

A Participatory Assessment of *Gugar Goge*, an Entertainment-Education
Radio Soap Opera, in Nigeria

by

Arvind Singhal
Professor of Communication Studies
Ohio University
email: singhal@ohio.edu

Sarah Hurlburt
Population Media Center
Email: hurlburt@populationmedia.org

and

Radha Vij
Email: radhaonly@hotmail.com

A Qualitative Assessment Report

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Executive Summary

The present report documents the results of a participatory assessment exercise, comprising of participatory sketching and participatory photography, conducted in Nigeria to gauge how avid listeners of *Gugar Goge* ("Tell It To Me Straight") an entertainment-education radio soap opera, engaged with the radio program, deriving personal meanings from its plot, characters, and educational messages.

The results of the present qualitative report are not meant to be generalized to the entire population of *Gugar Goge* audience members. Our research, at best, can suggest how certain (self-selected) viewers of the radio program engaged with, and reflected upon, the content of the program, providing rich descriptive insights that cannot be gained from traditional, quantitative impact evaluations.

Three research questions guided the present study. These questions, and their respective answers -- gleaned from our participatory assessment, are provided below.

Research Question #1: *What is the radio drama Gugar Goge about?*

Our participants' sketches and photos suggest that those who were regular listeners (1) comprehended the various intersecting plotlines of *Gugar Goge*, (2) could describe the attributes of its main characters, and, in so doing, (3) could articulate its various educational messages: That is, overcoming the harmful reproductive health practices of early marriage and multiple pregnancies; the importance of safe motherhood and the seeking of professional care, detection and treatment of obstetric fistula, and how youth can prevent infection with HIV, and stay away from vices such as drugs and alcohol.

Research Question #2: *As a female (or male) listener, which scene from Gugar Goge was most meaningful to you and why?*

Our participants' sketches suggest various degrees of emotional and personal resonance with the key plotlines and characters. Our participants freely talked about the debilitating health consequences for a woman (1) if her husband does not get her the professional medical attention she needs at the time of delivering a child, (2) if she is withdrawn from school and married off at an early age. The overwhelming emotional sentiment of our participants toward reproductive health of women was reflected in the pithy phrase: "Education as Protection."

Research Question #3: *How has your life has changed as a result of listening to Gugur Goge?*

The sketches, photos, and narratives of our participants, especially those of regular listeners of *Gugur Goge*, suggest that listening to the radio program affected their lives in various ways. Listeners emphasized that they learned about, or were reinforced in, the following: The importance of (1) educating girls, (2) delaying marriage until a woman's body is mature, (3) having a small family, (4) pre and ante-natal care, (5) early treatment of obstetric fistula, and (6) male responsibility in not marrying young girls, and assisting their partner in seeking professional reproductive health services when she becomes pregnant.

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The present report documents the results of a participatory assessment exercise conducted in Nigeria to gauge how avid listeners of *Gugar Goge* ("Tell it to me Straight"), an entertainment-education radio soap opera, engaged with the radio program, deriving personal meanings from its plot, characters, and educational messages.

Let us acknowledge up front that the results of the present qualitative report are not meant to be generalized to the entire population of *Gugar Goge* audience members. The results are useful to the extent that they suggest how certain (self-selected) viewers of the radio program engaged with, and reflected upon, the content of the program, providing rich, descriptive insights that are difficult (if not impossible) to gain from survey-based impact evaluations.

The present report (1) describes the *Gugar Goge* project, including the underlying theory and methodology behind the radio program's plot and character delineation, (2) lists the research questions guiding the present research, (3) discusses our participatory methods of data-collection, including the rationale for using participatory sketching and photography techniques, (4) presents our key results, and (5) raises implications for employing participatory methods in the assessment of entertainment-education programs.

The *Gugar Goge* Project

The *Gugar Goge* radio project was implemented in Nigeria by Population Media Center of Shelburne, Vermont, USA with support from The Rotarian Action Group on Population and Development; Conservation, Food and Health Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

Gugar Goge was a 70 episode entertainment-education radio soap opera, broadcast in the Hausa language in Kano and Kaduna States in Northern Nigeria from June, 2006 to February, 2007. It was broadcast on Radio Kano AM service every Sunday from 8 to 8:15 pm, on Radio Nigeria-Kaduna, Hausa Service, every Tuesday from 10 to 10:15 am, and on Saturday from 9:15 to 9:30 pm in a broadcast on both FM and SW bands. It also aired on FM 96.5 (Radio Kano FM).

Gugar Goge's educational purposes were interrelated and multi-fold: Promoting education for girls, delaying marriage and pregnancies; promoting adoption of family planning and reproductive health services including pre and ante-natal care for pregnant women, HIV prevention; and raising awareness and changing social norms and behaviors regarding obstetric fistula (also called VVF – vasico-vaginal fistula), a condition resulting from adolescent childbirth that makes its victims incontinent (that is, they have no control over their urine). Women who develop fistulas are often abandoned by their husbands, rejected by their communities, and deeply stigmatized. Most cases of obstetric fistula are preventable and treatable. However, it is estimated

that at least 2 million women in Africa, Asia and the Arab region are living with the condition, and some 50,000 to 100,000 new cases develop each year. *Gugar Goge* also addressed challenges faced by youth, including drug and alcohol abuse, unprotected sexual activity with multiple partners that puts them at high risk, and the like.

To achieve these educational goals, PMC staff conducted a training workshop for scriptwriters to transfer knowledge of the Sabido methodology to their Nigerian counterparts and to sketch out various intersecting storylines promoting the main educational themes. For each educational storyline, a set of positive, negative, and transitional role models were carefully delineated, drawing upon Albert Bandura's social learning and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986), and an accompanying methodology to operationalize it developed by Miguel Sabido, a Mexican writer-producer-director of entertainment-education *telenovelas* ("television novels") (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Singhal & Rogers, 2002; Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). PMC is well-known for its expertise in integrating the "Sabido-Methodology" in the design of radio and television soap operas around the world.

Positive, Negative, and Transitional Role Models

Drawing upon theories of Stanford University social psychologist, Albert Bandura, about how audience members learn from media role models, Miguel Sabido, a creative writer-director-producer at Televisa, the Mexican national television network, produced a series of seven entertainment-education *telenovelas* from the mid-1970s to early 1980s (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). In each of these *telenovelas*, Sabido incorporated Bandura's principles of role modeling in carefully delineating the key characters. Remarkably, each *telenovela* was popular with its audience, made a profit, and met its educational objectives (Singhal & Rogers, 1999).

In operationalizing the concept of modeling, Sabido was well aware that the relationship between a media consumer and a media model goes beyond the cognitive domain to include the emotive and affective domains. Sabido, for instance, knew that audience members engage in *parasocial relationships* with media models, defined as the seemingly face-to-face interpersonal relationships that can develop between a viewer and a mass media personality (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The media consumer forms a relationship with a performer that is analogous to the real interpersonal relationships. Thus, audience members tune in at a pre-appointed hour to welcome the media model into their homes. Incredibly, some audience members even talk to their favorite characters (that is, to their TV or radio set) as if the characters were real people (Papa et al., 2000; Papa, Singhal, & Papa, 2006). So, Sabido designed his entertainment-education *telenovelas* in ways that viewers could become affectively involved with the role models and learn socially desirable behaviors from them.

Each of Sabido's entertainment-educational *telenovelas* has three types of characters: (1) those who support the educational value (positive role-models) (2) those who reject this value (negative role-models), and (3) those who sit somewhere in the middle (or on the negative side) and, as the storyline unfolds, gradually begin to adopt the positive behaviors (transitional characters). When a positive character models a behavior that is socially desirable, the character is rewarded. If a negative character emulates a socially undesirable behavior, he/she is punished. The transitional characters, designed to mirror the attitudes and beliefs of the target audience,

carefully watch the consequences accruing to the positive and negative role models, and gradually move toward the positive end of the continuum.

Gugar Goge's Storylines and Character Delineations

As noted previously, the plot of *Gugar Goge* was designed around several intersecting storylines, each centered on an educational purpose. Patterned after the Sabido methodology, storylines were delineated by a set of positive, negative, and transitional role models.

In Northern Nigeria, especially in the States of Kano and Kaduna, factors that put a woman's reproductive health in jeopardy include being excluded from educational opportunities; marriage at a young age to men who may be 20 to 40 years older; early pregnancies; not having access to, or information about, family planning and little free choice to practice it; traditional birthing practices that exacerbate the problem of obstetric fistula, and others.

Gugar Goge addressed many of these issues through the positive, negative and transitional characters in two main intersecting storylines: (1) the fistula storyline which addressed themes such as education for girls, delaying marriage and pregnancies, adoption of pre and ante-natal care, and changing social norms and behaviors about obstetric fistula, including its preventable and treatable nature; and (2) the youth storyline which addressed drug and alcohol abuse, risky sexual behaviors with multiple partners, and HIV/AIDS.

At the center of the fistula storyline is **Kande (a positive character)** -- a beautiful, respectful, intelligent twelve year old girl, who lives with her parents. She is always singing, loves school, and is well-liked by everyone. When her father, **Dege (a transitional character)**, marries a second wife, **Dela (a negative character)**, trouble ensues in the house. Shortly thereafter, Kande's mother dies an unexplained death and Dela starts to mistreat Kande behind her fathers back -- beating her and working her to exhaustion. Dela wants Kande out of the house, and convinces her father to find Kande a husband. Dege complies, and at only twelve years, Kande is married to a man twenty years older than her.

Kande moves with her husband to a rural area. She becomes pregnant, but has no access to reproductive health information, so she does not seek out pre-natal care. When Kande goes into labor, there is no one there to assist her. There are complications because she is so small in size, and her obstructed labor creates a fistula. Kande's baby dies during the labor. Kande's fistula causes her to be incontinent, and she is shunned as she drips urine and gives out a foul smell. She no longer sings, she no longer laughs, and she becomes very weak physically. Her husband tells her to leave his house.

Kande goes back to her father's house and finds that he divorced Dela after discovering that she had been abusing Kande. **Yalwa (a positive character)**, a neighbor and community health worker, visits with Kande and discovers that she has developed a fistula. Yalwa asks Dege if she could bring Kande to the local hospital for treatment to repair her fistula. Dege agrees.

While Kande is in the hospital, she begins to take control of her life and gain self-efficacy. She learns how to sew and knit. Yalwa also teaches her about the proper care for pregnant women, and Kande begins to promote the importance of nutrition and prenatal care among the

neighborhood women. She shares her story in hopes that other women will not have to experience what she did. After Kande has the surgery to repair the fistula, she returns to school to complete her education. In the end, Kande's father marries Yalwa, the kind health worker, and Kande, after graduating, marries **Biggy**, a local soccer star who becomes a medical doctor.

The fistula story in the radio program is complemented by an interrelated story about male responsibility in women's reproductive health. In this story, **Lado**, a man in his mid-30s, denies antenatal treatment to his wife, **Tani**, who has given him two children among a spate of miscarriages. When Tani goes into a prolonged labor, Lado (with encouragement from his mother **Goggo**) refuses to take her to the hospital, calling in the traditional healer. When things get out of hand, Tani is rushed to the hospital, where she delivers a boy, who dies a few hours later in Lado's arms. Through this setback, Lado learns about the importance of taking good care of his wife during pregnancy.

In the youth storyline, the central character is **Biggy (a transitional character)** -- a 16 year old boy, who is best friends with **Kamilu (a positive character)**. The two boys are soccer players, and are well-known for their athletic talent. Biggy is envious of **Sabo (a negative character)**, who is a few years older than him and seems to lead the good life: He wears expensive clothes, goes out with beautiful girls, has a cell phone, likes to eat *suya* (meat), and smokes cigarettes and marijuana. When Sabo attends Kamilu and Biggy's soccer games, he takes an interest in Biggy, while Kamilu wants nothing to do with him. Kamilu knows that Sabo is a bad influence.

Biggy starts hanging out with Sabo, and since Kamilu does not approve of Sabo's behavior, the two friends become distant. In Sabo's company, Biggy starts smoking and drinking. Kamilu tries to intervene, but with little success. Biggy has access to many girls and has multiple sexual partners. He develops certain physical symptoms and believes that he has contracted HIV. Thinking it is a death sentence, he seeks Kamilu's help. Kamilu advises him to go to the hospital to be tested. Wrought with tension, Biggy finds out that he is negative for HIV, but is positive for an STI, which the doctor can easily treat.

Scared of STIs and the potential of contracting HIV, Biggy curtails his sexual appetite, and stops sleeping with many women. However, he is still hanging out with Sabo, doing drugs, and soon under Sabo's guidance, starts stealing. When caught, he is put in jail. Kamilu finds out and informs Biggy's father, who believes Biggy needs to learn a lesson, and lets him stay in jail for three days before bailing him out.

When Biggy gets out of jail he finds Sabo again, who introduces him to a man who uses a butcher shop as a front to sell drugs and stolen goods. Biggy and Sabo steal goods to sell to this man, who in turn sells them for a profit. Kamilu again tells Biggy's parents the mess that Biggy has gotten into, and the parents tighten the screws on Biggy, demanding that he stop hanging out with Sabo. But Biggy refuses. When Biggy and Sabo get busted during a deal, Biggy is sentenced for a month in jail, while Sabo gets a three-year sentence. In jail, Biggy misses school and as a result has to repeat his grade.

Shamed and embarrassed, Biggy realizes he needs to mend his ways. Kamilu helps him and they regain their friendship and start playing soccer together again. The boys go to Kande's

village (after she moves back with her father) to play in a football match, and Biggy and Kande meet and start a friendship. Biggy finishes school, becomes a doctor, and marries Kande. Kamilu marries Kande's friend Zulai.

Through these main characters, who find themselves in difficult situations, *Gugar Goge* was intended to spark reflection, conversations, and actions about the various topics addressed in the storyline. While this as the intended objective of *Gugar Goge*, we did not know how the listeners themselves had engaged with the radio program. Through our qualitative investigation, which included participatory sketching and photography exercises (described later in this report), it became evident that not only had listeners identified the intended learning objectives, but many had put the lessons learned into action in their own lives.

Research Questions

In order to gauge the personal meanings that avid listeners of *Gugar Goge* drew from its plot, characters, and educational messages, our participatory assessment exercise centered on asking the respondents the following three questions:

Research Question #1: *What is the radio drama Gugar Goge about?* In essence, what is the nature and scope of its plot, its characters, and its educational themes?

Research Question #2: *As a female (or a male) listener, which scene from Gugar Goge was most meaningful to you and why?*

Research Question #3: *How has your life has changed as a result of listening to Gugar Goge?* In other words, what aspects of your life have been influenced, changed, or impacted by your engagement with the radio program?

Participatory Assessment Methodology

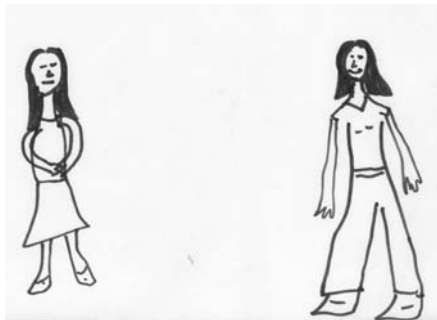
In recent years, participatory sketching and photography have emerged as novel, audience-centered, and low-cost qualitative methodologies for assessing the meanings that audience members of entertainment-education (E-E) programs derive from their engagement with the mass media text (Singhal & Devi, 2003; Singhal & Rattine-Flaherty, 2006; Singhal, Rattine-Flaherty, & Mayer, 2006; Singhal, Greiner, & Hurlburt, 2006). Such participatory methodologies offer a different perspective on audience engagement than, for instance, can be gathered through survey dataⁱⁱ.

The inspiration for participatory sketching and photography comes from the work of noted Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. In 1973, while conducting a literacy project in a barrio of Lima, Peru, a team led by Freire (author of the seminal 1970 book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*), asked people questions in Spanish, but requested the answers in photographs. When the question "What is exploitation?" was asked, some people took photos of a landlord, grocer, or a policeman (Boal, 1979, p. 123). One child took a photo of a nail on a wall. It made no sense to adults, but other children were in strong agreement. The ensuing discussions showed that many young boys of that neighborhood worked in the shoe-shine business. Their clients were mainly in the city, not in the barrio where they lived. As their shoe-shine boxes were too heavy for them to carry, these boys,

rented a nail on a wall (usually in a shop), where they could hang their boxes for the night. To them, that nail on the wall represented "exploitation." The "nail on the wall" photograph spurred widespread discussions in the Peruvian barrio about other forms of institutionalized exploitation, including ways to overcome them.

Drawing upon Paulo Freire's work with participatory photography in Peru, researchers have employed participatory sketching as a method to obtain rich, nuanced narratives from audience members of E-E programs. For instance, one of the present authors employed the participatory sketching methodology to assess the effects of an entertainment-education radio soap opera initiative in the Philippines (Singhal, Rattine-Flaherty, & Mayer, 2006) and also to assess the effects of another radio initiative in the Peruvian Amazon, spearheaded by Minga Perú, a non-governmental organization that promotes gender equality and reproductive health (see (Singhal & Rattine-Flaherty, 2006). For over four years now, Minga Perú has broadcast – three times a week -- a popular radio program, *Bienvenida Salud* (Welcome Health) in the Amazonas, and dove-tailed the E-E broadcasts with several community-based empowerment activities for local women (Singhal & Rattine-Flaherty, 2006). In 2005, using plain paper and colored markers, some 30 avid female listeners of *Bienvenida Salud* were asked to sketch out their perceptions of Minga Perú's contributions to reproductive health, gender equality, and social change. For instance, one of the questions posed was: "How has my life changed as a consequence of listening to *Bienvenida Salud* and participating in community-based activities of Minga Perú?" Participants were asked to draw two pictures – one to sketch how their life was some five years ago (i.e. *antes*, in the past), and how their life is today (i.e. *ahora*, now).

The *antes* and *ahora* sketches of Emira, a 21-year old, including her narrative, was highly revealing:



Antes

Ahora

Emira noted: "This is my early life. I didn't know how worthy I was; I was ashamed, I was sad. Now my personal life has changed, I feel myself as being capable of exerting a public function; I don't feel ashamed any more, I don't have fear. I am proud of my body -- my femininity. Before, I didn't want to cut my hair but when I went to live to the city, I cut them. With the trousers it was the same. Now I feel capable to wear trousers; previously I wore loose clothes. The same with the shoes, now I wear high heels."

Emira's sketch and its accompanying narrative provided a highly rich, highly poignant, and highly textured/nuanced insight on the long-term effects of E-E initiatives on certain audience

members. As noted previously, such insights are difficult, if not impossible, to obtain through structured personal interview surveys.

As both the Peruvian examples of participatory photography and sketching demonstrate, in privileging visual forms of expression, E-E researchers position themselves to question the dominant hegemony of textocentrism that legitimizes the lettered, literate, and text-based ways of knowing (Conquergood, 2002). Participatory sketching and photography both validate other non-textual ways of knowing by privileging the performative dimensions of sketches and photographs.

Inspired by this Freirean technique and Conquergood's (2002) call for incorporating more visual, performative methods, our assessment of *Gugar Goge* in the Nigeria included both participatory sketching and participatory photography.

Participatory Data-Collection for *Gugar Goge*

Our participatory data collection activities in the Nigeria, conducted over three days in mid-February 2007, comprised a total respondent pool of 50 listeners of *Gugar Goge*, all of whom hailed from Kano City and its environs. Of these, 29 of our respondents were men and 21 were women. Among the women, most were between the age group of 18 to 40 years old, and coming from the lower to middle socio-economic strata. Several of them were university students. The men were mostly in their 20s and 30s [one was his mid-40s and one in his mid-60s]. About a third of them were college students.

Participatory Sketching.

As part of the participatory sketching exercise, we asked our respondents, either as individuals or in groups, to answer the three questions that guide our present research study: (1) *What is the radio drama Gugar Goge about?* (2) *As a female (or a male) listener, which scene from Gugar Goge was most meaningful to you and why?* And, (3) *How has your life changed as a result of listening to Gugar Goge?* However, rather than having them respond orally to our query, we asked them instead to sketch their responses on white cardstock using colored pencils.



Women Sketching Their Responses

The participants were encouraged to draw whatever they wanted, regardless of their drawing ability, and no rigid time limits were set in order to not rush them. This participatory sketching activity with 50 respondents yielded a total of 82 drawings (as noted previously, some of these sketches were constructed in pairs or three to four person groups). After the sketches were completed, individuals (or members of the group) responsible for the drawing narrated what the sketch was about, including how it answered the posed questions, in front of their gender group. These narrations were simultaneously translated by a female and male translator from Hausa to English for the present researchers, providing opportunities to seek clarification and/or ask follow-up questionsⁱⁱⁱ. The female translator translated the narrations of female respondents; the male translator did so for the male respondents.



Respondents Narrating their Sketch

Participatory Photography. To further assess the effects of *Gugar Goge*, 10 of our 50 respondents took part in a participatory photography exercise. Six of these were men, and four were women. Only one broad question was posed to them, a combination of the first and third question: That is, *What is the radio drama Gugar Goge about?, and how has your life changed by listening to Gugar Goge?* Once again, rather than having the respondents provide an answer in oral or written form, we asked them to provide answers through photographs. The participants were given the freedom to interpret the question as they wished, emphasizing that there were no right or wrong answers.

The 10 participants who took part in the participatory photography exercise received disposable cameras, including a brief training on how to correctly operate them. They learned about framing through the viewfinder, when and how to use the flash button, how to press the shutter, and how to advance the film to take the next picture. Given each disposable camera yielded 27 exposures, we requested each participant to take about 10 to 15 pictures to answer the

question we had posed, and the remaining pictures could be of their friends and family members. The participants were given a time-frame of about 24 hours to take their pictures. All participants got the process under way by 2 to 3 practice shots as soon as they received the training.

A day after the disposable cameras were handed out our respondents returned the cameras to us, and the film was developed. After we got the pictures back, the respondents returned the next day to narrate – in front of the other participants -- what each picture was about, what it meant to them, why did they take it, and how it answered the posed question. All six men and four women returned the cameras and returned to review and narrate their photographs. Some of the women noted that they had never operated a camera before.

Of the 10 to 15 photographs that our 10 participants took to answer the posed question, we asked them to select their top 5 photos that they believed best answered the question and were most meaningful to their lives. A total of 50 photos were narrated by our 10 participants in front of their respective groups. Translators aided the process by translating the participants' photo narratives from Hausa to English to ensure concurrent opportunities for seeking clarification or asking follow-up questions.

Audience Interpretations of *Gugar Goge*

To gauge the personal meanings that avid listeners of *Gugar Goge* drew from its plot, characters, and educational messages, we organize our results around the three guiding research questions. Also, given the understandable overlap in the thematic content of our respondents' narratives across the three questions, for both the participatory sketching and participatory photography exercises, we draw upon the sketching and photo narratives interchangeably.

Before we get to answer the research questions, it is noteworthy to hear from our participants about the importance of listening to radio in Kano and Kaduna states. Several respondents credited radio not only for its entertainment value, but also for its important public service function. *Gugar Goge* listener Husseini Shehu Mumini (M, 28), who was one of our participants, spent two hours on a bus so he could take a photo of the headquarters of Radio Kano, and express his sentiments on the role of radio in civil society: "This is Gidan Bello Dandago House, the headquarters of Radio Kano. This is where *Gugar Goge* is broadcast out of, and this is from where we see the power of radio in serving the public and in educating them about health issues."



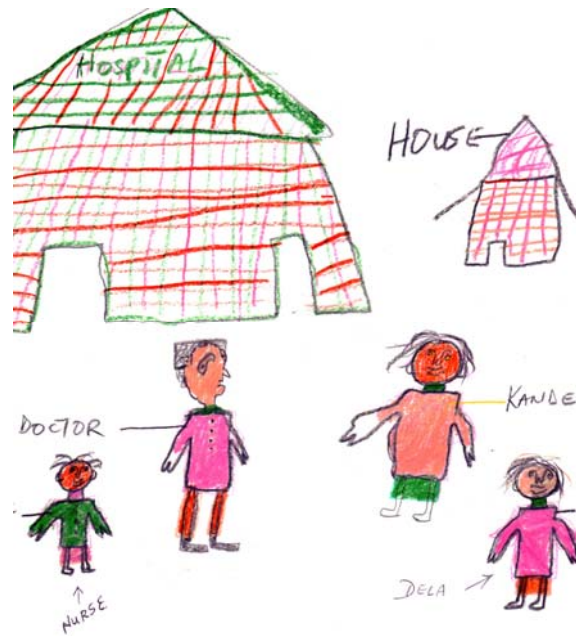
Gidan Bello Dandago House, the Headquarters of Radio Kano
(Photo by Husseini Shehu Mumini 28 years, Male)

Grasp of Intersecting Plots, Characters, and Educational Messages

Research Question #1 asked: *What is the radio drama *Gugar Goge* about?* In essence, what is the nature and scope of its plot, its characters, and its educational themes?

From the responses provided it was clear that while many participants were fairly regular listeners of *Gugar Goge* (for instance, those who could articulate the story clearly), there were others who had listened to only a few episodes. Such participants exhibited difficulty in recalling the names of certain characters, even if they were able to articulate the social themes. Some of our participants had *not* listened to any episodes of *Gugar Goge*, but heard about the program through conversations with others. In responding to our research questions, we focused on the responses of those listeners who were either regular listeners of *Gugar Goge* or at least had some first-hand exposure to the radio program.

In response to above question, Yakubu Musa Umar (M, 27 years) drew the following sketch and talked about the program's many intersecting storylines: "The radio program is about women's health. As my drawing shows, Kande and her wicked stepmother, Dela, go to the hospital. Kande has a problem. She has VVF (vasico-vaginal fistula). That is a bad problem – she drips urine all the time. No one wants to be close to her. She has this problem because Kande was married off early by her step-mother. So the program enlightens the people; it tells them that women can take care of the VVF problem. Another message is that one should see a trained doctor for pregnancy issues both before and after the child is delivered. When the pregnancy is complicated, *ungguwar-zumas* (traditional birth attendants) can be very harmful. Women and babies can die"



Sketch by Yakubu Musa Umar (M, 27 years)

Many listeners, both in their sketches and photos, focused on the interrelated themes of early marriage and pregnancies, the development of obstetric fistula, and the debilitating (and often fatal) consequences of such practices. For instance, Husseini Shehu Mumini (M, 28) narrated his photo by emphasizing: "Here is the dead body of a 15-year old girl in a *makara* (coffin), made out of bamboo. She died yesterday in a hospital. This girl was married to a 45 year old man when she was 11 years old. She developed VVF during her first delivery. Her baby did not survive. She became pregnant again. She died giving birth to her second child. The radio program is all about this topic. People need to be enlightened on these topics."



The Coffin of a 15 Year Old Girl Who Died During Child Birth.
(Photo by Husseini Shehu Mumini 28 years, Male)

Jamila Haruna's (F, 38 years) photo reinforced and echoed the radio program's key message about early marriage of girls and the reproductive health problems that come along with such practices. Narrating her photo, she said: "This is a young girl in my neighborhood who is only 13 ½ years old, and she is getting married next week. I chose this picture to show how young girls are given out for marriage." Here Jamila was also highlighting how young girls exercised little or choice in when they would marry or whom they would marry. These arrangements were made on their behalf by their parents and elders.



A Soon-To-Be Married Teenager in Kano
(Photo by Jamila Haruna, 38 years, Female)

Many respondents noted that *Gugar Goge* promoted a healthy lifestyle, especially for young people, free of vices. In so doing, it also addressed the theme of HIV/AIDS prevention, and voluntary counseling and testing. As Musa Maikudi (M, 18 years) noted while narrating his sketch: "*Gugar Goge* also dealt with problems and challenges faced by the youth. Biggie, the talented soccer player falls into bad company. Despite the best efforts of his friend Kamilu to stop him, Biggie becomes a womanizer and abuses drugs and alcohol. When he develops a sexually transmitted disease and fears he has AIDS, Kamilu advises him to take an HIV test. Biggie is relieved to find out that he is not HIV-positive. It was something treatable. This shakes him up. In the sketch, we see him with Kande (pointing to the hawking basket on her head), whom he meets when he goes out-of-town to play a football match. They fall in love and eventually get married. It was a good resolution for both."



Sketch by Musa Maikudi (M, 18 years)

In sum, our participants' sketches and photos in response to question one suggest that those who were regular listeners (1) comprehended the various intersecting plotlines of *Gugar Goge*, (2) could describe the attributes of its main characters, and, in so doing, (3) could articulate its various educational messages: That is, overcoming the harmful reproductive health practices of early marriage and multiple pregnancies; the importance of safe motherhood and the seeking of professional care, detection and treatment of obstetric fistula, and how the youth could guard against being infected with HIV, and staying away from vices such as drugs and alcohol.

Personal Resonance, Emotions, and Meanings

Research Question #2 asked: *As a female (or a male) listener, which scene from Gugar Goge was most meaningful to you and why?*

Our respondents talked about several emotionally charged-scenes. For instance, in a three-person group sketching activity, Hussaini Mumini (28 years, M), Mohammed Abdullahi (28 years, M), and Mohammed Dambata (47 years, M) drew the following sketch and provided this narration: "We talked about situations in which Lado is a very negligent husband. He knows that his wife is having pregnancy complications, but still does not allow her to go to the hospital. Instead, listening to his old and traditional mother Goggo, he takes his wife Tani to a traditional healer, who engages in traditional surgery – increasing the size of the opening so that the child can come out. Tani loses a lot of blood, and is unconscious for some days, before Lado relents and takes her to the hospital. The baby dies [pointing to the photo of the dead child]. If pregnant woman get proper care before and after the delivery, then doctors can take care of the problem before it becomes too dangerous for the mother or the baby." Disgusted by Lado's actions (or inactions), the narration noted: "This scene has two important implications for men. First, do not take your wife to the traditional birth attendant, who can cut her in ways that lead to VVF. Second, when a woman shows any signs of pregnancy related complications, she should be taken immediately to the doctor."



Sketch by Hussaini Mumini (28 years, M), Mohammed Abdullahi (28 years, M), and Mohammed Dambata (47 years, M)

The sketch of Yusuf Idris Yusuf, (22 years, M) highlighted the following situation from *Gugar Goge*: "The scene that I remembered the most was when Kandi and Zulai, who are friends in school, meet outside Kande's house. When Dela, Kande's step-mother, sees them talking about school matters from inside the house, she hates Kande more. She wants to stop her education, and so she gets her married early. How much more cruel can one be?" Further, Yusuf noted: "I drew this picture because children, especially young girls, should be allowed to finish school. If one does not get education, one can face problems such as no job, poverty, and poor health. If a girl child is withdrawn from school, she usually is married off, and then all her health programs begin as her body is not yet ready."



Sketch by Yusuf Idris Yusuf, (22 years, M)

Taking a cue from *Gugar Goge*, Auwalu Danjuma's (M, 36 years) photo and narration reinforced the importance of girls finishing their education so that they are not married off at an early age: "Here are two little girls in my neighborhood. One is seven years old; the other is six years old. They are both wearing school uniforms and are going to school. These girls are lucky for there are many girls who do not get an education or are removed from school when they are 10 or 11 so that they could get married. These girls represent the leaders of Nigeria's tomorrow. It is important that when they grow up, they can protect themselves. Education is their best protection."



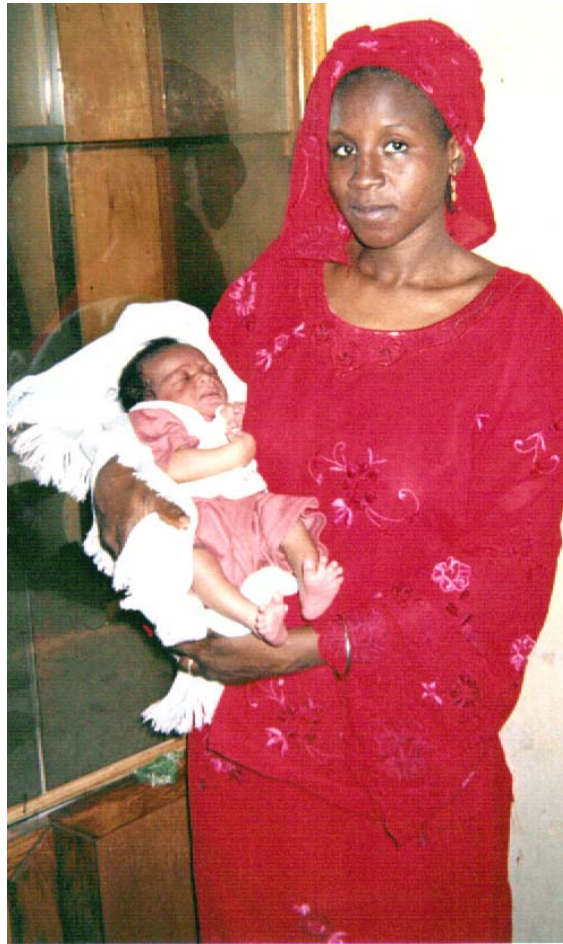
Two Girls Who Attend School in Kano
(Photo by Auwalu Danjuma, 36 years, male)

Husseini Shehu Mumini's (M, 28 years) photo and narration also reiterated the important health benefits of girls attending and finishing college: "Here is the outside gate of Bayero University, in Kano, where some forty percent of the students are female. I talked to many of them yesterday – several dozen – and they said that 'they were not going to get married before graduating from college.' So if there is no early marriage and we have educated women, then we will have healthy citizens. No woman will then have VVF."



Bayero University in Kano, Where Forty Percent of the Students Are Women
(Photo by Husseini Shehu Mumini 28 years, male)

To illustrate the link between a girl's education and health, Hussein Shehu Mumini's (M, 28 years) provided a concrete example: "This is a picture of my cousin's wife and her three-week old baby. She graduated from the university at age 22, and got married only after finishing her studies. Because she is an educated woman, she consulted a doctor before, during, and after her delivery. She delivered her baby in a hospital. Because of the medical check-ups and the expertise of the doctor, her delivery was smooth. She did not have any health problems."



A Healthy Mother and Baby
(Photo by Hussein Shehu Mumini 28 years, male)

In sum, our participants' sketches suggest various degrees of emotional and personal resonance with the key plotlines and characters. Our participants freely talked about the debilitating health consequences for a woman (1) if her husband does not get her the professional medical attention she needs at the time of delivering a child, (2) if she is withdrawn from school and married off at an early age. The overwhelming emotional sentiment of our participants toward reproductive health of women was reflected in the pithy phrase: "Education as Protection."

Learning and Impact

Research Question #3 asked: *How has your life has changed as a result of listening to Gugur Goge?* In other words, what aspects of your life have been influenced, changed, or impacted by your engagement with the radio program?

Our respondents answered this question about the influence of *Gugur Goge* on their lives in various ways.

Zakariya Idris (20 years, M) noted: "Prior to listening to *Gugur Goge*, I did not know much about women's reproductive health issues. But after listening to the program, I feel enlightened. So, on the right side is what I was before – small, unwise. On the left side, it seems I have suddenly grown up. I am wearing a hat, the symbol of a mature, learned man. After learning from *Gugur Goge*, I told my parents to not marry off my two younger sisters early. I have two younger sisters – 12 and 8 years old. I have seven older sisters – who have all been married. Some were only 13 to 14 years old. They have faced many problems. My parents have accepted my advice. At least my two younger sisters will be saved."



Sketch by Zakariya Idris (20 years, M)

Jamila Haruna (38 years, F) talked about the impact of the program in symbolic terms. She drew a sketch in which she was at the center, providing the following narration: "Jamila is a village girl. There are mountains around her with trees. As time goes on, she obtains a radio on which she listens to *Gugur Goge* [points to the radio]. After hearing the radio program, she becomes a wise lady. Her life became such that she is always empathizing with people. Before, she was not exposed to the world and stayed inside the house. Now that she has heard *Gugur Goge*, she built her house, and is wearing a graduation cap, and she is more enlightened. This is Jamila's radio. You can see the switch for volume, and *off* and *on*."



Sketch by Jamila Haruna (38 years, F)

When queried further on what was it about listening to *Gugar Goge* that made her wise, Jamila replied: "It taught her more about life, how women can get VVF so easily, and that [in order to prevent it] she should not give her daughter in marriage at a young age."

In her narration, Binta Abdullahi Abubakar (20 years, F) reinforced what Jamila Haruna had said, and further elaborated on the problems arising out of employing traditional birth attendants when young girls have complicated deliveries: "If the pregnant woman can not give birth by herself, some of the TBAs say 'okay let me help her, let me take the razor blade.' They want to aid her so that she can give birth by herself....After doing that [using the razor blade], as they are not in the hospital, they cannot restring the place [where they made the cut] and just leave it like that. That may lead to some problems. Bad odor may be coming out from her. She may have internal problems due to that."

When asked to explain what she learned from *Gugar Goge*, Binta emphasized: "I learned that early marriage is not good....It is better for parents to let their girls grow, maybe up to 19 or 20 years before they get married. Parents should let them study so that she will know the importance of pre and antenatal care if she is pregnant."

Ahmed A. Ahmed (27 years, M) emphasized: "My life has changed in many ways, and I have tried to influence many others as well through conversations. This is a sketch of me and my daughter Miriam. I have told her that no matter what, she should complete her education. I have also encouraged her to study health sciences, so she can be in a position to help others and provide advice to others. I also spoke to my two elder sisters, who have daughters who were recently married off. I told my sisters to tell my nieces to delay pregnancies, and if they become pregnant they should go to clinic regularly for health check-ups."



Sketch by Ahmed A. Ahmed (27 years, M)

Intrigued by Ahmed's sketch of him and his daughter Miriam in conversation, we asked our male participants to imagine an ideal future scenario for their daughter or a younger sister, and to sketch it out.

Ibrahim Mohammed Danwawu (23 years, M) and Ahmed Mohammed (28 years, M) drew the following sketch, and provided the following narrative: "We can see our sister Sara, who is now 12 years old, finishing high school and enrolling in Bayero University when she is 18 years old. After finishing her degree in Accounting with a first class score, she would take up a job with the bank. She will marry at 23, to a well accomplished man in his 30s, and have a beautiful house. Her husband will be relaxing in the garden with drinks and snacks. There will be running water [points to tap], 24-hour electricity [points to electric power grid], and Sara will have her own car [points to car]." After some reflection, noted: "And, Sara will have only one child -- a daughter, a healthy one".



Sketch by Ibrahim Mohammed Danwawu (23 years, M) and Ahmed Mohammed (28 years, M)

In talking about an ideal future scenario for their young sister, Rabi Sale (22 years, M), Musa Sani (21 years, M), and Yakub Musa Umar (27 years, M) sketched a colorful representation of two desired paths – “Road to School” and “Road to Hospital” -- and provided the following narrative: “We would definitely like our sister, Binta, to go to school and complete her education. After school, she will attend the university. As you can see she is a good student, always carrying books. After her studies she will become a nurse at the local hospital and serve people. People all around her neighborhood will be praising her parents for raising a good child. She will not be in a rush to marry. Perhaps she will marry at age 25 and find a man of her own wish.”



Sketch by Rabi Sale (22 years, M), Musa Sani (21 years, M), and Yakub Musa Umar (27 years, M)

When we asked the about the husband's responsibility in preserving his wife's health and in preventing and treating obstetric fistula, Binta Ahmed (32 years, F) noted: "The husbands have a big role to play. He can advise the wife to go for pre and ante-natal care. He may provide [nutritious] food that the wife may eat. He is responsible for all that, including the type of work that she does. He should take good care of her, and know that if she is in labor, he is the responsible man to take her to the hospital...all that."

When we asked Binta (20 years), Maimuna (20 years) and Rukkaya Usman (26 years) (in a three-person group) how a woman with obstetric fistula is treated by others, they drew the following sketch and noted: "In this sketch we have a husband and a wife. She was out by the tap washing plates, so the husband came out and was scolding her, telling her to stop working because she has VVF and should go the hospital. She has a catheter with her as she is passing

urine. Then she goes to the hospital where she is admitted for the operation. The picture below indicates her after the operation. Now she's back home with her husband."

When we further asked them "Do you think a man whose wife develops VVF, should do anything differently the next time he marries?" they noted: "He should not marry another small, underage girl again, so as to avoid the condition."



Sketch by Binta (20 years, F), Maimuna (20 years, F) and Rukkaya Usman (26 years, F)

In sum, the sketches, photos, and narratives of our participants, especially those of regular listeners of *Gugar Goge*, suggest that listening to the radio program affected their lives in various ways. Listeners emphasized that they learned about, or were reinforced in, the following: The importance of (1) educating girls, (2) delaying their marriage until their bodies are mature, (3) having a small family, (4) pre and ante-natal care, (5) early treatment of obstetric fistula, and (6) male responsibility in not marrying young girls, and providing them with professional reproductive health services.

Summary and Conclusions

The present report documented the results of a participatory sketching and participatory photography exercise conducted in Nigeria to gauge how avid listeners of *Gugar Goge* ("Tell It To Me Straight") engaged with the radio program, deriving personal meanings from its plot, characters, and educational messages.

Our participants' sketches and photos suggest that those who were regular listeners (1) comprehended the various intersecting plotlines of *Gugar Goge*, (2) could describe the attributes of its main characters, and, in so doing, (3) could articulate its various educational messages: That is, overcoming the harmful reproductive health practices of early marriage and multiple pregnancies; the importance of safe motherhood and the seeking of professional care, detection and treatment of obstetric fistula, and how youth can prevent being infected with HIV, and staying away from vices such as drugs and alcohol.

Our participants' sketches also suggest various degrees of emotional and personal resonance with the key plotlines and characterizations. Many of our respondents freely and openly shared the debilitating consequences of early marriage and pregnancy, and called for more responsibility by husbands to care for the health and well-being of their wives. There was also strong support for advancing education for girls and women as a way of protecting their health, and the health of society. Many emphasized the importance for youth to stay away from alcohol, drugs, unsafe sexual practices and criminal activities.

Further, the sketches, photos, and narratives of our participants, especially those of regular listeners of *Gugar Goge*, suggest that listening to the radio program affected their lives in various ways. Listeners emphasized that they learned about, or were reinforced in, the following: The importance of (1) educating girls, (2) delaying their marriage until women's bodies are mature, (3) having a small family, (4) pre and ante-natal care, (5) early treatment of obstetric fistula, and (6) male responsibility in not marrying young girls, and providing them with professional reproductive health services when they become pregnant.

What implications does our work with participatory sketching and photography have for researchers of entertainment-education initiatives? First, these participatory methods lie at the interface of theory, method, and praxis (see also Morphy & Banks, 1997). In taking stock of the sociology of visuals – whether in the form of sketches or photos – it is not difficult to discern the obvious conclusion: Almost all paintings, sketches, and photos are usually produced by "the powerful, the established, the male, the colonizer" to "portray the less powerful, less established, female, and colonized" (Harper, 1994, p. 408). Through participatory photography and sketching, E-E researchers hand over the means of visual production to the oppressed, the silent, and the muted. While recognizing that visuals allow the "oppressed" to make statements that are not possible by words, E-E researchers should remember that all sketches, paintings, and photographs are socially and technically constructed (Harper, 1994). Thus it is as important to foreground the absence of particular characters or scenes, as it is to explicate what is present.

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Endnotes

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ⁱⁱ Clearly, all methods of data-collection – whether quantitative or qualitative -- have their respective strengths and weaknesses. Further, the implementation of any method in the field is steeped in the grounded and situated realities of the respondents and their context.

One of us, after returning from Kano, reflected on the research process in Kano, Nigeria, noting: "It is a credit to this participatory methodology [that was employed] that participants were given a chance to portray their own realities as self-narrated and are not limited to choosing a pre-selected range of options, as is the case with most quantitative surveying techniques. The benefit of this research technique is that it enables participants to shape their own sense of space and time within which they are free to self-select and narrate/draw/photograph their own experiences in response to researchers. Through this process, participants reveal both an emotional attachment and an intellectual understanding of the themes presented in the radio drama. By sharing stories, a safe space for communication was created between participants, and a sense of community was palpable. Furthermore, through processing the various themes of the serial (family planning, reproductive health, obstetric fistula, and others) in a non-linear and artistic manner, the participants were able to communicate in new, expressive ways."

However, the implementation of this particular methodology in the field was far from perfect. Taken together, factors such as the lack of more "professional" translation, little control over the size of groups we worked with, a certain degree of mediation with participants to sketch out their thoughts (including the encouragement to use more than one color and to use bold colors

for outlines), offering of monetary compensation to participants (even if to cover their transportation and food expenses), and others, must necessarily have influenced the quality of the sketches as well as narrations. Although participants were given the tools (colored pencils and disposable cameras) to create and shape their responses, they played little or no role in the process of creating or shaping the methodology. While it is virtually impossible to eliminate all of the researcher's power and influence over the participants, we as researchers should strive for creating the spaces within which the participants operate in more autonomous, creative, and agency-affirming ways.

iii Prior to our arrival in Kano, we had arranged for translators through the Department of Mass Communication, Bayero University. However, at the last minute, this arrangement fell through, and we had to creatively improvise to designate a woman and a man respondent to serve as our translators. The "make-shift" translators were chosen on the basis of their bi-lingual capabilities. While they were not professional translators, their peer-standing among other respondents helped in fostering open and freer communication.