

Karlstad University

Media and Communication Studies

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Young East-African TV Producers reporting on HIV and AIDS: Experiences, Challenges and Eye-Openers

By Nanna Engebretsen, Lillehammer University College, Norway & Karlstad University, Sweden

In July 2009, ten young TV-producers from five different East-African countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda) gathered in Nairobi, Kenya, to attend a 10-day workshop in TV-documentary making. The course was a part of UNESCO's project *UNESCO's Network of Young TV Producers on HIV and AIDS* that supports capacity building of young TV professionals in developing countries for accurate, credible and sensitive reporting on HIV and AIDS.

This lecture presents some of the major findings from the Nairobi field trip, collected through in-depth interviews with the participants and by analysing the content of the mini-documentaries made as a result of the workshop. For example, while ten young TV-producers told about their journalistic practises in reporting on HIV and AIDS, seven claimed that their major challenge was connected to interviewing people living with HIV and AIDS. Some were simply just too afraid to meet them face to face. Therefore, it is also interesting to demonstrate through visual examples how people living with HIV actually are represented in the trainees' videos - sometimes telling the story themselves, sometimes left voiceless, and often in the shadow of authorities and experts. It is not seldom that it is the trainee him/her self that fills the frames through stand-ups and voice-overs, leaving less space for visual storytelling.

The lecture will also reflect on some educational and methodological challenges experienced - describing for instance how I, from being an observing PhD-student, overnight turned into the lead TV-trainer. Or how to surprise your students by telling you are living with the virus yourself. Moreover, thinking about the documentary genre and HIV programming in general, what if there is a *fatigue* against these kinds of TV-programmes after all? What if nobody is watching? Finally, what actually happened with all the former trainees; they didn't get tired of doing these TV-programmes - did they?

Nanna Engebretsen is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Television Production and Film Studies, Lillehammer University College, Norway, and Media Communication Studies, Karlstad University, Sweden. Her PhD project is entitled "*TV-programmes that make the difference. Documentary production and capacity building within the context of Communication for Development*". The study is based on the UNESCO project "*UNESCO's network of Young TV producers on HIV and AIDS*", established in 2002 to support capacity building of young TV professionals in developing countries for accurate, credible and sensitive reporting on HIV and AIDS.