procedures are important. Television professionals are trained to value creativity, originality, spontaneity, and authorship. When engaging in E-E collaboration, both parties enter the process with their own professional standards and frames of reference. These two frames of reference (and perceptions of reality) often conflict in the daily practice of producing an E-E program. Health communication professionals specify their aims and goals by means of a thorough and often detailed briefing, based on their frame of reference. After the briefing and the discussion with the television professionals, the latter also start to work on the project from their own frame of reference. During the actual production stage, the conflict becomes more evident. While both professionals think they are doing a good job, each is questioned and criticized by the other (Bouman, 2004).

A reference frame for conflict is fought out at the production level, on the work floor. Recognizing this potential conflict, both professionals invest time in socializing with each other in order to influence the decisions that are made. But the production of the television program takes place in the domain of the television professionals, so ultimately their frame of reference proves to be the more decisive. Health communication professionals, more often than television professionals, reframe their issues. During the collaboration process, and especially at the production stage, they are confronted with controversies that are based on different perceptions of reality. Because of the deadline structure of television, which requires quick and decisive answers when problems arise, there is not much time for reflection. This results most of the time in accepting the television professionals' frame of reference. Health communication professionals only in rare cases succeed in having television professionals accept their frame of reference (Bouman, 2002; 2004).

### **Toward a Mutual Frame of Reference**

However, our work in Netherlands with E-E interventions suggests that effective collaboration between “peacocks” and “turtles” can occur. The interests of both the collaborating partners can be met, when a mutual frame of reference is employed to search for common ground. In Netherlands, we have discovered that a *coordinating mediator*, who knows both fields and can speak both languages, is key to this collaborative process. As Ev noted: "If collaborating with the turtle can get the peacock what he wants, then ultimately they will, at least to some degree, collaborate" (personal interview in Netherlands, September, 2000).

For both the “peacocks” and the “turtles”, a coordinating mediator is one possible way to diminish the perceived risks involved in E-E. For health communication professionals, educational messages in entertainment television formats are complicated by the multidimensional character of the medium (a combination of text, image and

sound); further, these messages are open-aired, mass-mediated and, hence not restricted to a captive audience. The outputs are thus diffused: that is, the specific educational messages can disappear behind the veneer of entertainment. To media-professionals, health education messages loom as a direct threat to their creative processes and products.

To reduce the perceived risks in E-E collaboration for both the “peacocks” and the “turtles”, I helped found the Netherlands Entertainment-Education Foundation (NEEF) and Bouman E&E Development. The purpose was to establish independent organizations that could bring the different E-E stakeholders together. In 2000, NEEF organized the third international conference on Entertainment-Education and Social Change, where researchers, field workers, politicians, media professionals, and funders met on equal terms and mutually designed an EE Declaration for the future (NEEF and JHU/CCP, 2001).

To foster better coordination between different stakeholders, Bouman E&E Development recently completed a research study called *Health on Screen* in which we – the health communicators -- analysed how sexual behavior and intimate relationships were portrayed in four different Dutch popular soaps and drama series -- *Onderweg Naar Morgen; Goede Tijden, Slechte Tijden; Costa!; and Najib en Julia*. After carefully watching over a hundred episodes of these four dramatic series, we identified fourteen different dramatic plots dealing with sexual issues and intimate relationships (including gay and lesbianism, the first intercourse, (in)idelity in relationships, and others). We also interviewed in-depth the scriptwriters of these storylines and held focus group discussions with Dutch youth, (ages 13 to 19) years old, the primary audience of these series. This research yielded three interesting perspectives of different stakeholders -- health communicators, scriptwriters, and audiences. By using actual examples of storylines we are able to start a dialogue between health communicators, script writers and Dutch youth, and create an open forum for discussing the potential impact of drama portrayals and audiences’ sexual behavior. One outcome of this project is the design of a mutual, overlapping frame of reference for the three stakeholders (Bouman E&E Development, 2005).

Another more recent, more exciting participatory and collaborative Dutch example of entertainment-education is based on the user-as-designer (UAD) concept. In late, 2004, plans were put in place for a television-centered E-E intervention for Dutch youth titled *Find Out*. This 24-episode television series, created by Dutch youth for Dutch youth, is supported by the Dutch Health Research and Development Council, and aims to empower young people to reflect on their own beliefs, values, and practices on the use of drugs, sex, and alcohol. Supported by extensive formative and summative research, *Find Out* is a collaborative venture between various stakeholders: The National Institute for STI and AIDS Control in Netherlands (SoaAids Netherland), Netherlands Institute of Mental Health and Addiction (Trimbos Instituut), Netherlands Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NIGZ), Maastricht University, Bosch Film Amsterdam, and MTV – Box Television. Bouman E&E Development coordinates this project and provides formal and informal guidance to this collaborative venture.

Further, Bouman E&E Development, with financial support of the Dutch Health Research and Development Council, has initiated a large multi-university curriculum development project on entertainment-education, perhaps the first of its kind at a national level. The E-E teaching modules, being implemented in six communication and media studies programs, are designed to make health communication and television professionals become more skilled partners in designing and implementing E-E interventions.

### **In Closing**

Ev Rogers, our metaphorical bus-driver, will perhaps be pleased with the journeys that E-E has made in Netherlands.

### **Story #4: Entertainment-Education in the Peruvian Amazon Primary Storyteller: Eliana Elías**

In 1991, a cholera epidemic claimed hundreds of lives on the Peruvian coast and in the Andean highlands, menacing to become a great disaster as it advanced on the Peruvian Amazon. As a social communicator working with a development NGO, and a student preparing her thesis, I, on my own initiative, decided to validate the efficacy of the media materials for the national prevention campaign against cholera. Loaded with posters, stickers, and other campaign materials, and after a long trip by plane and boat, I arrived in Papaplaya, a riverine community of four hundred families on the Huallaga River in San Martin province.

Over the next several days, focus group interviews with community members demonstrated that most of the national campaign materials were poorly designed and many lacked cultural sensitivity. Messages like “wash your hands with soap after going to the toilet” had no relevance in the rural Amazonas riverine communities where people could barely afford soap, and where there exist no toilets. “Boil water for 20 minutes” means little in communities where one can hardly find clocks, and where “cook” is the commonly-used term, not “boil”. Nor surprisingly, most of the campaign materials were developed in Lima -- the capital city of Peru -- by “expert” health educators. Even some of the graphic designers, it was clear, only knew the Amazon region by its pictures.

As part of my job, I also interviewed local youth groups in the Peruvian Amazon who were creating other messages to control cholera<sup>8</sup>. They showed me a poster in which ghosts were emerging from a metal pot in which water was being “cooked” on a bonfire. They explained that “with the bubbles the ‘bad’ things go out from water, illness is gone, and water is ready for drinking”. These youth groups, also broadcast a radio spot in which two commonly-available fruits, Cocona and Guineo (in local parlance alluding to female and male genitals, respectively) talked among themselves about the importance of washing the fruit prior to eating them. The spot became so popular that people in the market place joked about these two fruits, including the importance of cleaning them, prior to pleasurable consumption!



The creative ghost and bubbles poster and the daring radio spot were big hits in certain parts of the Peruvian Amazon region. Unlike the materials developed in Lima by “experts”, these locally-produced messages were understood, remembered, and enjoyed by the Amazonian people. People told me that they “felt these messages as their own.” Once local creativity was empowered and liberated, a communication circuit was established that appealed to local culture, was respectful of local idioms and metaphors, and build on peoples’ previous knowledge. During those few days in the Amazonian jungle, I began to see the potential of locally-sensitive entertainment-education.

During the next four years, as I traveled extensively in Peru’s Loreto region (mainly in the Amazonian riverine communities) working as consultant to health and environmental projects, I tried to engage with local sensitivities and understand local communicative practices in the context of peoples’ well-being<sup>9</sup>. “In the Amazonian jungle everything [everybody] talks to us, you just have to know how to listen”, an old village woman told me. I began to believe her. Not surprisingly, “vegetalist physicians” -- or shamans -- are most respected in the Amazonas – primarily on account of their unique capacity to converse with sacred plants (e.g. Ayahuasca). Norma Panduro, a vegetalist physician explained: “The sacred plant talks to us, she tells us about the ‘damage’ [illness] that affects the ill person, and guides us to be able to choose the plants that will cure him/her”.

Naturally, I was struck by the richness of communication in the Peruvian Amazon. As heirs of an ancient oral tradition that has allowed the creation and recreation of world views and knowledge systems, where the joyous life world resists the disenchantment that comes with modern colonialism, the Amazonian peoples maintain conversation and oral narration as the locus for encounter, recall, and intergenerational transmission of old wisdom, creating new meanings and comprehensions. In the Amazonian region, it is common to experience lengthy talks, plenty of details, rhetoric resources, and magnificent histrionic talents – all devices that that prompt and promote interpersonal closeness. One can listen to countless narratives in which human beings and nature are united, where the life-giving river and forest “mothers” constantly communicate providing, taking care, or punishing when natural resources are appropriately used. I began to realize that in the Amazonian region, where conversation is the core of life —both for an individual and the community, health is also maintained through the exchange of messages. “Good communication” is considered part of wellbeing (Panduro 2004, Aquituari 2004).

### **A Quest for Culturally-Sensitive Communication Circuits**

In 1998, along with my husband, Luis Gonzales, I co-founded Minga Peru, a non-profit organization committed to fostering social justice and human rights through the promotion of better health, increased equity, and the sustainable management of natural resources for peoples of the Amazon region, especially its rural women. Minga’s activities are focused in the Region of Loreto, a territory comprising one-fourth of Peru's geographic area, including 146,000 square miles of the Amazon rainforest (Sypher,

McKinley, Ventsam, & Elías, 2002). About one million people live in Loreto: Half in Iquitos City, the main city, and the other half in some 500 riverine communities<sup>10</sup> along the Amazon River and its serpentine tributaries. Some 60 ethno-linguistic groups make up the Peruvian Amazon, representing a non-homogenous population. The river is the main transportation channel and most people travel by manually-powered shallow canoes made of balsa wood (Farrington, 2003). Steamers, ferries, and motor boats connect major riverine routes along the Amazon. There are no roads in these remote communities, nor a dedicated power supply. There are insufficient health services: Only a few health clinics exist, mostly located in bigger riverine communities or towns.

From day one, communication was the main axes to fulfill our mission. One of our first projects was the production of *¡Bienvenida Salud!*, a 30 minutes radio show broadcast three times a week throughout the Loreto region of the Peruvian Amazonas. The radio program revolves around a soap opera whose main character is Pasionaria, a peasant woman that fights bravely for a better life for her, her family, and her community. *¡Bienvenida Salud!*, the brainchild of a group of communicators, nurses, and local actors, is in its seventh year of broadcast. By 2005, over 900 episodes of *Bienvenida Salud!* had been broadcast (Singhal & Rattine-Flaherty, in press)..

*Bienvenida Salud* recreates and adapts the entertainment-education strategy to suit the local conditions of the Peruvian Amazonas. We sought to create “communicative circuits” where listeners are not just message receptors; rather, they become active coproducers of messages (Neira 2001, Elías 2004). To foster coproduction, audience members are strongly encouraged to write letters to the program, which serve as the basic input for *Bienvenida Salud*'s radio scripts. Letters come in the form of cards, hand-sewn notes, and some are even painted on bark. Vegetable and natural colors are used as ink. To encourage audience feedback and formative inputs to designing *Bienvenida Salud*, Minga has made arrangements with boat companies to ferry listeners' letters from the interior of the Amazon jungle to Iquitos City, where the headquarters of Minga is located. Letter-writers do not pay for this "postal" service; Minga Perú pays a small fee for each letter that is delivered (Singhal & Rattine-Flaherty, in press).

To date, over 4,500 letters have been received where Amazonian women and men share their personal stories, ask questions about reproductive health, denounce human right violations, and provide advice about the content of the program. For instance, in December, 2002, Romel Castro wrote in about his abusive father: "I suffered psychological abuse from my father....He often came home drunk and would insult my mother and hit her....Sometimes I would see blood on her face. It's a big problem for me" (quoted in Farrington, 2003, p. 2). Minga distills stories like the ones provided by Romel into its social dramas on *Bienvenida Salud*, each illustrating a carefully chosen topic for the episode, such as why eradicating violence in the community is important, or how to recognize the side effects of contraceptive injections.

*Bienvenida Salud!* is highly popular among its audiences. Almost one out of two radio listeners in Loreto's rural areas listens to *Bienvenida Salud!*, and almost one out of three listeners of *Bienvenida Salud* talks about the program with another person (Ventsam

1998. Listeners also point out that what they value most about Pasionaria, the main character, is the way she faces adversity and joins with other women for collective empowerment. In the program's episodes, Pasionaria discovers her own strength, the capabilities and knowledge she has and that she ignored, resulting in a better self-image. Beyond the explicit content, the acknowledgement of women's lives in *Bienvenida Salud!* constitutes the "subtext", and is acknowledged as the main value of the program.

Some viewer stories and testimonies reinforce the value of *Bienvenida Salud!* in the Peruvian Amazon:

Evarina Yumbato, a 58-year old indigenous Cocama woman living in the riverine community of San Antonio, who assists women during delivery, admits that she did not know the danger of swelling (or water retention) during pregnancy: "I heard that Pasionaria brings her friends to the hospital when they have swelling during pregnancy, because she says it is dangerous....When I observed that my oldest daughter who was in her fourth month of pregnancy had swelling on her face and feet, I brought her as soon as I could to the medical center. She had high blood pressure....but they assisted her and she recovered".

Asunción Lozano Flores, a 28-year old woman and mother of a three-year old daughter lives with her husband in Nueva Vida, a riverine community on the Itaya river, seven hours by boat from Iquitos. A regular listener for the past seven years, Asunción was inspired by *Bienvenida Salud!* to practice family planning: "I use natural methods which I combine with artificial ones", she noted. Asunción is a human rights and health activist in her community. She travels to Iquitos to hand-deliver letters of *Bienvenida Salud!* to Minga headquarters, and pick up audio cassettes of the program which she plays during community assemblies: 'In this way it is easier for me to talk in front of all the people of my village. When they meet in an assembly I put on a cassette with *Bienvenida Salud* and the people get excited....They take more interest in what I'm going to explain afterwards about human rights'.

Complementing Minga's on-air broadcasts of *Bienvenida Salud!*, are a host of ongoing on-the-ground interventions, led by a trained cadre of community *promotoras*. Minga trains young women, using culturally appropriate materials, to work as health promoters and change agents in the communities where they live. They are carefully chosen on the strength of their personality, drive, and motivation, and trained at the Tambo Minga training center, located two hours away by motorboat from Iquitos City. "Tambo" means a place of rest (or home) in Peruvian Spanish. *Promotoras* come here for training from various riverine communities to learn the basics of male and female anatomy, detection of breast and cervical cancers, and simulation of the birth process (Farrington, 2003). They also implement sewing, weaving, and crocheting projects; learn carpentry; how to establish and run a fish farm; how to grow medicinal herbs; and create environmentally sustainable eco-systems through agro-forestry and small animal husbandry projects. The *promotoras* represent Minga's partners and field-based change agents, modeling healthy reproductive lifestyles, initiating community discussions and projects, and serving as local resource persons for Minga's outreach (Singhal & Rattine-

Flaherty, in press). By 2005, 52 community health *promotoras* have been trained by Minga, who work closely with a network of 500 women in 35 riverine communities (of the Marañon and El Tigre river basins) in the Peruvian Amazon.



**Photo 9-5.** Eliana Elías (Standing in Front and Fourth from Right) with *Promotoras* at Minga’s Tambo Training Center in the Peruvian Amazon Region.

Source: Personal files of author Singhal.

In sum, Minga Perú’s work in the Peruvian Amazonas is geared toward empowering members of riverine communities, especially its women, to experience a higher quality of life; to make better informed choices with respect to their reproductive health; and to gain in self-esteem to value their sexual and human rights.

### **In Closing**

In a culturally diverse environment such as Peru, where most messages (a) are created in, and emitted from, a material and symbolic “center of power” (located in the capital city of Lima), and (b) carry a top-down homogenizing agenda, the entertainment-education approach [such as the one followed by Minga] forces the communicator to respect differences among audience members, and to be sensitive to their language, idioms, metaphors, emotions, humor, and wisdom. Also, our experience at Minga suggests that E-E proposes an educational pedagogy that values pleasure, engagement, and joy -- where the learning-teaching experience is founded in an ethic of wellbeing

rather than in one that privileges duty, fear, and guilt. E-E supports a laughing over a crying education. E-E liberates the creative capacities of people, encouraging democratic encounters through listening, discussions, and actions rather than hierarchical relations.

Further, our E-E experiences at Minga Peru suggest that behind every text there is a subtext. In the Peruvian context, Amazonian women value horizontal communication, where the “different other” is not ignored. They prize the affective link and the closeness that is achieved within a community of communicators (not just listeners). E-E shows that humor, joy, and pleasure can establish a public space for meeting. It liberates the self, not severing it from the rest of life. Through E-E the self can realize that it belongs to a community, close to, together with, like in a riverine village.

Professor Rogers’ writings on communication for social change, and particularly about entertainment-education, greatly inspired our work at Minga. *Bienvenida Salud!* had been on air for only a short when Professor Rogers’ and Singhal’s collaborative writings on entertainment-education (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Singhal & Rogers, 2002) helped us to reassess our practice and gave us more elements to think strategically in designing and understanding the construction of the characters and dealing with emotions and stories of our program.

Muchas gracias, Professor Rogers!

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> This story was narrated by Ev Rogers many-a-time and is featured in Rogers (unpublished manuscript).

<sup>2</sup> This section draws upon Singhal (1990), Singhal and Rogers (1999), and Backer, Dearing, Singhal, and Valente (2005).

<sup>3</sup> Bakari spent a semester at the University of New Mexico while Swalehe earned an MA degree.

<sup>4</sup> *Mambo Bomba* ("Cool Stuff"), a radio youth magazine with a soap opera component, was another program inspired by *Twende na Wakati*. It was produced by Radio Tanzania under the Africa Youth Alliance (AYA) Project. The skills gained by youth in developing *Twende na Wakati* contributed to the development of *Mambo Bomba*.

<sup>5</sup> *TNW* has also inspired (and been inspired by) other work in East Africa, notably the Kenyan radio soap opera *Ushikwapo Shikamana*. Both serial dramas are in Kiswahili the national language of Kenya and Tanzania, and shared common design elements, including formative research; development of a values grid; positive, negative and transitional role models; and culturally sensitive storylines.

<sup>6</sup> This section draws upon some previous writings of author Bouman (1999, 2002; 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Other examples of Dutch E-E television interventions in the late 1980s and early 1990s are the comedy series *Familie Oudenrijn*, the *Way of Life Show*, docu-drama *Twaalf Steden*, *Dertien Ongelukken*, the comedy series *Oppassen*, the hospital dramaseries *Medisch Centrum West*, and the game and talk show *Op leven en Dood*.

<sup>8</sup> They organized themselves around *Radio Oriente* (Orient Radio) and *La Voz de la Selva* (Voice of the Jungle) radio stations.

<sup>9</sup> These villages are located in a region that represents one fourth of the country territory. There live more than sixty indigenous peoples, which are culturally and linguistically diverse. However, due to decades of discriminatory and exclusionary policies, they lack even basic services.

<sup>10</sup> These numbers pertain to officially-recognized riverine communities. The actual number is higher.