

Chapter 10

Amplifying the Health Concerns of Minoritized Groups in Nigeria Using Documentary

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ABSTRACT

Several studies have shown that most highly placed government officials in the Ministry of Health in Africa do not bother to get to the hinterlands, slums, or inner cities where there are poor people, and socially excluded people, because according to them, these are hard-to-reach areas; and additionally due to the spate of insecurity in the continent. In the case of Nigeria, it has also been revealed that these top government health officials prefer a situation where they are briefed by their media aids who must have gone to have a one-on-one encounter with these minority groups, by capturing their plights on camera, especially in this era of rising insecurity in the country. This chapter explores the role of documentaries in amplifying the health concerns of these minority groups in Nigeria. The study uses social shaping theory in explaining concepts, themes, and constructs. Findings are shared.

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INTRODUCTION

When properly packaged, documentaries can be a catalyst for social change and social inclusion especially in the realms of health inequalities and policies (Shaw and Robertson, 1997; Nichols, 2001; Parr, 2007; Dobson, 2007; de Lange, Olivier & Wood, 2008). Some documentaries are intentionally designed to showcase from a health perspective the life of the poor and socially excluded around the world, and especially in Nigeria; to draw the attention of decision makers to their plight and challenges in accessing health care services. This article draws from one of the authors' work on "Partnership for Transforming Health Systems Phase Two" (PATHS2), which was a six-year development initiative that aims to ensure Nigeria achieves important health-related Millennium Development Goals which ran from 2002 to 2008. PATHS2 was designed to use the art of documentary to draw the attention of policy makers to the plights of minoritized groups in Nigeria; and one of the authors was involved in the media production and report. PATHS2 documentaries were designed to showcase the life of unusual people and draw the attention of decision makers to the plight and health challenges facing this group of people in Nigeria. This strategy was informed by two National Strategic Health Development Plan (NSHDP) priorities: to strengthen accountability, transparency and responsiveness of the national health system and to attain effective gender inclusive community participation in health development and management, as well as community ownership of sustainable health outcomes. So, as a catalyst for change and social inclusion, PATHS2 used documentaries to reach the unreached in the nooks and crannies of Nigeria, find their voices and bring such voices into public discourse to influence health planning and policy. Our camera waded through rivers to get to the forgotten masses in the slums of Makoko in Lagos State, climbed the quarry to find women labourers in Ebonyi State, staggered through the deserts to find the Nomads in Jigawa state, stooped under the rocky bridge of Wuse in Abuja to reach the abandoned pensioners, prostrated before Mai angua's (community heads of Hausa communities in urban cities) and even escaped being destroyed in an attempt to reach the almajiris.

Definition of Terms

This section presents definitions of some key terms in respect of how they are used in this paper.

Social Exclusion

Social exclusion (SE) is a process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live (Koshoedo, Paul-Ebhohimhen, Jepson, Watson, 2015). People who are excluded are not 'just like' the rest of the poor. They are also disadvantaged by who they are or where they live and as a result are locked out of the benefits of development. Some of the socially excluded groups include the rural and urban poor women and men; young people, physically challenged, old people/retirees and other less privileged service users. Social exclusion is a multidimensional process of progressive social rupture, detaching groups and individuals from social relations and institutions and preventing them from full participation in the normal, normatively prescribed activities of the society in which they live (Lashko, 2006; Gohagan, 2008; Pinsky, Ford, Gamito, Higgins, Jenkins, Lamerato, Tenorio, Marcus, Coleman, 2010).

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