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Abstract

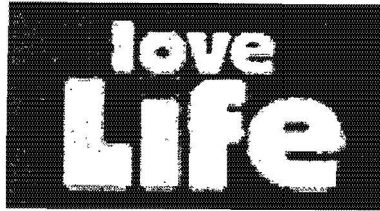
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The HIV/AIDS youth education organisation, loveLife, was examined to determine how its production of knowledge and values relates to transforming gender relations as they impact on HIV/AIDS in a South African context. The research originated out of a concern that loveLife, the world's largest HIV/AIDS youth education organisation in the world, was possibly replicating gendered inequities in its communication initiatives geared toward reducing transmission of HIV in the adolescent population. To carry out the research data was collected from three different "sites" and was analysed using discourse analysis. The approach to discourse analysis was informed by both Foucauldian and feminist theory. Furthermore, both the literature review and the primary data were informed by a social constructionist approach, in an attempt to recognise the environmental, social, structural, temporal and political impact on the constructions of AIDS, gender and sexuality by loveLife messages, staff and participants as they intersect with the lived realities of South African adolescents.

All of the primary data is qualitative, and therefore, limited in scope. The research is experimental and iterative in nature and the data produced is varied. Nevertheless, it provides a useful snapshot with which to begin an examination of loveLife's production of knowledge and values. The data sites included: loveLife's second major print media campaign; interviews with loveLife staff and their volunteer youth corps, known as "groundBREAKERS"; and a focus group with participants at a loveLife youth centre. The print campaign included a series of five billboard advertisements and produced the most static of all the data examined. The interviews were conducted with five loveLife staff and

four groundBREAKERS at loveLife's head office in Johannesburg and at a loveLife youth centre in Langa. Finally, the focus group consisted of three young men and two young women between the ages of 14 – 18 and was also conducted at the youth centre in Langa.

The findings show that loveLife's constructions of gender are both narrow and problematic and often lose relevance when intersecting with the target audience as represented by the focus group. The findings also show that through its chosen strategy to promote loveLife as a brand, loveLife is producing a discourses that both homogenises its target audience and shifts the focus of the organisation away from transforming behaviour change as it relates to sex, sexuality and gender relations in an attempt to curb HIV transmission. Lastly, the findings also reveal that loveLife assumes that sexual choice is universally available to all South Africans. However, because this assumption does not reflect the lived realities of South African youth, particularly the realities of young women, loveLife ignores, and consequently, further replicates existing gendered inequities.



**Productions and Re-Productions
of Gender Constructs and HIV/AIDS Discourses**

Laura Templeton/TMPLAU001

A dissertation submitted in *fulfillment* of the requirements for the award

of the degree of Master of Social Science

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2003

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signed by candidate

signature removed

Signature: _____

Date: 17 February 2003

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who helped with this project.

Sincere and special thanks to: my advisors, Dr. Jane Bennett and Professor Amina Mama for their feedback, guidance, accessibility and wisdom; my fellow Gender and Transformation Honour's and Master's students for their encouragement and feedback, in particular Johanna Jochumsdottir; the entire staff at the African Gender Institute; Ginny Volbrecht for constantly going the extra mile to help me in any way possible; Anna Strebel for her work and insight on HIV/AIDS discourse; Msokoli Quotole for providing a broader perspective of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa beyond loveLife; Amy Marks for connecting me to loveLife and helping me to understand social marketing; Eike Puck and Alex Boyce for their collaboration; and Stacey Martin for both friendship and assistance with research. I'd also like to thank Tamara Lindsay and Donna Templeton for their proof-reading expertise.

I would like to thank all the loveLife staff and loveLife participants who willingly and eagerly gave their time for this research. Furthermore, I would like to thank the students in my Understanding Gender tutorial who provided both insight and inspiration.

I would also like to thank my family for their support and love even though they knew this project would take me many miles away from them. Finally, I would like to thank my partner, Hilton Horwitz, for his ongoing love, support and faith in me, but mostly for his never-ending belief in the people of South Africa, which served as a constant reminder to me to not succumb to pessimism about the future of this country.

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Preface

The first time I saw a loveLife billboard was while driving through Bloemfontein in June of 2001. The design of the billboard was eye-catching, but the message itself was confusing and I was unfamiliar with the organisation. I was with a friend of mine who was working as a Peace Corps volunteer in Mpumalanga and I pointed it out and asked if she knew what it meant. She informed me that this was a new media campaign to address HIV/AIDS in South Africa. She told me that the project was supposed to be fantastic in its approach to youth. I asked what was fantastic about the billboard and she told me she wasn't exactly sure, but that is what she had heard about the campaign. I felt as if there was something I did not quite understand, but pushed this nagging feeling into the back of my mind.

I did not think of loveLife again until I was on holiday in New York City the following December. I visited the marketing and communications firm that I had worked at prior to coming to South Africa in 2001. I engaged in a conversation with one of the principals of the agency. The agency had just begun work as the public relations agency for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and we began a discussion about their work on HIV/AIDS in South Africa. I was informed that they were funding and contributing to an amazing and revolutionary new initiative that was tackling HIV/AIDS among adolescents. What was so revolutionary, I was told, was that the initiative was approaching adolescents not as a traditional public health campaign, but rather as a new lifestyle brand. A few days later I came upon a *New York Times* article that had reported positively on the loveLife initiative. At this point I made the connection with the Bloemfontein billboard and again, wondered at all the hype.

I began to do more research into loveLife and HIV/AIDS in a South African context. In doing only a small amount of investigating, I was repeatedly overwhelmed by how constructs of gender had such a profound impact on the spread of HIV. From links between HIV and gender-based violence, to economic circumstances that disempowered women in sexual situations, to HIV education initiatives focusing primarily on women, I began to realise that constructs of gender that rendered men dominant and women subordinate were actually

impacting on incidences of HIV transmission. Simultaneously, I was also overwhelmed by the constant onslaught of media messages from loveLife, in particular, by the messages that profiled their tremendous success rates in impacting the behaviour of South African youth. I was both sceptical about the numbers profiling their success and alternately hopeful that the organisation was having the intended impact.

In looking at their advertising campaigns I began to question the context of loveLife's messaging. While the organisation received constant commendations for its brand approach as being particularly relevant to the lives of adolescents, I worried whether the brand approach transcended the contexts of all South African youth, particularly when it seemed to be largely informed by an American brand and media culture. Much of the advertising language was an appropriation of American and African-American colloquial speech, and its relevance in South Africa – it seemed to me – would only extend so far particularly as there exists such diversity among South African adolescents racially, culturally, geographically and financially (to name only a few).

Yet what began to motivate my exploration most profoundly (and what began to shape the idea for this dissertation) was loveLife's relation to gender. I worried that this, the world's largest HIV/AIDS organisation for youth in the world, had gaps in its understanding of the impact of gender on HIV/AIDS at least insofar as their media representations suggested. I began to collect loveLife materials to better understand how loveLife was "doing" gender. I was somewhat reassured, as their literature seemed constantly vigilant about recognising the impact of gender on the spread of HIV. Furthermore the reality of large-scale violence against women was also identified and addressed in the loveLife literature. I began to wonder about the relevancy of deconstructing loveLife's relation to gender particularly in light of the urgency of the AIDS epidemic in South Africa. If this organisation was having any impact, so much the better, I thought.

However, I was still bothered by the context of their messages in light of the history of South Africa under apartheid rule and the historical context of HIV/AIDS in South Africa as well as ongoing systems of male domination that not only continue to privilege men over women but also impact on the spread of HIV. While loveLife did note the importance of

history in South Africa and gender as significant to HIV/AIDS, there seemed to be a gap between this acknowledgement and the messages of the loveLife brand. Gender was constantly being produced and re-produced by loveLife, but whether this was done in a way that challenged those structural inequalities and power dynamics between men and women in a way that empowered both men and women to protect themselves against HIV, I was uncertain. I began to be convinced that there was an urgent and extreme relevancy in examining their messages specifically *because* of the large-scale impact they were purported to have.

As my research evolved I made the decision to deconstruct the messages loveLife was producing at three levels: by looking at their print media advertising; by speaking with loveLife staff; and finally, by speaking with youth who have had association with loveLife. I employed a social constructionist approach in an attempt to recognise the environmental, social, structural, temporal and political impact on the constructions of AIDS, gender and sexuality by loveLife messages, staff and participants as they intersect with the lived realities of South African adolescents.

The nature of this research is such that it crosses a variety of disciplines that examine the problem of HIV/AIDS in a social context. It draws on research from social anthropology, psychology, history, epidemiology and marketing. However, my primary context for engagement with the research is from the discipline of gender studies.

As the researcher, I locate myself as a postcolonial feminist and my research draws on feminist epistemologies. Certainly there is much room for difference within that positioning. However, I use the term to acknowledge the profound structural imbalances that privilege men – both in terms of power and structure – over women. I also use the term to highlight that this phenomenon was deeply exacerbated by colonisation in South Africa and continues to have a profound impact throughout South African society. Finally, I also put forth a social constructionist position and, therefore assert that gender is a social construct influenced by a variety of forces operating on both individuals and society, and that there is a great deal of diversity within those constructs. Additionally, for reasons of “transparency” as articulated by Marjorie Mbilinyi who states, “The researcher/writer needs to tell us her own

position and multiple identities, so readers can understand the 'knower,'"¹ I note the critical importance of my location as a white woman from the North currently living and engaging in a South African context.

Finally, I also note that loveLife, as an organisation impacting on youth in South Africa, is open to multiple interpretations from various sectors and actors who engage with the organisation. This paper seeks to engage with knowledge produced by the organisation primarily as it intersects with constructs of gender and productions of HIV/AIDS discourses in South Africa. However, I note that it is also an organisation with many different functions and facets, and gender productions and HIV/AIDS discourses within those multiple functions and facets are by no means static. Thus, while this research hopes to provide a "snapshot" of the organisation, it does not claim to have represented the organisation as a whole. Moreover, the impact of "success" in its engagement with gender is also open to multiple interpretations, however my location as a postcolonial feminist motivates my analysis of this engagement.

Upon completion of this dissertation, I hope to submit a copy to the staff at loveLife. It is my hope that this dissertation will make a positive contribution to raising awareness and consciousness around gender issues at loveLife, which, in turn will hopefully infiltrate itself into the messages that are reaching the loveLife target audience.

¹ Mbilinyi, Marjorie (1992) "Research Methodologies in Gender Issues," **Gender in Southern Africa**, Ruth Meena (ed), SAPES Books, Harare, p. 48

Introduction

The primary purpose of this research is twofold. The first goal is to examine productions and re-productions of gender constructs and HIV/AIDS discourses within loveLife. The second goal is to examine the intersections of the loveLife productions and re-productions of gender constructs and HIV/AIDS discourses with a small sampling of loveLife's target audience. This paper has been divided into two main sections. The first section is a literature review and the second presents the methodology employed, research findings and analysis of findings.

The first section will give context to the environment in which loveLife operates. Chapter One includes an examination of responses to HIV/AIDS in South Africa, including responses within governmental, non-governmental and the activist sector since the epidemic first appeared in South Africa. It goes on to introduce loveLife through its mission and scope of services. Chapter Two gives an overview of how HIV/AIDS has impacted men and women. This examination is, however, not biological, but social, and includes exploration of constructs of gender as they relate to barriers to safer sex for both men and women. Chapter Three briefly highlights some of the approaches and challenges faced by HIV/AIDS educators. It further defines both social marketing and branding and begins to explore their relevance as a means for HIV/AIDS prevention and education efforts. Finally, Chapter Four explores dominant HIV/AIDS discourses, particularly as they lead to gendered inequalities.

The second section delves into the primary data and provides subsequent analysis. Chapter Five explains the methodology employed for the research and the different sites at which data was collected. Chapter Six reviews loveLife's billboard campaign as a site for exploration of emergent gender constructs. Chapter Seven and Eight explore the production of discourses within loveLife and give analysis as to how these discourses evolve within the organisation and intersect with the target audience. Finally, Chapter Nine gives an overall summary analysis that integrates analysis of constructs and discourses as produced by loveLife.

The first section will reveal that loveLife's goal is to reduce HIV transmission among youth by 50 percent. This express mission is meant to be achieved, loveLife posits, through behaviour change. loveLife states that, "Behaviour change requires internalisation by the target group of the desired changes. To be successful, loveLife has to change pervasive values and attitudes among adolescents to sex, sexuality and gender relations."²

I will argue, however, that loveLife's success is stymied by three main factors. First, beginning with their billboard campaign and infiltrating throughout the organisation, loveLife's constructions of men and women are narrow and problematic in that they further replicate gendered inequities that have been shown to negatively impact on HIV transmission. Second, loveLife's strategic positioning as a brand has created a discourse of consumerism within the organisation that homogenises its audience and overtly silences discussions about gender, race, class and other differences, thereby ignoring and replicating the ramifications of diversity among its target audience. Finally, through this process of homogenisation, loveLife assumes sexual freedoms as a product of choice. Furthermore, these sexual freedoms are framed within a context that is based within a heterosexist, monogamous, Judeo-Christian framework that simply excludes a majority of its audience. Acting in accordance with one another, I will argue that these three factors replicate gendered inequalities, silence further discussion or understanding of those gendered inequalities and disallow alternative explorations of approaches to changing pervasive values and attitudes among adolescents to sex, sexuality and gender relations.

² loveLife "Our Story" brochure, p. 2

Part I: Literature Review

Chapter I: South African responses to HIV/AIDS and the emergence of loveLife, a new lifestyle brand

1.1 Responses to HIV/AIDS in South Africa

A recent study by the Medical Research Council of South Africa reported that in the year 2000 twenty-five percent of deaths in South Africa were AIDS-related. By the year 2010, estimates suggest that 5 - 7 million South Africans will have died from AIDS-related symptoms.³ These are only a few in a series of devastating statistics that are readily available in examining the particular situation of HIV/AIDS in South Africa.

That there is a new urgency to responses to HIV/AIDS in South Africa can be attributed, sadly, to the extreme rise in AIDS-related deaths and in rates of HIV transmission. With the exponential rise in HIV cases throughout South Africa has come an exponential rise in prevention initiatives. Across many sectors – including government, international and domestic non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based organisations, corporate initiatives, union initiatives, academic initiatives – there have arisen new organisations working to curb the spread of the epidemic.⁴ One such initiative was borne out of and combines several of these sectors and is, furthermore, the focus of this study. loveLife is organised by a consortium of South African NGO's, and receives funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Kaiser Family Foundation, UNICEF and the South African Government. Yet, in order to understand the emergence of loveLife as a new lifestyle brand to address HIV/AIDS, it is first useful to give a brief overview of responses to HIV/AIDS within South Africa.

1.2 State responses – the apartheid government

³ Gerbus, Lisa (2002) "South Africa on HIVinsite" AIDS Policy Research Center, UCSF: <http://www.hivinsite.org>

⁴ A small sampling includes: AIDS Training Information & Counselling Centre, Legal Aid Clinic, Life Line, Masimanyane Women's Support Centre, Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation, National Association of People Living With AIDS, Save the Children, UNAIDS, United States Agency for International Development, Treatment Action Campaign, Youth for Christ, Students HIV & AIDS Resistance Programme, Triangle Project.

Such intense focus on the issue of HIV/AIDS is a relatively new trend in South Africa, particularly with regard to state responses. The first AIDS-related deaths in South Africa occurred in 1985.⁵ At this time the government allocated a rather paltry sum of R1 million to the Department of National Health and Population Development (DNHPD) to run an awareness campaign. The impetus for the campaign was not an internal government push, but instead came over concern about one of South Africa's biggest industries. As Dr. Jack van Niftrik states, "Let it hastily be added that all of this 1985 activity would not have taken place had the SAIMR and the Chamber of Mines not conducted a privately sponsored survey. To the dismay of the authorities and the glee of the doomsayers, HIV was prevalent amongst black mineworkers, especially those from Malawi."⁶ The campaign itself showed coffins being lowered into graves and the general consensus – not surprising in the context of apartheid – was that AIDS was somehow linked to political violence.⁷

Douglas Webb argues that subsequent state campaigns were culturally illiterate, in some cases damaging and largely discredited the DNHPD. For example, in 1991 the DNHPD would not allow the promotion of condoms to curb transmission of the virus as, they claimed, that would promote promiscuity.⁸

A simple glance at budgets for AIDS education in Southern Africa reveals that the apartheid government was well behind the rest of Southern Africa in addressing the issue. Webb states "Zambia's AIDS budget, for example, was US\$5 million for 1991, three times that of South Africa. Even Mozambique, racked by civil war, was reputedly spending twice as much on AIDS education. Considering South Africa's considerable GDP per capita relative to other countries in Southern Africa, the disparity in spending is even more marked."⁹

1.3 State responses – the ANC

Prior to coming to power, the ANC can be credited with recognising that HIV would have a major impact on the country. Therefore, prior to the transition of power, the ANC worked

⁵ Webb, Douglas (1997) *HIV and AIDS in Africa*, Pluto Press: London, p. 73

⁶ van Niftrik, Jack "The bumlbers play on – a decade of debacle" in *AIDS Analysis Africa*, Southern African edition, Dec 92/Jan 93, p. 1

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 1

⁸ Webb, Douglas (1997) *HIV and AIDS in Africa*, Pluto Press: London, p. 74

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 76

with the apartheid government to formulate policy on HIV/AIDS. Yet, once in power, the gap between policy formulation and implementation remained wide. In a USAID report, Lisa Gerbus argues:

The plan, however, greatly overestimated the implementation capacity of the post-apartheid government. Given public sector capacity constraints, multiple sources of special AIDS allocations, and complex disbursement procedures, the ANC underspent AIDS funds. Some of the projects on which funds were spent--and the lack of transparency in granting them--were heavily criticised. As in many countries, the national AIDS program was housed in the Department of Health, thereby impeding a multisectoral response. Despite that the plan had been created in a consultative fashion, there was a lack of consultation with nongovernmental actors on the plan's implementation.¹⁰

In 2000, SANAC (the South African National AIDS Council) was formed, yet the gap between policy and implementation remained. Moreover, the government's stance on HIV was perplexing as President Mbeki publicly questioned the link between HIV and AIDS, and made public his belief that anti-retroviral drugs are toxic,¹¹ while the Department of Health was launching the "Beyond Awareness" Campaign to educate young people about HIV/AIDS. Thus, the government's stance was highly incongruous as they simultaneously questioned the link between HIV and AIDS, but also launched a campaign to educate on the very same links.

1.4 Multi-sectoral responses

Within South Africa there have developed a multitude of organisations attempting to respond to the epidemic. I would argue that both the lack of and inadequacy of state responses to HIV/AIDS helps to explain the proliferation of organisations across a multitude of sectors that have involved themselves with attempting to deal with issues of advocacy, care, education and prevention.

In 1992, South Africa saw the first push to address HIV/AIDS across different sectors. Organised by the ANC and the AIDS Unit of DNHPD, the first meeting of the National AIDS Convention of South Africa (NACOSA), brought together actors from a variety of

¹⁰ Gerbus, Lisa (2002) "South Africa on HIVinsite" AIDS Policy Research Center, UCSF: <http://www.hivinsite.org>

sectors, including, inter alia, corporations, unions, churches and select NGO's.¹² However, it quickly became clear that many of the organisations were largely concerned with their own agendas, and the conference was marked by political infighting.¹³ So, while the conference marked a positive beginning, little was offered in the way of practical solution.¹⁴

As the decade evolved, much of the response to AIDS in South Africa came from the corporate sector interested in the impact of HIV/AIDS on business. Large actuarial companies such as Met Life and Old Mutual commissioned major research¹⁵ while all of the major mining companies implemented education and awareness programs.¹⁶

At the international level, attention was increasingly focused on sub-Saharan Africa. Rather than a focus on strategies for intervention, however, many international organisations were often more focused on assessing levels of impact.¹⁷ Additionally, many international organisations have been major drivers of funding for all kinds of NGO's and CBO's within South Africa. For example, both the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have provided major funding for loveLife, the focus of this research.

Academic institutions within South Africa have spawned a whole new field of research across multiple disciplines, including (but not limited to) the following fields: health science, public policy, public health, sociology, anthropology, education, social development and commerce. Furthermore, numerous NGO's, FBO's and CBO's are also attempting to address HIV/AIDS. One significant example is the organisation known as the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), which took the government to court in 2001 to demand implementation of a mother-to-child transmission prevention program and continues to

¹¹ Coleman, Sarah (2002) "Mbeki's Tin Ear on AIDS" *World Press Review* (VOL. 49, No. 2)

¹² Fleming, Alan "Report on the NACOSA conference" *AIDS Analysis Africa* (Southern Africa Edition) 3 (4) Dec 92/Jan 93, p. 7

¹³ Webb, Douglas (1997) *HIV and AIDS in Africa*, Pluto Press: London, p. 77

¹⁴ Van Niftrik, Jack "The Bumpers Play On - A Decade of Debacle" in *AIDS Analysis Africa*, Southern Africa Edition, Vol 3 No 4, Dec 92/Jan 93, p. 4

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 79

¹⁶ Gerbus, Lisa (2002) "South Africa on HIVinsite" AIDS Policy Research Center, UCSF: <http://www.hivinsite.org>

¹⁷ Webb, Douglas (1997) *HIV and AIDS in Africa*, Pluto Press: London, p. 79

drive one of the most powerful civil engagements advocating for prevention and treatment for South Africans.¹⁸

Yet while South Africa has seen a major shift in types of interventions, increased sophistication in education about the virus and, most simply, sheer numbers of people thinking about HIV/AIDS in a South African context, the reality of the situation is that the numbers of the infected and dead continue to rise. It was within this environment that the loveLife initiative that I will explore throughout this paper was borne.

1.5 loveLife: Implementation and Funding

Originally launched in September 1999, loveLife is the largest HIV/AIDS youth education organisation in the world. The intended mission of the organisation is to cut the HIV infection rate among South African youth by 50 percent. To achieve their intended goal of reducing the rate of transmission among youth by 50 percent, loveLife states that they, "...combine traditional marketing techniques with the best principles of public health education to create a lifestyle brand with which young people will associate healthy positive living. To create this level of association among loveLife's 12 – 17 year target group, the loveLife brand is positioned as part of popular youth culture."¹⁹

To carry out this initiative, loveLife implements a variety of different intervention methods through a consortium of South African non-governmental organisations, including: Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa, Reproductive Health Research Unit and the Trust for Health Systems Planning and Development. The Reproductive Health Research Unit carries out research and evaluation as well as implementation of adolescent friendly clinics. The Health Systems Trust oversees the infrastructure, IT, finance, and the media functions of loveLife. Finally, Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa manages the outreach of the organisation, including its call centre, the Y-centres, the franchises, and the Groundbreakers.

¹⁸ Coleman, Sarah (2002) "Mbeki's Tin Ear on AIDS" *World Press Review* (VOL. 49, No. 2)

¹⁹ loveLife Brochure, "Our Story"

loveLife receives its primary funding from the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Secondary funding comes from the South African Government, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Nelson Mandela Foundation and UNICEF. In-kind support comes from the South African Broadcasting Corporation, the Independent Newspaper Group and Times Media Ltd.

1.6 Execution: A Three-Pronged Approach

While this paper will focus specifically on an analysis of loveLife's print media campaign as well as their organisational discourse, it is useful to give a comprehensive view of all the services the organisation provides to South African youth.

loveLife's strategy in reaching their goal is three-pronged, and begins first with building awareness among their target audience through media. Second, they seek to develop support services to help young people understand and incorporate their messages. Finally they intend to continually monitor and research the impact of the organisation. This three-pronged approach works on the assumption that, according to loveLife, "Behaviour change requires internalisation by the target group of the desired changes. To be successful, loveLife has to change pervasive values and attitudes among adolescents to sex, sexuality and gender relations."²⁰ Of critical note is that loveLife's task, then, is not simply to reduce transmission rates by 50 percent, but instead to fundamentally alter the relationship that teenagers have to sex, sexuality and gender.

Furthermore, loveLife gives five main reasons that they have chosen to focus their efforts toward reducing transmission of HIV at youth. In the loveLife report "Impending Catastrophe Revisited: an update on the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa", they note:

- Young people are in the process of learning sexual behaviours and are therefore much more receptive to adopting safer practices than older people who are habituated to established sexual practices that are mostly unsafe.
- Targeting interventions at the youth also makes sense because of the high proportion of infections that occur at young ages in South Africa. This is not surprising given that about 45 percent of the South African population (16 million) is under 20 years of age. It is estimated that

over 60 percent of all new infections currently occur in those between 15 and 25 years of age with women generally being infected earlier than men.

- The premature mortality of adults will mean that youth will need to fill the skill gaps in the workplace as well as in parenting and other household leadership roles. Successful prevention initiatives, aimed at the youth could create a cadre of uninfected adults to maintain community and household continuity.
- Prevention initiatives, especially if packaged as part of life skills, can contribute to creating hope for the future and building respectful relationships among young people. An example of such an initiative is the loveLife campaign, which is a comprehensive sexual health strategy, harnessing popular culture to promote sexual responsibility and healthy living.
- Health promotion initiatives for other conditions have often chosen not to target young people in an effort to influence the adult members of their communities. It is not unlikely that young people, who adopt safe sexual practices, will influence adults to do likewise. This is especially important for young women struggling to resist the sexual advances of older men.

loveLife believes that the increasing rates of infection among 16 million South African youth makes them a logical target. Beyond that, however, loveLife believes that changing the behaviour of young people is a more straightforward task than changing the behaviour of adults, whose sexual behaviour is already ingrained. Finally, loveLife also believes that their particular approach will work to generate hope, and consequently, provide better futures for South African youth and adults.

1.7 Media

Table 1.1: Media execution of loveLife strategy

Media	Outdoor Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1,800 billboards ▪ 800 taxi placards and signs on water towers
	Television	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ S'camto groundBREAKERS ▪ loveLifeGAMES ▪ Parent-focused PSA's
	Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weekly 1 hour programmes on 4 stations ▪ 6 ethnic-language stations "partners"

²⁰ loveLife Brochure, "Our Story"

	Newspaper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “S’camto Print ▪ Thethanathi
	Collateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Love Them Enough to Talk About It ▪ loveFacts ▪ Tell Me More
	Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Web site: www.lovelife.org.za

The loveLife strategy seeks to make the first point of contact with their target audience through media. Through their first point of contact they hope to build awareness of the loveLife brand and, subsequently, stimulate, “open discussion about HIV/AIDS, sexual responsibility and healthy living.”²¹ loveLife has employed a variety of media through which to reach South African adolescents, including: outdoor media, television, radio, Internet, newspaper and collateral materials.

According to loveLife, they are South Africa’s largest purchaser of rural billboards.²² Nationwide they have close to 2,000 billboards and an additional 800 taxi placards and signs on water towers. Each has a call-to-action for young people to contact the thethajunction, loveLife’s toll free helpline. loveLife runs public service announcements that are aimed primarily at parents, but with the same objective of stimulating open discussions around sexuality. Also on television is the weekly show S’camto groundBREAKERS, which is a reality-based television show in which young people talk about issues around sexuality. loveLife also broadcasts its loveLife Games, which will be explained in the next section.

loveLife produces weekly one-hour radio shows for four youth radio stations. Additionally, they state that they also “partner” with six ethnic-language radio stations, “to broadcast culturally sensitive program segments on popular shows.”²³ In print media, loveLife runs two bi-weekly youth news supplements: *S’camto*, which appears in the *Sunday Times* and *Thethanathi*, which was produced specifically for the *Independent Newspapers Group*. With

²¹ loveLife Brochure, “Our Story”

²² Interview with loveLife head of communication, Fiona HodgesStewart Fiona Hodges

regard to new media, loveLife has a Web site that informs visitors of the organisation's activities.

Finally, loveLife produces a series of brochures. These brochures include: "Love Them Enough To Talk About It"; "loveFacts"; and "Tell Me More". The first is geared toward parents while the latter two are information for adolescents.

Again, each of these executions carries loveLife messages intended to motivate South African youth to discuss issues around sex and sexuality.

1.8 Service and Support

Table 1.2: Service and Support execution of loveLife strategy

Service & Support	Y-Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ groundBREAKERS ▪ Sexual health education and counselling ▪ HIV/STD Testing and counselling ▪ Radio studio ▪ Computer training facilities ▪ Recreation: Basketball and Volleyball ▪ Additional: community ▪ loveTrain and loveBus
	loveGames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local, Regional and National Games for high school students
	Thethajunction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trained counsellors: info, counselling and referrals
	NAFCI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adolescent friendly clinics

After they have built awareness around the loveLife brand, the loveLife strategy is to offer services that they believe will, "promote lasting behaviour change by connecting young

²³ Kaiser Family foundation web site: <http://www.kff.org>

people with resources to help them lead responsible, safe, fulfilling lives.”²⁴ These services include: Y-Centres, loveGames, NAFCI clinics and Thethajunction.

Y-Centres are defined by loveLife as, “...multi-purpose youth centres in the poorest parts of South Africa that provide sexual health education, clinical services, skills development, and recreational activities.”²⁵ As of this writing, there were sixteen Y-Centres, with the largest concentrations in the Eastern Cape, the Northern Province and Kwa-Zulu Natal, with each centre serving an estimated 3,000 young people per week.²⁶ Y-Centres are run by loveLife’s groundBREAKERS. groundBREAKERS are, in effect, loveLife’s youth corps. They are full-time volunteers between the ages of 18 – 25. They serve loveLife for one year and in that time receive training to act as peer educators in sexual health. Currently there are about 200 loveLife groundBREAKERS, however there are plans to have 600 by the end of 2003.²⁷

Another support service is the loveGames. These are as a nation-wide school sports competition. Similar to a mini-Olympics, the loveGames are held locally, regionally and culminate in a national competition in which South African high school students compete. To run the loveGames, loveLife has partnered with USASA (United Sports Association of South Africa), an organisation that had existing access to the schools, teachers and students.

As mentioned previously, all loveLife collateral materials and advertising highlight the telephone number for Thethajunction. Thethajunction is loveLife’s telephone helpline for youth. It is intended to act as a resource for sexual health information, counselling and referrals to alternative support services.

Finally, loveLife has also begun the National Adolescent Friendly Clinic Initiative. Based on research that has shown that most adolescents have negative perceptions of health clinics and, therefore, do not access their services, loveLife has developed a set of national

²⁴ Kaiser Family foundation web site: <http://www.kff.org>

²⁵ Kaiser Family foundation web site: <http://www.kff.org>

²⁶ Kaiser Family foundation web site: <http://www.kff.org>

²⁷ Kaiser Family foundation web site: <http://www.kff.org>

standards for adolescent clinical services. Their goal is to implement these standards in as many as 900 government clinics by 2006.²⁸

1.9 Monitoring and Evaluation

Table 1.3 Monitoring and Evaluation execution of loveLife strategy

Monitoring & Evaluation	Baseline Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ loveLife participant monitoring (across all loveLife programs)
	Sentinel Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impact assessment of Y-Centres and NAFCI clinics
	National Surveillance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ loveLife national sample surveys (2002 and 2005) ▪ Existing data sources in South Africa
	TAG (Technical Advisory Group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International panel of HIV prevention experts

Inasmuch as they would like their services to have the intended impact on young people, the third part of their strategy for implementation is through monitoring and evaluation. A partnership headed by researchers from the Reproductive Health Research Unit of the University of Witwatersrand, the Medical Research Council of South Africa and Cambridge University has developed a six-year monitoring and evaluation program to determine the effectiveness of the loveLife brand.

As part of their baseline assessment, loveLife plans to collect information from selected participants across all of their programmes. More specifically, they will record demographic information, test for awareness of loveLife messages and sexual health, knowledge, attitudes and practices. They intend, also, to collect data from their Y-Centres and NAFCI clinics to measure impact. The intended data will be collected through behavioural surveys and biological samples (used to track sexual risk behaviours, HIV and STD prevalence and pregnancy rates).²⁹ Finally, loveLife will use both existing data sources in South Africa as well as carry out their own national sample surveys among South African adolescents. These

²⁸ Kaiser Family foundation web site: <http://www.kff.org>

are expected to be carried out in the years 2002 and 2005. These surveys will probe for behaviour change among adolescents with regard to sex and HIV, sexual behaviour and related HIV and STD infections and pregnancy rates.

In addition, the loveLife program is monitored by an international group of HIV prevention experts. These experts are: Dr Mary Bassett of the Rockefeller Foundation; Dr. Willard Cates of Family Health International; Dr. Robert Fullilove of Columbia University School of Public Health; Dr. Helene Gayle, of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (and formerly HIV, STD and TB Prevention at the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention); Dr. ~~William Makgoba~~ William Makgoba of the South Africa Medical Research Council; Dr. David Serwadda of Makerere University Institute of Public Health, Uganda; and Dr. Debrework Zewdie of The World Bank. This team works to provide ongoing counsel on all of loveLife's initiatives.

1.10 Scope of services

While the previous sections may read more as advertorial³⁰ than intended, the information provided is merely to show the full scope of the organisation as well as the numerous other organisations (both national and international) that are involved with and have a stake in loveLife. Clearly, loveLife's efforts are widespread both through the range of media outlets the organisation has targeted, the different intervention methods it has employed and through the range of high-profile personalities and organisations who have endorsed loveLife's campaign. Furthermore, the power of loveLife's publicity machine is evidenced by the extensive coverage it has received both nationally and internationally.

However, after having reviewed their scope of services, I would like to return to loveLife's positioning in its "Our Story" brochure. It states that, "Behaviour change requires internalisation by the target group of the desired changes. To be successful, loveLife has to change pervasive values and attitudes among adolescents to sex, sexuality and gender relations." As evidenced by their own statement, loveLife believes gender is at the core of changing values and attitudes among adolescents as those values and attitudes pertain to curbing HIV transmission rates among adolescents. It is my intention to explore further

²⁹ Kaiser Family foundation web site: <http://www.kff.org>

³⁰ Advertorial are editorials written for advertising purposes, and stated as such.

what alternative constructions of gender loveLife has produced within their own discourse given that their expressed commitment is to alter values and relationships to sex, sexuality and gender.

Chapter II: Gender Constructs and their Relationship with HIV/AIDS

2.1 Environmental Analysis

While modes of transmission vary around the world, epidemiologists mapping the spread of the HI virus in South Africa ascertain that the primary means of transmission is through heterosexual relations.³¹ While precise numbers cannot be determined, recent estimates reveal that more than five million South Africans have contracted HIV. That number is expected to double, if not triple (depending upon models of analysis), in the next ten years.³² For various reasons – to be explored at greater length through the course of this research – women are at higher risk for infection than men and, moreover, women between the ages of 15 – 25 are at highest risk for becoming infected.

However, placed in context, the general picture for women in South Africa shows that the inequalities are not relegated merely to HIV infection, but instead are diffused throughout South African society. Women do not have the same access to resources that men have. Inequalities in income show that households headed by women account for 37 percent of the poorest households, while those headed by men account for 23 percent.³³ Furthermore, while women and men have relatively equal access to education (particularly in contrast to other African countries), women's wages average only 87 percent of men's in the formal labour force, yet they still spend more of their income on the nutritional needs of their children.³⁴

Additionally, the impact of gender-based violence on women's lives must be taken into account. Due largely to underreporting, statistics for gender-based violence by men against women remain highly problematic. Nevertheless, both domestic and criminal violence against women is rife. A recent study in three South African provinces revealed 26.8 percent of women in the Eastern Cape, 28.4 percent of women in Mpumalanga and 19.1 percent of women in the Northern Province had been physically abused by their partner. In the

³¹ Whiteside, Allan and Sunter, Clem (2000) **AIDS: The Challenge for South Africa**. Human and Rousseau Tafelberg: Cape Town, p. 36

³² Statistics South Africa Web site: <http://www.statssa.gov.za>

³³ Statistics South Africa Web site: <http://www.statssa.gov.za>

³⁴ Maharaj, Zarina (1999) "Empowering Women in the new South Africa" Africa Policy Information Center, Washington, DC, p. 3

Eastern Cape 51.4 percent of women experienced financial and emotional abuse while 50 percent had experienced it in Mpumalanga and 39 percent in the Northern Province.³⁵ Again, while underreporting obscures the statistics, in 1998 the South African police reported 49,280 rapes, while a study by Jewkes also revealed that in 1999 the incidence of rape for women aged 18 – 49 was 1,300 per 100,000. Simpson and Kraak highlight this point, stating, “The incidence of rape in South Africa is twice as high as in any other country for which statistics are available.”³⁶ The negative consequences of violence against women in South Africa are immeasurable.

Overall, in South Africa, women face higher levels of poverty than men and also face more frequent occurrences of gender-based violence. Yet, I do not highlight these points in a vacuum. Instead I raise them to highlight the links between poverty, gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS in an attempt to give context to the environment in which the epidemic is occurring. I will explore the links at greater depth in the following sections. I also note that this is the environmental context in which loveLife operates.

2.2 A Social Constructionist Approach

Of course, race, class, age, religion, geographic location and other factors mediate the levels of inequality experienced by women. Thus representations of South African women as homogenous, particularly with regard to their levels of vulnerability, are indeed misleading.

It has been stated many times over that while the shift from apartheid to ANC rule occurred peacefully, the legacy of South Africa’s colonial past left the majority of black South Africans economically, politically and socially disadvantaged. While the legacy of apartheid is certainly not the sole determining factor for levels of HIV risk, the levels of HIV transmission are highest among those who were most disadvantaged by apartheid. Lisa Gerbus evidences this, stating, “Race remains a significant determinant of HIV risk. HIV risk is highest among black South Africans, substantially lowered among coloureds and Asians, and lowest among

³⁵ Rachel Jewkes, et al quoted in Vetten and Bhana, p. 3

³⁶ Simpson, G and Kraak, G (1998) “The illusions of sanctuary and weight of the past: notes on violence and gender in South Africa,” from *Development Update* Vol. 2, #2, p. 2

whites.”³⁷ Gerbus also points to class inequalities, inequitable access to healthcare and high levels of unemployment as adding to levels of vulnerability for transmission of HIV. Clearly women in South Africa are located in different contexts and therefore should not be treated as a monolithic group. Yet, overwhelmingly, the impact of gender is a critical link to transmission of HIV/AIDS regardless of location. When placed in context, women’s relationship to HIV/AIDS must be understood as compounded by the myriad inequalities that exist in South Africa and that privilege male structures of domination. This is particularly true for young, black women. In highlighting these inequalities, I do not wish to collude with stereotypes of women, in particular black women, as inevitable victims with no agency. However, for the purposes of this research it is necessary to highlight the inequalities to draw attention to women’s multiple vulnerabilities to HIV as increased through the nexus of sexism, racism and poverty.

A social constructionist approach to exploring and understanding why women, and in particular young women, are increasingly vulnerable to the spread of HIV takes into account the impact of these inequalities. Furthermore, this approach explores the relationship of individuals and communities to HIV and the subsequent impact the relationship has on individual or collective action. Strebel clarifies this approach, stating, “The social constructionist approach to the problem of AIDS takes account of prevailing public depictions of the disease, their interaction with current social structures, and their impact on individual experience, public views and policy formation.”³⁸ Yet to gain an even greater understanding of how and why the disease is affecting men and women differently (beyond biological considerations), it is vital to recognise also gender and gender relations as socially constructed. Further, it is essential to grasp the subsequent impact of gender relations as they relate to sexual behaviour and ultimately transmission of HIV. Thus, I will argue that understanding the intersections of gender constructs, power dynamics and structural inequalities is paramount to understanding the context of the pandemic in South Africa. Furthermore, this understanding is necessary to make effective HIV prevention initiatives.

³⁷ Gerbus, Lisa (2002) “South Africa on HIVinsite” AIDS Policy Research Center, UCSF: <http://www.hivinsite.org>

³⁸ Strebel, Anna (1997) “Putting discourse analysis to work in AIDS prevention” in **Culture, Power and Difference: Discourse Analysis in South Africa**, Burman, et al (ed.) Cape Town: Zed Books, p. 109

2.3 Gender Constructs as they relate to HIV/AIDS

Currently, the best means of prevention against HIV and other STI's during sexual intercourse is condom use. Dr. Jack Coetzee points out that condoms have about a 97 percent success rate in preventing transmission of the virus.³⁹ Unfortunately, while condoms are the best means of prevention for curbing transmission, there is abundant research that explicates numerous barriers to use for both men and women within a South African context. Thus, even for those who are knowledgeable about the benefits of condom use in HIV prevention, the perceived costs of overcoming these barriers often outweigh the perceived potential of contracting HIV.

At a fundamental level, these barriers can be understood in terms of the imbalance of power between men and women in South Africa, with men dominant and women subordinate. As Rachel Jewkes notes, "The power imbalance also translates into a power imbalance in sexual interactions which increases both men and women's vulnerability to HIV."⁴⁰ A cursory outline of some of the research is useful then in helping to explain how gender constructs lie at the heart of these barriers. Of course, before exploring the research, it should be noted again that neither men nor women in South Africa constitute a homogenous group, and structures of male domination across all sectors of society ensure that gender imbalance impacts the lives of everyone. Additionally, heterosexual sex is not the only means of HIV transmission within South Africa. However, deeply embedded heterosexual norms mean that negotiation to protect oneself during sexual intercourse against transmission of HIV occurs primarily with relation to prophylactics such as condoms. Finally, it should be noted that much of the research I draw from pertains specifically to adolescent sexuality in South Africa.

2.4 Barriers for Women

For women, barriers to condom use can be linked to both constructions of gender as well as structural inequality. Those that I will explore can be broadly placed in four categories:

³⁹ Coetzee, Jack Talk given at WC NACOSA conference 3-6 December 2002, Cape Town

⁴⁰ Jewkes, Rachel "Gender-Based Violence, Gender Inequalities and the HIV Epidemic" Working Paper presented at the *AIDS in Context Conference*, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 4 – 7 April 2001.

constructions of femininity, economic dependency, lack of access and gender-based violence. These categories are not static and often overlap and influence one another.

Constructions of femininity within many locations in South Africa can act as a barrier to suggesting or negotiating condom use. For example, in many locations throughout the country pre-marital sex is seen as inappropriate behaviour for young women, and young women who are sexually active are, therefore, reluctant to seek out information about prevention methods or visit clinics.⁴¹ Often when they do visit clinics they are ostracised or chastised for being sexually active by clinic staff, thereby impeding their access to health care; these staff members are often also members of the communities where the young women reside.⁴² Alternatively, in some locations constructions of femininity dictate altogether different social mores. For example, proving fertility prior to marriage is important to a woman's social status and, thus, condoms are possibly an interference with securing marriage.⁴³ Both of these examples make evident only that notions of femininity can be elastic according to location. They also serve to highlight that in each case, these constructions of femininity make women more vulnerable to HIV. In the first case communities regulate the sex lives of these young women so if they are to have sexual desire and act upon it they are acting outside of the regulations imposed by the community. In the second case, proving fertility involves having sex without a condom, again rendering young women vulnerable to HIV transmission.

Other common constructions of women as subordinate and men as dominant lead both men and women to the notion that women are expected to suppress their own needs – be they sexual or otherwise – to those of their male partner. Campbell and MacPhail assert, “Thus, for example, female identities are often constructed in ways that predispose women to collude with men in sexual relations that do not necessarily meet their needs and interests. These include practices such as forced sex, or sexual relations that prioritise male sexual

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p 1

⁴² Gerntholtz, Liesl and Richter Marlise (2002) “Young women's access to reproductive health-care services in the context of HIV” in *Agenda* No. 53, p. 101

⁴³ Hobson, Sarah and Collins, Anthony “Women, Culture and AIDS: How discourses of gender and sexuality affect safe sex behaviour” School of Anthropology and Psychology, University of Natal, Durban. Working Paper presented at the *AIDS in Context Conference*, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 4 – 7 April 2001, p. 5.

pleasure over female pleasure.”⁴⁴ So, for example, some research indicates that women’s fears that men do not like condoms and suggesting their use may put the relationship in some sort of jeopardy prevent many from attempting to negotiate condom use.⁴⁵ Still other research has shown that women are wary to suggest condom use because they fear that it will send the message to their partner that they do not trust him or that they, themselves, are not trustworthy and may be promiscuous.⁴⁶

Economic dependency on men is another factor that has been shown to compromise women’s ability to engage in safer sexual relations. This is manifest in a variety of male-female relationships, including but not limited to: marital partnerships, boyfriend-girlfriend relationships (particularly those in which there is a significant age difference with a older man and younger woman), sex worker relationships, and schoolgirl and teacher relationships (Jewkes, 2001; Hobson and Collins, 2001; MacPhail and Campbell, 2001; Strebel and Lindegger, 1998). In some cases there may be an explicit acknowledgement of money exchanged for sex, while in others school fees may be paid or money might be provided for food or other necessities. Regardless of the exact interaction, the very nature of women’s economic reliance on men can lead to an inability (perceived or otherwise) to negotiate condom use during sexual relations precisely because their economic disempowerment does not put them in a position for negotiation. Moreover, structural inequalities that disallow women from having the same access to employment as men ensure that this cycle continues.

The previous examples also raise the overlapping issue of gender-based violence against women. Increasingly research is showing that the threat of violence is another barrier to safer sexual practices and acts of violence can increase rates of transmission. In their review of literature about the relationship between HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence, Vetten and Bhana cite four main hypotheses for how the two are linked. First, they suggest that

⁴⁴ Campbell, Catherine and MacPhail, Catherine (2001) “Peer education, gender and the development of critical consciousness: participatory HIV prevention by South African youth” *Social Science and Medicine*, Elsevier Science, Ltd., p. 3

⁴⁵ Hobson, Sarah and Collins, Anthony “Women, Culture and AIDS: How discourses of gender and sexuality affect safe sex behaviour” School of Anthropology and Psychology, University of Natal, Durban, Working Paper presented at the *AIDS in Context Conference*, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 4 – 7 April 2001, p. 4

incidences of rape occur largely without condom use and often with genital injury. Second, women who are in abusive relationships may feel unable to negotiate condom use. Third, some research proposes that often women who have a history of child sexual abuse will engage in high-risk sexual behaviour as adolescents or adults. Finally, they propose that women who disclose seropositive status may be at risk from their partner or even the community where they live.⁴⁷ Each of these possibilities leads to greater vulnerability for women.

Again, these linkages draw attention to the impact of gender-based violence as it relates to the HIV epidemic in South Africa. However, this has yet to be addressed in the majority of preventive literature. This will be explored at a later stage, particularly when I address AIDS education discourses. Nevertheless it should be noted for the dilemma it raises, particularly with regard to educating both women and men about HIV/AIDS. Strebel and Lindegger suggest, "South Africa has also recently seen sharp increases in criminal and domestic violence, while the coercive and abusive nature of heterosexual relationships for many youth has been documented, so that current AIDS talk could be expected to reflect this.

Therefore, suggesting to women that they undertake behaviour which could increase the likelihood of such violence may be irresponsible on the part of HIV/AIDS educators."⁴⁸

The suggestion, then, is that the increasing vulnerability of women to threats of violence places them in a position where attempting to negotiate condom use could put them at risk. Further, Strebel and Lindegger's position that HIV/AIDS educators may be irresponsible in suggesting that women negotiate condom use is one that highlights the complexities and challenges facing AIDS educators who would like for women to have the knowledge to protect themselves yet are likely unable to provide the structural support necessary for the implementation of that knowledge.

⁴⁶ Jewkes, Rachel "Gender-Based Violence, Gender Inequalities and the HIV Epidemic" Working Paper presented at the *AIDS in Context Conference*, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 4 – 7 April 2001, p. 2

⁴⁷ Bhana, Kailash and Vetten, Helen Lisa .

0(2001) **Violence, vengeance and gender: a preliminary investigation into the links between violence against women and HIV/AIDS in South Africa**, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Johannesburg, p. 2

⁴⁸ Lindegger, Graham and Strebel, Anna (1998) "Power and Responsibility: Shifting Discourses of Gender and HIV/AIDS" *Psychology in Society (PINS)*, 24, 4 – 20, p. 13.

Others might argue that it would be irresponsible not to suggest condom use, even in light of the violence. While this point has validity and speaks to the urgency of the epidemic, it fails to address the power dynamics between men and women that continue to limit women's abilities to protect themselves, regardless of how much knowledge they may have on HIV prevention. Still others suggest that threats of violence may be more theoretical in nature. In a study in which 1306 women were interviewed across three South African provinces, Rachel Jewkes found:

Women in this study were asked about the outcome of the condom use suggestion. By far the most common response was that the men agreed to use them (44 percent of cases). The next most common response was to say he didn't like them (36 percent). In 2 percent of cases the woman was accused of infidelity. None of the women said they were beaten, but one was threatened with violence. None were made to leave but one was threatened with abandonment. It is possible that women who most feared violence did not suggest condoms but the basis of the fear was not indicated by previous experiences. It seems from this that the risk of violence after suggestion of condom use may be largely theoretical.⁴⁹

Jewkes certainly does not disregard the possibility of violence; moreover the context of her study is one that seeks to highlight the complexities of gender as it impacts on sexual relationships. Yet in placing doubt about the reality of violence for women who attempt to negotiate condom use she does contribute to a discourse that continues to place the responsibility of condom use on the shoulders of women – a problem highlighted by Lindegger and Strebel. In other words, if threats of violence are largely theoretical, then the irresponsibility argument posed by Lindegger and Strebel is largely negated and women are then not compromised in suggesting condom use (and should be the ones to do so). Yet, regardless of Jewkes' research, the reality of gender-based violence against women in South Africa cannot be ignored. Thus, perhaps rather than talking to women who were empowered enough to suggest condom use, the more pertinent information may be contained in the cases where women do not suggest condom use, because the threats of violence for those women may be more than simply theoretical. That gender-based violence is characterised largely by underreporting should not be ignored. Or perhaps other research

⁴⁹ Jewkes, Rachel "Gender-Based Violence, Gender Inequalities and the HIV Epidemic" Working Paper presented at the *AIDS in Context Conference*, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 4 – 7 April 2001, p. 5

that focuses on male response to suggestion of condom use may also help add layers to the picture. In any event, I echo Jewkes in noting that more research around this topic is imperative.

2.5 Barriers for Men

Gender constructs as they relate to the spread of HIV are not harmful to women alone. While they may not be in the highest risk category for contracting the virus, men are also harmed by these constructs as they increase barriers to condom use.

Constructions of men – particularly impoverished, black men – as highly sexual beings who are unable to control their sexual desire are common. Hobson and Collins note, “Men are seen to need sex in ways in which women do not, and this constrains opportunities for women to either refuse sex or take the time to negotiate or raise the issue of safe sex.”⁵⁰

However, what Hobson and Collins do not note -- and their omission again contributes to a discourse in which women are perceived as responsible for condom use – is that this construction also constrains opportunities for men to refuse sex or raise the issue of safe sex, because to do so might put their masculine identity at risk. Furthermore, these constructions underscore ways in which constructions of masculinities can further entrench and normalise racist and classist stereotypes.

Likewise, another common construction of masculinity is that “real men” have multiple partners, with whom they have the “right” to have sex.⁵¹ Thus, as he may attempt to achieve a desired masculine identity, the more partners a man has and the more unprotected sex he has the more he puts both himself and his partners at risk for contracting HIV. In much of the research, this construction of masculinity was also intertwined with constructions of African culture in which “African men” have a right to multiple partners and, further, an obligation to remain true to their culture. This construction was produced and re-produced by men and women alike. Thorpe highlights some of the difficulties for HIV/AIDS

⁵⁰ Hobson, Sarah and Collins, Anthony “Women, Culture and AIDS: How discourses of gender and sexuality affect safe sex behaviour” School of Anthropology and Psychology, University of Natal, Durban, Working Paper presented at the *AIDS in Context Conference*, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 4 – 7 April 2001, p. 4

⁵¹ Levine, S and Ross, F (2002) “Perceptions and attitudes to HIV/AIDS among young adults at UCT” Department Social Anthropology, University of Cape Town, p. 8.

educators in addressing risky behaviour that is justified or framed in terms of “culture”. He states:

Young people construct their identity around such a wide range of factors, from ‘The Bold and the Beautiful’ and ‘Yizo Yizo’, to the tales told by uncles about family traditions. To say, as some boys do, that ‘this is my inheritance’, when referring to unsafe and abusive beliefs, such as having a right to sex on demand, leaves educators in a dangerous and difficult position with regards to challenging such belief. ‘Respect for culture’ is a card that can be played until it is too late.⁵²

Thorpe suggests affirming culture, but only as it is dynamic and shifting. Nevertheless, this makes clear some of the difficulties in confronting constructions of gender, particularly when intersecting with culture. This is particularly true when “culture” is seen as threatened by outside forces or other cultures and, therefore, needs to be treated as sacred and unalterable. Additionally, this discourse runs the risk of stereotyping around not only culture, but race as well. As Ross and Levine state, “While the ethnographic content of studies that focus on black male promiscuity and the relative powerlessness of black women are important, they may have the unintended effect of reinforcing stereotypes of black male promiscuity.”⁵³

I have outlined some of the barriers to condom use as they relate to gender constructions in a South African context. In doing so I do not mean to suggest that men and women do not also operate outside of these constructions or that neither has agency within these constructions. However, simply put, those working in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention cannot afford to ignore these barriers as they relate to gender constructs because the constructs are a dominant feature that impact sexual behaviour. Furthermore, I am concerned with examining how HIV prevention efforts are accountable to the link between gender constructs, structural inequalities and barriers to safer sexual practice.

⁵² Thorpe “Shifting discourse – Teenage masculinity and the challenge for behavioural change” Working Paper presented at the *AIDS in Context Conference*, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 4 – 7 April 2001, p. 12.

⁵³ Levine, S and Ross, F (2002) “Perceptions and attitudes to HIV/AIDS among young adults at UCT” Department Social Anthropology, University of Cape Town, p. 12.

Chapter III: HIV/AIDS Prevention Initiatives: From an Historical Overview to Social Marketing/Branding as a Behaviour Change Initiative

3.1 Preventive Responses

HIV prevention efforts in South Africa initially operated on the assumption that knowledge equals power. In effect, if the public were given the proper information about how to reduce the risk for transmission of the virus they would then act on that information in order to protect themselves.⁵⁴ While getting information to all sectors of the public has been problematic at best, it soon became very clear that knowledge did not translate into behaviour change. As Douglas Webb states, "There is no doubt that, in Sub-Saharan Africa, AIDS prevention efforts have been met with extremely limited success. The increasing HIV rates across the region are testament to this simple conclusion."⁵⁵

The difficulties were and continue to be manifold. However, at the heart of the difficulty lay the primary assumption that information would translate into individual behaviour change. One example of this is the "A, B, C: Abstain, Be Wise, Condomise" campaign, which had a nice rhythm to it, but little, if any, impact on behaviour change. Models of behaviour change have become more sophisticated since Fishbein's Theory of Reasoned Action in which Fishbein's primary argument is that changing beliefs is the key component in changing behaviour.⁵⁶ Out of this was borne the Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice and Belief (KAPB) approach to behaviour change. The critical limitation to this approach is that it does not factor in an individual's external environment as impacting on behavioural decisions. Further, it makes the assumption that individuals are always operating at rational and logical levels in their decision-making. This becomes especially problematic when examining adolescent sexuality because, simply put, changing beliefs is not enough. Catherine MacPhail claims, "...interventions stemming from KAPB research are directed towards the individual and ignore the environment in which the individual functions, thus limiting the creation of

⁵⁴ The context here is primarily post-1994. Prior to that, government policy around HIV/AIDS claimed that the promotion of condoms would encourage promiscuity.

⁵⁵ Webb, Douglas (1997) *HIV and AIDS in Africa*. Pluto Press: London, p. 193.

⁵⁶ Mlungwana, Juju "Cultural Dilemmas in Lifeskills Education in Kwa-Zulu Natal: Umbonambi Primary School Project" *DramAidE*, Working Paper presented at the *AIDS in Context Conference*, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 4 – 7 April 2001, p. 2.

enabling environments in which behaviour change is most likely to take place.”⁵⁷ MacPhail goes on to point out that even with knowledge, young people may have little idea as to how to operationalise their knowledge. Moreover, because “sex as a social construct is location specific”⁵⁸, whether there can be a formulaic approach to changing sexual behaviour across different locations is questionable.

3.2 Problematising Gender within HIV/AIDS education initiatives

Irrespective of the particular approach, the current environment created by the AIDS pandemic is one of great urgency. The focus on curbing transmission rates has allowed for decreased scrutiny with regard to gendered approaches. For example, common sense would seem to dictate that since young women from the ages of 15-20 are at highest risk for infection, education initiatives in turn must be aimed at those young women. And this has been strategy for many initiatives. Yet this approach ignores the context of why and how young women are being infected. Prevention measures are being implemented that are ineffectual because they do not take into account core social constructs, such as those explored in the previous section, that inhibit behaviour change. This is particularly evident in most prevention and education campaigns that focus on young girls and women as needing to take responsibility for safer sex. As discussed previously, women are often without the structural or even psychological power to implement or initiate behaviour change when it comes to heterosexual relations. Additionally, a focus on women further entrenches ideas of women as responsible for curbing transmission of the disease and – albeit in many cases inadvertently – excuses men from any responsibility.

How then do AIDS activists and educators confront this dilemma? How do they begin to integrate and influence additional factors, such as social environments, that influence behaviour change? Certainly models of behaviour change are evolving and beginning to take into account the impact of environment – including family, peers, and social norms – and HIV/AIDS educators and researchers are beginning to have a better understanding of the many factors inhibiting behaviour change. Nonetheless, this hasn’t necessarily translated into a practical response for prevention efforts. The gap between knowledge and

⁵⁷ MacPhail, Catherine (1998) “Adolescents and HIV in Developing Countries: New Research Directions” *Psychology in Society (PINS)*, 24, 69 – 87, p. 70.

implementation remains wide. The research around influencing behaviour change must begin to catch up to the practical implementation if it is to have any effect. Prevention responses, then, must be constantly vigilant about new research ideas so that they may be enfolded into their efforts.

However, to the credit of practitioners in the field, in both their desperation and their innovation, HIV/AIDS responses in South Africa are beginning to explore different avenues for responses as well as different mediums to talk to both individuals and communities about the epidemic. Many of these approaches have been spearheaded by social scientists studying adolescent sexual behaviour change particularly with regard to gendered contexts.⁵⁸ In effect, these studies are working to expand beyond the knowledge as power model and find practical implementations for new strategies. Certainly, creative and new initiatives working to curb transmission are laudable.

It should also be noted that the field of HIV/AIDS prevention work – particularly in the developing world – remains in its infancy and thus methods for review are limited at best and problematic for various reasons. For example, many prevention efforts are not practised in exclusion from other initiatives and, therefore, measuring effectiveness of a single initiative is difficult. Furthermore, understanding why and how initiatives are successful is vastly different from understanding simply that the initiatives have been successful. With these caveats in mind, I should note that frameworks for analysis of prevention initiatives as they are accountable to gender constructs are limited at best and virtually absent from the field in many cases.

Regardless of caveats, however, it is the purpose of this paper to explore one new initiative in particular. As explained earlier, loveLife is a social marketing organisation that employs branding to influence behaviour change initiatives in curbing HIV transmission among South African adolescents. While it is not my intention to investigate the fields of social marketing and branding at length, I believe it is valuable to give a brief contextual overview of both social marketing and branding as they are currently being employed in the field of

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 70

⁵⁹ Refer to Campbell, MacPhail, Bhana, Vetten, Beeker, Thorpe and Mlungwana.

HIV/AIDS to effect behaviour change in young South Africans. I hope to offer a brief critique of their value as mediums for behaviour change.

3.3 Social Marketing: From capitalist agenda to agent of social change?

Alan Andreasen defines social marketing as, "...the application of marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution and evaluation of programmes designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society."⁶⁰ In effect, rather than selling a product as corporate marketing works to do, social marketing attempts to sell behaviour change.

Social marketing campaigns have been documented to have a positive effect on bringing about behaviour change; albeit most case studies that I have reviewed are located in a Northern context. An oft-repeated success story of social marketing is the stop smoking campaign in North America. Additionally, campaigns to educate about the danger of high-blood pressure have been shown to have impressive success rates in the United States.⁶¹ Andreasen asserts that if social marketing campaigns remain customer-centric they can be successful in bringing about behaviour change. According to Andreasen, accounting for the needs of the target customer is critical to the success of any social marketing campaign, with "needs" including such environmental factors as peer influence or lack of access to resources. Accounting for those needs will, theoretically, effect behaviour change and positively impact on the social environment in such a way that is beneficial to the society. Marketing theory evolved out of many disciplines – sociology and psychology included – and certainly this is an effort to evolve beyond the knowledge as power model of behaviour change. However it should be noted that the incorporation of sociology and psychology into marketing theory was not for any reason other than to figure out how to best manipulate behaviour change, or rather, how to best make the customer buy the product.

For critics of social marketing context is critical. In comparing social marketing initiatives to the field of health promotion they state, "...the field of health promotion is marked by its recognition of the critical effect that environmental conditions create in supporting or

⁶⁰ Andreasen, Alan (1995) **Marketing Social Change**. Jossey – Bass Publications: San Francisco, p. 16

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18

undermining health ... In lieu of addressing these factors, social marketing concentrates on communicating messages to individuals liberated from their social context by the assumptions of the free market.”⁶² They argue that the translation from a capitalist market economy to a social market realm is problematic. Employing the marketing technologies of the free-market capitalist system will likely imbue any efforts with those very capitalist values. For example, if capitalist markets are premised on the idea of market exchange, the question arises as to what it is that social marketers receive in exchange? Andreasen’s laudatory stance of social marketing blithely ignores the motivations of the social marketers. He operates on the assumption that their ideological stance for social change will inevitably represent the greatest common good and in no way conflict with the needs of the customer. He does not explore the value-systems of the social marketers but merely assumes that they will be able to best meet the needs of the target customer. In one critique of social marketing, Buchanan, et al posit:

The uneasiness that people feel about social marketing is that it constantly threatens to collapse into a manipulative relationship ... And when ends and means are regarded as independent, it is easier to slip into thinking that changing people’s behaviour is merely a means to an end and that any and all strategies are open for equal consideration ... In the social realm, however, ends and means are not independent. People are an end in themselves and must be treated as such.⁶³

Andreasen further ignores the idea that there may be conflict with the capitalist framework out of which the discipline arose. Already the health industry is being altered by influence from economic frameworks that ignore social frameworks or rather, ignore human needs. Again, the authors caution, “Already the claim that people are entitled to the health promotion services on principle, and not because they are cost-effective are losing force. With the ascent of economic modes of reasoning, the field is being transformed.”⁶⁴ This is particularly evident in the field of HIV/AIDS in which the evolution of the issue itself has transformed from a health issue to a development issue. Why? I would argue that critical responses have only come after the disease was framed in terms of economic modes of reasoning. It is only in representing how HIV/AIDS may potentially cause economic

⁶² Buchanan, David et al. (1994) “Social Marketing: A Critical Appraisal” *Health Promotion International*: Oxford University Press, Volume 9, No. 1, Great Britain, p. 5

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 7

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8

devastation to nations at large (rather than just to individual bodies or impoverished communities) that governments and corporations have really begun to respond. Much of the research on HIV in South Africa includes statistics like the following that paint the picture in macroeconomic terms, “By 2010, South Africa’s gross domestic product will be 17 percent lower than it would have been in a “no-AIDS” scenario. Because of AIDS, South Africa will lose 10.8 percent of its labour force by 2005 and 24.9 percent by 2020.”⁶⁵

The issue is, however, not simply around whose values are being considered, but also whose interests really lie at the heart of marketing technologies. The concept in social marketing that the customers’ needs must be at the heart of any marketing push is not confined to the social marketing realm but rather is a direct evolution from traditional marketing. de Chernatony and McDonald point out, “Textbook definitions of marketing have emphasised the satisfaction of identified customer needs as a fundamental article of faith. Various interpretations exist, but the concept of ‘putting the customer at the centre of the business’ summarises these viewpoints.”⁶⁶ While their work is an examination of traditional marketing rather than social marketing, de Chernatony and McDonald are sceptical of the concept that the customers’ needs can always be at the heart of any marketing effort. They note that while philosophically the needs of the customer must lie at the heart of production and marketing of the product, the reality is that often the business needs come first. The authors posit:

However, it must be recognised that the ability of the business to produce offerings that meet real needs will generally be limited to very specific areas. More particularly, what we find is that an organisation’s skills and resources are the limiting factor determining its ability to meet market-place needs...What we are in effect saying is that marketing should really be seen as the process of achieving the most effective deployment of the firm’s assets to achieve overall corporate objectives.⁶⁷

While proponents such as Andreasen argue that success of social marketing is incumbent upon factoring in the needs of the customers, he is not able to account for the fact that the social marketers will frame the messages themselves. Implicit in that framing is an influence

⁶⁵ Gerbus, Lisa (2002) “South Africa on HIVinsite” AIDS Policy Research Center, UCSF: <http://www.hivinsite.org>

⁶⁶ de Chernatony, L and McDonald, M (1992) **Creating Powerful Brands** Redwood Books Limited: London, p, 6

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p, 6

of value as defined by the message-makers, value that is inevitably influenced by the capitalist discipline out of which social marketing was borne. This is problematic in that capitalist constructs largely place power in the hands of a white, Western-based, heterosexual elite.⁶⁸

Allison Gilwald argues, “Power is to be found in the construction of subjectivities appropriate to a particular vision of the world. In other words, power always makes normal.”⁶⁹ In effect, Gilwald postulates that those who have power – the message-makers – are able to construct reality as they see it. If this is how we understand the workings of power, then we must recognise that the power of mass media (wherein media includes marketing and advertising) – controlled largely by a group of male capitalists – makes normal the vision of reality as accorded to the subjectivities of this very elite. This is problematic in that it precludes the subjectivities of anyone outside the group of this elite, namely women and particularly women of colour in the developing world. That does not mean that there are no representations outside of the elite. It does, however, mean that the elite shapes the representations.

From the perspective that social marketing and mass media are being used to influence behaviour change around HIV/AIDS within South Africa, I propose that it is critical to examine the benefits and limitations of the medium in addressing the many barriers to behaviour change particularly as they relate to constructs of gender. However, while issues of representation are certainly important, I will examine further how those issues have been appropriated by marketing and branding technologies. Not, however, in an effort to meet the customers’ needs but rather to further the cause of the brand.

3.4 Branding – Political appropriation as a market motivator

Perhaps what makes loveLife so interesting is that it is seemingly revolutionary in its approach as a “lifestyle brand.” While they operate as a social marketing organisation, they

⁶⁸ This white, male, Western, heterosexual elite need only be illustrated by a review of the heads of the highest-grossing corporations internationally.

⁶⁹ Gilwald, Alison (1991) “Understanding Mass Media Through Gender: A Method for Developing Media Awareness” in *Media Matters in South Africa* (ed.) Jeanne Prinsloo, Media Resource Center, Department of Education, University of Natal, Durban, p. 290

do not merely employ “marketing” to change behaviour. Indeed, in all of their marketing materials loveLife focuses on its function as a brand. The differences between marketing and branding may seem subtle or even inconsequential. On the contrary, I would argue that in labelling itself a brand loveLife places itself even more profoundly under the rubric of free market capitalism. In other words, in branding itself, loveLife aligns itself more strongly with consumer culture selling consumer goods than with HIV/AIDS advocacy work. There is an intrinsic shift from promoting health to selling goods. Through branding, loveLife has attempted to tap into the power that consumerism has in South Africa. Eve Bertelsen stresses the notion that consumer culture has permeated throughout all of South African society, she states:

While the world’s (or indeed South Africa’s) poor and unemployed may not be able to afford to buy, their desire for commodities is just as great, and their ‘interpellation’ by the discourse of consumerism is no less achieved.”⁷⁰

This argument will be explored at greater length in the second section of this paper. However, to understand my argument better, it is helpful to gain a broader perspective of branding as a discipline.

While numerous definitions of branding abound, McDonald and de Chernatony define a brand as:

“A successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant unique added values which match their needs most closely. Furthermore its success results from being able to sustain these added values in the face of competition.”⁷¹

The term itself derives from *brandr*, an Old Norse word that means “to burn”; burning cattle with their mark was the best way for owners of cattle to identify ownership.⁷² The

⁷⁰ Bertelsen, Eve (1998) “Ads and amnesia: black advertising in the new South Africa”, in Sarah Nuttal and Carli Coetzee (eds.) **Negotiating the Past: The making of memory in South Africa**. Cape Town: Oxford University Press., p. 223

⁷¹ de Chernatony, L and McDonald, M (1992) **Creating Powerful Brands** Redwood Books Limited: London, p, 18

⁷² Stobart, P (ed.) (1994) **Brand Power** New York University Press: New York, p. 1

evolution from cattle to other products evolved with the Industrial Revolution in which production increased exponentially and businesses began to see a need to differentiate their product in the marketplace in order to compete. Branding as a discipline did not truly gain the eminence that it holds today until the latter half of the twentieth century, and then the evolution of branding can be located primarily in a Western context and particularly in an American one. Naomi Klein notes the significant paradigm shift that took most corporations from marketing products to branding. Klein states:

A new kind of corporation began to rival the traditional all-American manufacturers for market share; these were the Nikes and Microsofts, and later, the Tommy Hilfigers and Intels. These pioneers made the bold claim that producing goods was only an incidental part of their operations...What these companies produced primarily were not things, they said, but images of their brands. Their real work lay not in manufacturing but in marketing.⁷³

Successful brands sold not just a product but an attitude, an emotional relationship; in effect these companies began to sell a way of living. This is evidenced widely in Klein's study **NoLogo**, in which she documents the rise in advertising and marketing expenditures with the increasing trend for companies to outsource all of their production needs. These trends brought about the rise of the "Super Brands" such as Nike, Gap, Microsoft and Virgin.

What is noteworthy in terms of this paper, however, is not necessarily the rise of the Super Brand. While in the section on social marketing I explored the idea that issues of representation outside of a white, heterosexual, Western male elite are critical, I think it is also necessary to understand how brands have eagerly appropriated issues of representation to serve their own ends. Klein evidences this in her exploration of some of the Super Brands:

The Gap, meanwhile, filled its ads with racially mixed rainbows of skinny, childlike models. Diesel harnessed frustration at that unattainable beauty ideal with ironic ads that showed women being served up for dinner to a table of pigs. The Body Shop harnessed the backlash against both of them by refusing to advertise and instead filled its windows with red ribbons and posters condemning violence against women. The rush to diversity fitted in neatly with the embrace of African-American

⁷³ Klein, Naomi (2000) **No Logo**. HarperCollins: New York, p. 1

style and heroes that companies like Nike and Tommy Hilfiger had already pinpointed as a powerful marketing source. But Nike also realised that people who saw themselves as belonging to oppressed groups were ready-made market niches: throw a few liberal platitudes their way and, presto, you're not just a product but an ally in the struggle. So the walls of Nike Town were adorned with quotes from Tiger Woods declaring that 'there are still courses in the U.S. where I am not allowed to play, because of the colour of my skin.' Women in Nike ads told us that 'I believe 'babe' is a four-letter words' and 'I believe high-heels are a conspiracy against women.'⁷⁴

It is vital to understand that corporations had not suddenly turned to agendas aimed to empower women or people of colour. Instead they were appropriating and exploiting the very politics of identity in an attempt to hawk their product and stimulate their market.

It is not my intention to suggest a similarly insidious *modus operandi* on the part of loveLife, nor is it my intention to suggest that any organisation that has engaged in branding is the root cause of societal inequality. Yet I will contend that, as a brand, loveLife employs a medium for communication that is not value-free. In the analysis section of this paper I will offer a critique of how loveLife's use of branding as a strategy to reach young people has fundamentally influenced the loveLife campaign. Furthermore, inasmuch as loveLife does employ branding as an agent of behaviour change in adolescents, it becomes necessary to enquire whether branding can be transferred to act as an agent of behaviour change in adolescents and not simply to sell consumer products? As it evolved out of a capitalist agenda, can branding work towards transformation, particularly as that transformation pertains to values and perceptions of gender? Can an agenda that is feminist be considered or is the language merely appropriated? Again, these questions will be addressed in the section that analyses loveLife's production of discourse.

⁷⁴ Klein, Naomi (2000) *No Logo*. HarperCollins: New York, p. 113

Chapter IV: HIV/AIDS Discourses

4.1 *HIV/AIDS discourses: Constructing reality*

It is my intention to explore emergent discourses in loveLife, but first I would like to highlight some of the dominant discourses that have developed and influenced perceptions and responses to HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Discourses around HIV/AIDS have emerged, overlapped, been replicated and contradicted at many sites in a South African context. The previous chapters have provided a foundation with which to explore the impact of discourse on the epidemic.

4.2 *How do discourses affect perceptions and responses to HIV/AIDS?*

HIV/AIDS is indeed a biological reality impacting the social world. However, social constructions of the disease created by language also have a very real effect on the perceptions and responses of the social world to HIV/AIDS. In other words, throughout the history of HIV/AIDS, discourses that have been created and employed to explain and understand the virus have helped to shape behaviour as it relates to HIV/AIDS. I use Potter and Wetherell's description of how discourse constructs versions of reality to help clarify this point:

...people are using their *language* to construct versions of the social world. The principal tenet of discourse analysis is that function involves construction of versions, and is demonstrated by language variation. The term 'construction' is apposite for three reasons. First, it reminds us that accounts of events are built on a variety of pre-existing linguistic resources, almost as a house is constructed from bricks, beams and so on. Second, construction implies active selection: some resources are included, some omitted. Finally, the notion of construction emphasises the potent, consequential nature of accounts. Much of social interaction is based around dealings with events and people which are experienced *only* in terms of specific linguistic versions. In a profound sense, accounts, 'construct' reality.⁷⁵

One of the limitations of Potter and Wetherell's explanation of discourse analysis, however, is that it does not acknowledge that people are differently empowered to construct reality.

Thus, power is a primary function in determining the discourses that have greater power and resonance and those that do not. Dominant discourses largely evolve out of sites where power is located.

While in the second section of this paper I will explore specifically loveLife discourses, I now turn to certain HIV/AIDS discourses as they have evolved in various locations in South Africa. I acknowledge that myriad discourses affecting the perceptions and responses to HIV/AIDS have emerged since the onset of the epidemic. These discourses have emerged out of different institutions and out of different global locations. While some of these discourses have reflected the value systems of hegemonic forces, others have reflected alternative or activist values as they pertain to perceptions and responses to HIV/AIDS. I have only chosen to highlight a few of these discourses. Those that I have chosen to examine in this chapter, I argue, best illuminate the imbalance of power between men and women, particularly as that imbalance relates to issues of access to resources and burdens of responsibility on women. Additionally, they are discourses that largely reflect hegemonic values, namely those representing a white, Judeo-Christian, heterosexist elite. Finally, I also note that the discourses I have outlined and named below are drawn primarily from previous discourse analysis work done by two South African women, Anna Strebel and Lesley Miles, both of whom have been concerned with how social constructions of HIV/AIDS have impacted on women.

I would also argue that these discourses have had profound impact on both individual and collective responses as well as perceptions of power and agency with relation to HIV/AIDS. For example, as I will discuss, behaviour with relation to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment of persons living with HIV/AIDS and use of resources employed to stop the epidemic are just some of the factors that have been influenced by the dominant HIV/AIDS discourses. Finally, I note that the discourses that I have chosen to highlight are also those that have informed and influenced the environment in which loveLife has embedded itself.

4.3 *HIV/AIDS Discourses: Discourses of Power, Responsibility and Control*

⁷⁵ Potter and Wetherell (1987) **Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour**. Sage Publications: London, p.33

Chapter Two explored how gender constructs in South Africa have had an influence on increasing transmission of HIV. What is interesting is how dominant HIV/AIDS discourses have reinforced these constructs to further strengthen barriers to safe sex for both men and women. This is evidenced through discourses focused on notions of power, responsibility and control with relation to sexual behaviour and HIV/AIDS.

4.3.1 *Discourse of Power: Constructions of Male Power and Female Powerlessness*

Structural oppression that renders men dominant and women subordinate has also contributed to a discourse that reifies notions of men as imbued with greater power than women, and, therefore suggests that male power must be respected by both men and women alike.

One result of this discourse, then, is that both men and women subscribe to the notion that women are expected to privilege the needs of their male partner over their own. I reiterate the findings of Campbell and MacPhail, who state, "...female identities are often constructed in ways that predispose women to collude with men in sexual relations that do not necessarily meet their needs and interests. These include practices such as forced sex, or sexual relations that prioritise male sexual pleasure over female pleasure."⁷⁶ Subsequently, women are often left to feel without power to assert control over their lives or their bodies. Again, resulting feelings of powerlessness for women lead many to believe that negotiating condom use may put their bodies at risk, their children at risk or even their economic well-being.⁷⁷

I am not suggesting that the male power and female powerlessness have been created solely through discourse. On the contrary, as explained in Chapter II, many factors, economic and otherwise, do situate men with greater power than women. Additionally, high levels of violence against women also contribute to the imbalance of power between men and

⁷⁶ Campbell, Catherine and MacPhail, Catherine (2001) "Peer education, gender and the development of critical consciousness: participatory HIV prevention by South African youth" *Social Science and Medicine*, Elsevier Science, Ltd, p. 3

⁷⁷ Hobson, Sarah and Collins, Anthony "Women, Culture and AIDS: How discourses of gender and sexuality affect safe sex behaviour" School of Anthropology and Psychology, University of Natal, Durban, Working Paper presented at the *AIDS in Context Conference*, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 4 – 7 April 2001, p. 4

women. However, I am suggesting that this discourse does serve to inhibit agency on the part of women particularly in circumstances involving sexual behaviour.

4.3.2 *Discourse of Female Responsibility and Empowerment*

Inasmuch as discourse can create the feeling that women are without power, it does not create the feeling that they are without responsibility. This is manifest in discourse created by society and women alike. Hobson and Collins assert that, "Women are constructed as caregivers, educators and protectors, who love, care and nurture men in the same way that they do for children...By virtue of being positioned as caregivers, women are constructed as more responsible for condom use."⁷⁸

Both Lesley Miles and Anna Strebel highlight discourse in which women position themselves as responsible for preventing transmission of HIV. In Strebel's study, one participant states, "A woman can control herself, if her man is sleeping around, she knows how to control herself, the important thing is that she should protect herself."⁷⁹ Similarly, in Miles' study, a female respondent asserts, "We [women] can stop it."⁸⁰ Because women take responsibility for preventing transmission, they also are then perceived as responsible when transmission is not prevented. What is fundamentally inconsistent is that discourses of female responsibility directly contradict other discourses that situate power with men thereby rendering women without power to control situations. Strebel notes, "As a result of these conflicting stances, they feel both guilty and helpless."⁸¹

It is not just women, however, who situate responsibility for the virus in their own hands. This discourse has also been perpetuated throughout the media and by HIV/AIDS advocates and practitioners.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9

⁷⁹ Strebel, Anna "Discourse Analysis in AIDS Prevention" in **Culture, Power and Difference: Discourse Analysis in South Africa**. Burman, et al (ed.), Cape Town: Zed Books, p. 114

⁸⁰ Miles, Lesley (1992) "Women, AIDS, Power and Heterosexual Negotiation: A Discourse Analysis" *Agenda*, p. 22

⁸¹ Strebel, Anna "Discourse Analysis in AIDS Prevention" in **Culture, Power and Difference: Discourse Analysis in South Africa**. Burman, et al (ed.), Cape Town: Zed Books, p. 116

Due to the fact that South African women from the ages of 15 – 20 are at highest risk for contracting HIV/AIDS educators have, consequently, aimed much of their education efforts at women in an attempt to curb transmission. Much of the education literature aimed at women has been a directive towards female empowerment. The logic is that if women are able to empower themselves through contraception, they then will help to control the course of the epidemic. An example of this can be found in an interview with Melinda Gates of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.⁸² Gates states, “During the next decade I’m hopeful that an effective microbicide will be produced and inexpensively delivered to put the power of stopping AIDS into the hands of women.”⁸³ Be it in relation to microbicides or condoms, this discourse constructs women as the keepers of sexual responsibility whose task is to look after themselves and others. Inherent in this discourse is also a construction of male irresponsibility – men are simply not up to the task of being sexually responsible.

Although the intentions of the AIDS educators are not necessarily in question, this discourse is, again, in direct contrast with discourses that situate men as dominant and women as subordinate, thereby rendering much of the education efforts geared at women as ineffectual. At best, as Strebel pointed out, women may be left feeling guilty for their inability to act “responsibly” when it comes to practising safer sex. At worst, this discourse may put their lives in danger.

What is also interesting here is the conflict that this discourse brings up for feminist positionings. Notions of empowering women are not without merit for feminists. Yet whether any real empowerment can (or should) happen through women’s actions alone is questionable. Without explicit recognition of the imbalance of power between men and women, discourses of female responsibility and empowerment mistakenly reinforce women as solely responsible for the epidemic.

4.3.3 *Discourse of control: Constructions of the Male sex drive*

As noted in Chapter Two, constructions of men as highly sexual beings who are unable to control their sexual desire are common. In fact, masculinity is confirmed by an uncontrolled

⁸² The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is one of loveLife’s primary funders.

⁸³ Gates, Linda “I Told A Friend Africa Changed Me” *Newsweek*, February 4, 2002, p. 51

sexual desire for women. The idea that men cannot control their sexual drive also colludes with the discourse of female responsibility. Men are unable to control their sexual desires and women (perhaps devoid of any sexual drive or so it may seem within this discourse) are again responsible for curtailing men's lack of control. Indeed, one consequence of this discourse is that if men do not have control, then they are excused for certain types of behaviour, namely forms of sexual violence.

As much as these discourses of power, responsibility and control overlap and reinforce dominant constructions of gender, they also impact other HIV/AIDS discourses that have also become dominant in shaping the course of the epidemic. It is useful, then, to look at some of these.

4.4 *HIV/AIDS Discourses: Discourse of Blame and Stigma*

Because they were the first to respond to the disease, the first responses to HIV/AIDS came from the medical community. From the outset, dominant discourses centred on whom was carrying the disease. In a 1981 *New York Times* article reporting on AIDS, the reporter noted, "Dr. Curran said there was no apparent danger to nonhomosexuals from contagion. 'The best evidence against contagion,' he said, 'is that no cases have been reported to date outside the homosexual community or in women.'"⁸⁴ Furthermore, before the disease was named Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, it was known as GRID, which stood for Gay-related Immune deficiency. Thus, the homosexual community, those first identified with the disease were also blamed for its existence.

In addition to homosexual men, because the virus was spread through intravenous drug use, intravenous drug users also became targets of blame. Susan Sontag writes:

The unsafe behaviour that produces AIDS is judged to be more than just weakness. It is indulgence, delinquencies – addictions to chemicals that are illegal and to sex regarded as deviant. The sexual transmission of this illness, considered by most people as a calamity one brings on oneself, is judged more harshly than any other means – especially since AIDS is understood as a disease not only of sexual excess but of perversity ... An infectious disease whose principal means of transmission is

⁸⁴ Altman, Lawrence K. "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals" July 3, 1981, *New York Times*

sexual necessarily puts at greater risk those who are more sexually active – and is easy to view as a punishment for this activity.⁸⁵

Those that had HIV or full-blown AIDS were stigmatised as “Other”; their errant behaviour had made them responsible for their own behaviour. Their “lifestyle” and behaviour was located outside of the social norm of a primarily heterosexist, white context, and the disease was practically retribution for being outside the social norm. Moreover, the discourse took on an overtly moralistic tone that took root in Judeo-Christian values, which saw plagues as punishments inflicted on the deserved. Sontag goes on to point out, “It is usually epidemics that are thought of as plagues. And these mass incidences of illness are understood as inflicted, not just endured.”⁸⁶

Discourse also centred on the origins of the disease. The discourse turned to Africa and Africans as the inevitable culprit – responsible for this sort of modern-day plague.⁸⁷ In effect, this discourse of blaming Africa was not a newly emergent discourse. Rather, the idea of “the Dark Continent” as the originator of AIDS was, in effect, a recycling of earlier colonial, racist discourse. As Megan Vaughan notes, “In the post-Enlightenment European mind, Africa, it seems, has been created as a unique space, as a repository of death, disease and degeneration, inscribed through a set of recurring and simple dualisms – black and white, good and evil, light and dark.”⁸⁸

This racist discourse had resonance with apartheid values toward race. It is difficult to gauge the impact of this discourse on any individual level. Yet it is certainly enough to say that in the South African context it further entrenched racist and homophobic discourse. As Dr. Jack Van Niftrik contends, “It was firmly believed by many to be a God-ordained disease designer-made for two sectors of the nation: white homosexuals would receive their speedy

⁸⁵ Sontag, Susan (1989) *AIDS and its Metaphors*. Farrar Straus and Giroux: New York, p. 25

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45

⁸⁷ Sontag, Susan (1989) *AIDS and its Metaphors*. Farrar Straus and Giroux: New York, p. 51

⁸⁸ Vaughan, Megan (1991) “Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness. Stanford University Press: Stanford California, p.2

death their 'perverse' lifestyles deserved, and AIDS was the perfect punishment due the 'promiscuous' blacks, considered not even to know the meaning of single-partner sex."⁸⁹

What the discourse also did, however was to help spread HIV. Lesley Miles points out that, "The metaphors of AIDS contribute to the social division between those who are seen to be 'at risk' and the general community, which is not."⁹⁰ The result was that individual and communities felt they did not need to take any action due to the fact that the discourse of blame and stigma reinforced the idea that those operating within the social norm would not contract HIV/AIDS.

Certainly, discourses that laid blame and created stigma did not go unchallenged and there have been very real efforts to change the discourse. However, blame and stigma discourses have not left HIV/AIDS discourse within South Africa, rather the discourse has shifted to place blame and responsibility largely in the hands of women. Discourses of blame and stigma overlapped with discourses of female responsibility, thereby making women responsible for controlling sexual behaviour. So, not only have women become largely responsible for controlling prevention of transmission, they also suffer the consequences of the blame and stigma that lies therein.

Stigma and blame attached to the disease and to those responsible for spreading the disease has led to an environment in which there is great fear of the consequences of getting HIV/AIDS. Anna Strelbel found that stigma attached to the disease made women fearful of the consequences of disclosing seropositive status. One focus group participant laid out the consequences, stating, "She will be isolated, no one will want to have anything to do with her because people know that this sickness, it is infectious and it is incurable." This fear led to a silencing for both those living with HIV/AIDS.

What should be stressed is that the fears revealed by the women in Strelbel's study were not unfounded. Vetten and Bhana's study linking HIV/AIDS and violence against women

⁸⁹ Van Niftrik, Jack "The Bumpers Play On – A Decade of Debacle" in *AIDS Analysis Africa*. Southern Africa Edition, Vol 3 No 4, Dec 92/Jan 93, p. 1

⁹⁰ Miles, Lesley (1992) "Women, AIDS, Power and Heterosexual Negotiation: A Discourse Analysis" *Agenda*, p. 16

revealed an environment in which a woman disclosing her seropositive status could lead to assault by members of the community, eviction from their homes, dispossession of property or blame for a partner's death by AIDS-related illnesses.⁹¹

4.5 *HIV/AIDS Discourses: Medical Discourses – Constructions of HIV/AIDS as understandable to the elite few*

As a virus, HIV/AIDS is both complicated and sophisticated. Thus, discourse has helped to construct the perception that understanding HIV/AIDS and, furthermore dealing with its effects on the body is only accessible to those with a medical background. The consequence has been that access to knowledge about HIV/AIDS has been unevenly distributed throughout communities depending upon both issues and perceptions of access. The concomitant result has been a feeling of individual powerlessness at the hands of the virus. Strebel asserts, "While positioning within this discourse might offer some reassurances in the promise of scientific solutions, it also engenders feelings of powerlessness and dependence on professionals to identify and deal with the problem. In other words, it suggests that the individual cannot do anything."⁹²

For most women, particularly black women, living in South Africa their lack of access to medical treatment fuels the resulting feeling of powerlessness. A respondent in Strebel's study highlights the point, arguing, "But, but, even if you go for testing, what are you going to do, because if you are HIV+, there is nothing that can be done."⁹³ Thus, while going for HIV testing could have a positive impact, it is ruled out as a useless exercise due to this feeling of powerlessness against HIV/AIDS. Again, there is evidence that the discourse around HIV/AIDS has an impact on perceptions and, subsequently, individual behaviour as it relates to protecting oneself against HIV/AIDS. And again, women affected by contradicting discourses that position them as responsible while also positioning them as powerless.

⁹¹ Bhana, Khailash and Vetten, Lisa (2001) **Violence, vengeance and gender: a preliminary investigation into the links between violence against women and HIV/AIDS in South Africa**. Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation: Johannesburg, p. 20

⁹² Strebel, Anna "Discourse Analysis in AIDS Prevention" in **Culture, Power and Difference: Discourse Analysis in South Africa**. Burman, et al (ed.), Cape Town: Zed Books, p. 114

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 115

4.6 *HIV/AIDS Discourses: Prevention/Education Discourses*

Chapter Three discussed some of the limitations of prevention initiatives employed to help educate about HIV/AIDS. The main criticism with most prevention initiatives, I have argued, is the assumption that knowledge about HIV leads to power to implement the behaviour changes that will protect against transmission. Nevertheless, as I stated, most prevention campaigns have yet to operate beyond the knowledge equals power model, particularly as exemplified by the KAPB approach. Education and prevention discourses have largely continued to relay the message that knowledge equals power.⁹⁴

Strebel and Lindegger highlight how this discourse is conveyed to most women, stating, “In order to avoid infection, women are advised to abstain from sex, practise monogamy or negotiate the use of condoms with their partner.”⁹⁵ Again, these education discourses replicate the problem of merely trying to empower women without an explicit acknowledgement that there are structural, cultural and economic barriers to behaviour change. Instead, this discourse positions empowerment and behaviour change as simply matters of individual, rational choice. Rooted in Western values of individualism, this positioning ignores the reality of most black women’s (and black men’s) lives, and again, results in feelings of guilt and helplessness.

4.7 *The absence of discourse: Silences and Silencing*

Not only have discourses of blame and stigma resulted in a silencing of people, discourse has also created HIV/AIDS as a “silent and invisible disease”.⁹⁶ Depictions of the disease as such were reinforced through State mechanisms. As discussed in the first chapter, initial state responses to HIV/AIDS were education campaigns that were confusing and misleading, depicting coffins being lowered into the ground. There was no clear or comprehensive understanding of what AIDS was, how one got it or what to do to prevent it, only that it was to be feared. A consequence of this fear was an environment in which there

⁹⁴ Campbell and MacPhail (2001) “I think condom are good but, aai, I hate those things: condom use among adolescents and young people in a Southern African township” *Social Science and Medicine*, 53, 1613–1627, p. 1614

⁹⁵ Lindegger, Graham and Strebel, Anna (1998) “Power and Responsibility: Shifting Discourses of Gender and HIV/AIDS” *Psychology in Society (PINS)*, 24, 4-20, p. 6

⁹⁶ Strebel, Anna “Discourse Analysis in AIDS Prevention” in **Culture, Power and Difference: Discourse Analysis in South Africa**. Burman, et al (ed.), Cape Town: Zed Books, p. 113

was little discursive space to talk about the disease. This was not only at the state level, but also at the individual level too. This lack of discourse compounded the silencing experienced by those living with HIV/AIDS. In effect, people living with HIV/AIDS experienced an erasure through this silence.

As evidenced above, dominant HIV/AIDS discourses have contributed to social constructions of HIV/AIDS as well as perceptions of and behaviour towards persons living with HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, these discourses have also shaped the direction of education initiatives and of community responses to HIV/AIDS. Finally, feelings of individual agency in working to protect against transmission or in living with the virus have also been profoundly impacted by these discourses.

I argue, then, that previous and ongoing discourses need to be carefully examined as they have so clearly shaped the course of the epidemic. Therefore, I turn to the second part of this research, which will look at the discourse from one particular organisation to begin to discuss how it is shaping, challenging or creating HIV/AIDS discourses.

Part II: Research Findings, Analysis of Findings and Summary Conclusion

Chapter V: Research Methodology

5.1 Outlining the Methodology

As stated in the Introduction, the primary purpose of this research is twofold. The first goal is to examine productions and re-productions of gender constructs and HIV/AIDS discourses within loveLife. The second goal is to explore the intersections of the productions and re-productions of gender constructs and HIV/AIDS discourses with loveLife's target audience.

This research is characterised by both its complexity as well as its exploratory nature. While I was deeply concerned with the organisation as it may replicate structures of male domination and disempower women, I felt that my analysis needed to focus less on the organisation and more on the production of knowledge within the organisation. Due to the complexity of the organisation, its messaging, and its interaction with the loveLife audience, my focus shifted in an attempt to expand and broaden my analysis of how each of these sites produce knowledge and intersect. To that end, I turned to discourse analysis as a tool to examine the production of knowledge and values within loveLife. I was interested in how, as Chapter V discussed, discursive practice helps to construct loveLife's version of the world, and consequently how it has shaped their practical responses throughout the organisation, particularly as it pertained to loveLife's branding strategy. More central to the purpose of this paper, however, as a heuristic tool discourse analysis helps highlight the imbalance of power between men and women particularly as it relates to access to resource and burdens of responsibility as they are informed by social constructions.

There are various theoretical approaches to examining discourse as it pertains to power. Burman, et al, point out that Foucauldian discourse views power as, "a function of a multiplicity of discursive practices that fabricates and positions subjects." Furthermore, Foucauldian discourse analysis examines texts in three ways, "...first to analyse how they construct images of the self as if it were something coherent; second to explore how those

images function to reproduce certain experiences consistent with a coherent self; and third to highlight how texts themselves are riven by variation.”

While I believe that Foucauldian discourse analysis is useful in examining multiple sites of power and in examining relations to self, the approach that I am employing for this exploration is informed by feminist theory. To help conceptualise feminist views of discourse, Lindy Wilbraham juxtaposes feminist views with Foucauldian views of discourse. She states that:

They both adopt a productive view of discourse, and add a moral-political slant to the relationships between discourse, knowledge and power. However, while Foucauldian approaches conceive of power as an individualising tendency concerned with the physical organisation of bodies ('disciplinary power'), and resistance at micro-levels (see Foucault, 1976, 1982), feminists highlight the structural oppression of women ('sovereign power') and an agenda of social transformation at a macro-level.⁹⁷

I do not discard Foucauldian analyses – indeed I believe they are a useful guide in embarking on any exploration of power as produced by discourse. In employing a feminist approach to discourse analysis I hope to underscore HIV/AIDS discourses that contribute to, replicate or challenge structural oppression of women. I contend that it is through these contributions, replications or challenges that agendas of social transformation can emerge or be stymied. And it is in that sense that I believe that an examination of loveLife discourse as it pertains to power between men and women will help to answer the question of whether loveLife can effect social transformation. In highlighting my approach, I note my own reflexivity as an interpreter of discourse, particularly as discourse is dynamic and subject to context. Therefore, a feminist approach to discourse highlights my own moral-political slant in which I argue for social transformation between men and women as a means to positively affect behaviour change as it relates to HIV/AIDS. I also argue that approaches to education and treatment for HIV/AIDS are inherently political, and must be revealed as such in order to impact on the epidemic.

⁹⁷ Wilbraham, Lindy “The psychologization of monogamy in advice columns: surveillance, subjectivity and resistance” in *Culture, Power and Difference: Discourse Analysis in South Africa*. Burman, et al (ed.), Cape Town: Zed Books, p. 66

However, I am also aware of the limitations of a feminist approach. In effect, using a gendered lens to explore loveLife's production of discourse inevitably limits explorations of the productions as they relate to factors such as race and class. This not only privileges analyses of gender over other exploratory lenses, but it also has the residual effect of homogenising gender as intersections with race and class are often buried at the expense of gender. It is my hope, then, that this research may act as a starting point for exploration and that subsequent analyses from different perspectives will follow, particularly as discursive practice does not only impact on gender relations, but also on class, race and many other relations.

To that end, I have carried out research across each of these sites of the organisation which produce knowledge: the organisation, the messages of the organisation and the organisation's target audience. Each of these provides a vastly different "text" for analysis and, in some ways, limits comparison. Nevertheless, while they each provide very different texts, none was produced in isolation, and all have points of intersection. It is those points of intersection that I hope this research will explore at greater length.

Simultaneously I had logistical issues to consider in carrying out this research. Due to issues of accessibility to the loveLife staff and its target audience and the feasibility of researching an organisation with such a vast scope of services, I, therefore, found it necessary to impose limitations on the research for each site, as I will explain in outlining each section.

To carry out this methodology I used in-depth interviews, a small focus group and loveLife's second print campaign to examine each of these sites.⁹⁸ Each produces a different kind of data. As a "product" of the organisation, certainly the print campaign provides the most static data of the three, whereas the interviews and focus groups themselves served as sites where data was produced with my involvement. With regard to the interviews and the focus groups I align myself with Holstein and Gubrium, who state:

⁹⁸ The guidelines for the focus groups and in-depth interviews are attached in the appendices. The print campaign is also attached.

A recently heightened sensitivity to representational matters – characteristic of poststructuralist, postmodernist, constructionist and ethnomethodological inquiry – has raised a number of questions about the very possibility of collecting knowledge in the manner the conventional approach presupposes. In varied ways, these alternative perspectives hold that meaning is socially constituted; all knowledge is created from the actions undertaken to obtain it. Treating interviewing as a social encounter in which knowledge is constructed suggests the possibility that the interview is not merely a neutral conduit or source of distortion, but is instead a site of, and occasion for, producing reportable knowledge itself.⁹⁹

Furthermore, as tools of inquiry, the focus group and the interview provide dynamic social environments, which also produce diverse data. That each site produced such different data is, I hope, a strength of the research that will broaden the overall analysis.

5.2 Messages

In exploring how loveLife constructs gender within its marketing materials I must note that loveLife's marketing output is both prolific in its materials and in the many mediums through which it delivers its brand message. Therefore, the limitations of this study dictated the necessity of containing and narrowing the examination. In reviewing the output of material, along with loveLife's communication strategy, I sought to identify the loveLife communication that reaches the greatest number of South Africans. The loveLife Web site states:

loveLife currently has a billboard holding of 2060; 160 water-towers in rural areas, and 850 taxis. loveLife's total annual media spend is R 33 million (including billboards, taxis, radio and print advertising). This represents approximately 16 percent of the total annual loveLife budget and about one fifth of the spend by the top commercial advertisers in South Africa.

To that end, I chose to review loveLife's second major print campaign, which was advertised on the billboards throughout South Africa and was current during the time in which I conducted my research.¹⁰⁰ This choice was influenced by loveLife's own assertion that billboards are often the first point of contact for most of their target audience. They provide

⁹⁹ Holstein, James and Gubrium, Jaber (1997) "Active Interviewing" in **Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice**. David Silverman (ed) Sage Publications: London, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ LoveLife's first print campaign had debuted the previous year (2001), and their third major print campaign was launched in November 2002.

the first representation of loveLife and therefore help to “position the brand”.¹⁰¹ Of course, this campaign cannot be expected to represent loveLife’s marketing in its entirety. However, as these materials provide the initial brand position, they also provide a snapshot of loveLife’s relationship to gender. Therefore I use the billboards as a starting point for my exploration of how loveLife is producing and re-producing gender constructs. This exploration constitutes the first section of my findings. The second section of the findings focuses on the data produced by the interviews and the focus group to determine emergent discourses.

5.3 The organisation

Again, in attempting to study loveLife as an organisation, I have to note that it has multiple functions and multiple intersections with its target audience. For reasons of feasibility, I needed to narrow the scope of examination and in doing so, chose to use interviews with staff members to help represent the organisation. Of course, my initial engagement with the organisation was informed by the loveLife Web site, collateral materials and media coverage and Chapter One has already provided an overview of the organisation based primarily on these materials. I hope this lends context to the examination of the organisation. To bring life to the exploration, I felt that the loveLife staff would best represent the voices of the organisation. I felt that, as a site of production and reproduction of gender constructs and HIV/AIDS discourses, the staff would provide both resonant and dissonant voices in relation to the brand.

I gained access to loveLife through a personal contact at the UCT Graduate School of Business. Working with two other MBA students, I was able to interview loveLife’s head of information and communications. After this initial connection I visited loveLife’s head office in Johannesburg and was able to interview an additional seven loveLife employees. However, due to taping difficulties, my interview with loveLife’s Head of Radio was inaudible and was not used for this research. Due to the fact that my introduction to loveLife came through the Graduate School of Business, many of the staff made the assumption that I was an MBA student. I did attempt to clarify that my project was not through the Graduate School of Business but rather located with the African Gender

¹⁰¹ LoveLife Web Site: <http://www.lovelife.org.za/llwebsite>

Institute and hoped that this rectified any issues around misrepresentation. During this visit, a loveLife staff member also gave me a tour of one of loveLife's first Y-Centres in Orange Farm. I spoke to three loveLife groundBREAKERS at this Y-Centre and to some of the participants on an informal basis. These informal interviews have not been used as primary data but did serve to inform my overall analysis of loveLife. In all, I conducted interviews with six loveLife staff and four groundBREAKERS.

After my visit to Johannesburg, I contacted the Y-Centre in Langa and was invited for a visit. I made four visits to this centre for both interview and observation purposes. In writing my interview guidelines I did not differentiate between staff and groundBREAKERS. However, throughout my analysis I decided to separate data produced by "Staff" interviews from data produced by "groundBREAKER" interviews. This was because, as trends in data began to emerge, I felt that differentiating between the two groups was necessary in understanding productions of discourse and gender. In essence, my analysis contends that most production of discourse originated with staff and was reproduced by the groundBREAKERS.

I explained to both staff and groundBREAKERS that this research was for the purposes of my dissertation and all were willingly interviewed. However, I have chosen to use pseudonyms to protect individual identities and note that my critique is geared toward the organisation and not towards individuals. Interviews were conducted with:

Staff

Fiona Hodges, head of Communications

Cheryl Abraham, Editor S'camto Print

Nicola Petersen, Executive Producer of loveLife television

Tshepang Mashawu, Information Coordinator

Thandiwe Siyongwana, loveLife Games Programme Officer

Pozisa Ngema, School Projects Coordinator

groundBREAKERS

Kabelo Ndlovu

Helen Sinyanya
Busisiwe Mabalane
Mapula Tshabalala

5.4 Target Audience

Perhaps the greatest limitation of this research was my inability to interact with South African adolescents on any large scale. Due to a lack of resources and access, my interaction with the loveLife target audience was limited to a focus group conducted at a loveLife Y-Centre in Langa. Ultimately, I chose the Y-Centre as the site for the focus group because I wanted to interact with South African adolescents who had been exposed already to the loveLife brand messages. It was my hope that this would strengthen my examination of the intersection between the loveLife brand and its target audience. Certainly, however, I believe that further exploration is required to examine not only the intersections with the target audience, but also the impact of the messaging on the target audience's sexual behaviour. As stated, that was well beyond the scope of this research and would require further quantitative and qualitative analysis of the target group, including those who had been exposed to loveLife's messaging and those who had not.

I felt that using the focus group as a research method would be most appropriate. Abigail Harrison notes the advantage of peer group discussions as opposed to interviews based on, "...the sensitive nature of the topic and adolescents' potential difficulties in discussing sexuality in an interview format."¹⁰² However, wanting to facilitate engagement between the adolescents to see how they themselves were producing discourses also motivated me.

This focus group consisted of three boys and two girls between the ages of 14 to 18. My original intent was to conduct at least two focus groups, one with boys and one with girls. I wanted to separate boys from girls in order to create an environment in which they felt comfortable to speak. However, the loveLife groundBREAKER who organised the focus group for me felt that separating boys and girls was not necessary. He also felt that one focus group would likely be sufficient. While I would have liked to have conducted at least

¹⁰² Harrison, Abigail (2002) "The social dynamics of adolescent risk for HIV: using research findings to design a school-based intervention" *Agenda* No. 53, p.45

one more focus group, the groundBREAKERS' schedule, which frequently has them on business trips away from the Y-Centres, made scheduling difficult. My worry, however, about creating a "safe" environment seemed unfounded as all participants willingly engaged and appeared to be quite comfortable. And, while I had expected to spend a bit of time explaining the purpose of a focus group, they were all already very familiar with the focus group format, informing me that they participated in them quite often at the Y-Centre.

I should note, however, that while I did not focus on loveLife's print campaign in my interviews at the Head Office, I used loveLife's second major print campaign as the primary focus for discussion in the focus group. The goal was to ascertain how the loveLife productions of gender and HIV/AIDS discourse as produced by loveLife print materials and Y-Centre environment intersected with their own production of discourse and constructs of gender. It was also to explore their reactions to the loveLife materials as they pertain to the relevancy of their lived experiences.

Finally, to add richness to this examination, I also chose to interview opinion leaders within the field of HIV/AIDS education, prevention and intervention. These opinion leaders were useful in helping me to form a relevant and legitimate framework with which to review loveLife in the context of South African HIV/AIDS organisations. To that end, I spoke with:

- Amy Marks, a lecturer in marketing at the UCT Business School who has specialised in social marketing as discipline and practice;
- Msokoli Quotole, who has worked for the Western Cape Provincial Department of Health and has specialised in educating populations on HIV/AIDS;
- Anna Strebel, who currently works as a consultant but has written extensively on the creation of discourse around HIV/AIDS and its subsequent impact on women
- Ginny Volbrecht, a lecturer at the African Gender Institute who has extensive background experience in the field of HIV/AIDS and who currently lectures undergraduate students in gender studies;

- Stacey Martin, a United States Peace Corps worker who has spent the previous two years in a small community in Mpumalanga organising workshops with teachers and learners on HIV/AIDS prevention and education.

While the input from these opinion leaders was invaluable, I chose not to include it as data, but rather as a platform from which to launch my own information gathering.

5.5 Examining and Analysing Texts

In looking at the data I have chosen to review, I reiterate the exploratory and iterative nature of this research. The data is varied, constituting both static advertising materials, talk produced by one-on-one interviews as well as talk produced by a group. In the findings section of this paper, I have attempted to thematise this data through categories of gender constructs and categories of discourse. This process, however, is subject to my own reflexivity and inevitably silences other discourses that are also present within the organisation, the messages and the target audience. Still, I believe there is relevance within this framing as it may impact on future productions both within and beyond the organisation.

In the subsequent sections I have included both my research findings and my analysis of findings. As constructs and discourses overlap and build on one another, I found it necessary to structure these sections by laying out a set of findings and then laying out analysis of the findings immediately thereafter. However, at the end of all the findings and analyses, I have included a summary conclusion of findings, which will hopefully weave together the major points of intersection.

Chapter VI: Constructs of Gender: loveLife's Billboard Campaign

6.1 The strategy for behaviour change

Once again, I highlight loveLife's express belief that, "Behaviour change requires internalisation by the target group of the desired changes. To be successful, loveLife has to change pervasive values and attitudes among adolescents to sex, sexuality and gender relations."¹⁰³ The loveLife strategy is to "combine a high-visibility, sustained multi-media campaign with countrywide adolescent friendly services in public clinics and a national network of community-level outreach and support programmes for youth."¹⁰⁴ Again, however, I will argue that loveLife's strategy for behaviour change is thwarted by three factors: through constructions of men and women that are not only narrow, but further replicate gendered inequities; through a discourse of consumerism that homogenises the audience and stifles further discussion about the diversity of youth and diversity of challenges they face; and, finally, through the false assumption that sexual freedoms are a product choice available to all youth. While I will explore the latter two points in the following chapters, the first point is to be explored at greater length in this chapter.

6.2 The billboard campaign

While they are not meant to act in isolation, the billboards are the starting point for the loveLife strategy. As the first part of this three-pronged strategy to change pervasive values and attitudes among adolescents to sex, sexuality and gender relations, the primary goal of the billboard campaign is to build awareness of the brand and stimulate discussion around sexual behaviour and gender relations. Through the billboards the brand is positioned and, therefore, is critical in setting the target audiences' context for loveLife's representations of gender. Thus, this first point of contact will influence subsequent interactions with the brand. The medium itself dictates brevity in message, as the primary objective of most billboard campaigns is simply to raise awareness of a product, brand or organisation. loveLife itself acknowledges the limitations of the medium in that only limited information

¹⁰³ loveLife Brochure, "Our Story"

¹⁰⁴ loveLife Web site: <http://www.lovelife.org.za//llwebsite>

can be conveyed, however, raising awareness of the brand has been of primary importance within the organisation.¹⁰⁵

In that regard, what is critical to this examination is identifying what kind of gender constructs are being produced in this print campaign that can only convey limited information. In other words, is loveLife constructing gender in such a way that will help to stimulate behaviour change? Is loveLife challenging the dominant constructs of gender that privilege men over women or is the organisation replicating them? Are they creating alternative constructions of gender that young people can embody? And, if so, are those alternatives based in some kind of reality for the majority of South African youth? While loveLife may acknowledge the critical importance of internalising behaviour change as it relates to values and attitudes towards sex, sexuality and gender relations, I will argue that the organisation is unable to acknowledge and then raze the existing dominant discourses and constructions that are deeply embedded in the South African context and that have profound implications for how young men and women and organisations respond to HIV/AIDS. Indeed, the constructs that I have identified from the billboards offer little in the way of challenge or alternative to dominant, existing constructions that leave women largely responsible for sexual behaviour. Meanwhile, within these constructs, there is no recognition of the structural inequalities and power differentials that prevent many women from being able to implement those responsibilities.

What is also problematic is that these constructs are not isolated to the billboards (whose limitations for conveying limited knowledge and values is acknowledged) but instead diffused throughout the organisation. This will be explored at greater length in the following chapters. I will argue that these constructs collude with discourses created by the organisation to further create women as primarily responsible for sexual behaviour. I will also argue, that due to the fact that loveLife's constructions are so narrow, the representations that are meant to challenge dominant constructions of men as irresponsible in their sexual behaviour actually succeed in normalising those constructions. Again, however, this will be discussed at greater length in the subsequent chapters. Below I will

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Fiona Hodges, 8 July 2002

review the print campaign and provide a sketch of the constructs that I argue loveLife is producing. I will then provide an analysis of the constructs.

Launched in 2002, loveLife's second major print campaign serves as the starting point for my examination of the productions of gender within the organisation. The campaign is characterised by a series of five individual print advertisements that have a similar look and layout.¹⁰⁶ The advertisements have no pictures, only words. Each advertisement is set up with two speakers making statements about the same topic. The statements are bifurcated by two different, brightly coloured backgrounds. These statements do not necessarily constitute dialogue because they are not made in response to each other, but rather in isolation. The speakers are given names and ages but no other dimensions or characterisations. The advertisements attempt to use youthful language and often appropriate American and African-American colloquial language to achieve this goal. Each advertisement also lists the number for loveLife's hotline, the thethajunction as well as loveLife's logo and tagline "Talk About It."

To provide a framework with which to examine gender constructs in the campaign, I have identified and categorised gender constructs for both young women and men as laid out in the table below. I argue that for both men and women only two primary constructions are produced by the loveLife print campaign: those that align themselves with the loveLife brand and those that do not. This is evidenced through the consequences that those unaligned with the brand experience.

I have termed the two primary constructions of women as The Empowered or The Disempowered. In the case of men, I have categorised them as either The "Playas" or The Reformed. Below I will define each of these constructions and highlight their emergence in the print campaign. I should note that the constructions are not entirely static as there is room for movement between the two primary constructs, as will be evidenced by both Abram and Sandy.

Table 6.1: Constructs of Women and Men in loveLife's Billboard Campaign

Constructs of women	Constructs of men
The Empowered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lindi ➤ Zola ➤ (Sandy) 	The Playas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Thabo ➤ James ➤ Sugar Daddy ➤ (Abram)
The Disempowered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sandy ➤ Suzette ➤ Renee ➤ Thuli 	The Reformed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Abram

6.3 Constructions of Young Women: Empowered or Disempowered

I will begin each section by defining each of the constructions that I have identified. I will then explore each construction as it is expressed through the advertisements.

6.3.1 The Empowered

The Empowered is a construct of a young woman or girl who has educated herself about the risks of HIV transmission and has taken it upon herself to prevent transmission from happening to her. She makes positive choices in her life and lives a positive lifestyle. Within the loveLife print campaign, it is evident that constructs of young women as empowered and in control of their sexual interactions have highly affirmative connotations. Women who are aggressive about protecting their sexuality reap the benefits of living a positive lifestyle. They embody the loveLife brand through their choice to take control of their lives. Lindi and Zola represent the Empowered Girl in two of the five print executions.

In the first advertisement, we are introduced to Lindi and Thabo:

“I can score with any chick I want...am I the man?” Thabo 17

“Thabo was my man, ‘til I found out he’s just a playa” Lindi 16

¹⁰⁶ The campaign is included in the appendices.

From their statements, it is made clear that Lindi and Thabo have had a previous relationship by Lindi's statement, "Thabo was my man". The central conflict in this advertisement is that Thabo is a "playa". While they had a relationship, Lindi ended it when she found out that Thabo scores with "any chick I want."

As The Empowered, Lindi has two primary functions. First, she is employed to judge and render the consequences for Thabo's behaviour. Second, she is employed to represent an empowered woman who is in control of her own fate through the choices she makes.

As we are meant to understand it, a "playa" is someone who has multiple partners and also has the idea that they can "score" with those partners. The use of the word "score" connotes sexual intercourse, although this is not explicitly stated. Lindi meets Thabo's characterisation of himself with a negative judgement. She states, "Thabo was my man, 'til I found out he's just a playa". Thus, Lindi passes judgement on Thabo's sexual behaviour by contradicting his statement that he can score with "any chick". Because he is a "playa", Thabo cannot have Lindi. This construction of Lindi shows that she has educated herself about the risks of HIV/AIDS and believes that sleeping with someone who has had multiple partners puts her at greater risk.

As The Empowered, Lindi is also responsible for her own behaviour and, therefore, aggressively protects herself. Rather than stay in the relationship, it is Lindi's decision to end it when she discovers that Thabo may be putting her at risk. As she represents empowerment, she is also employed to show a woman who won't put up with Thabo's sexual proclivities. It is then her responsibility to protect herself from Thabo and to control the situation.

"I only do it skin on skin" James, 18
"I told James to wrap it or zip it" Zola, 17

In the next advertisement we are introduced to James and Zola. Similar to the conflict with Lindi and Thabo, Zola also acts in response to James' actions.

James asserts that "I only do it skin on skin". The audience is meant to understand that James will only have sex without a condom. His statement does not sit well with Zola who responds "I told James to wrap it or zip it". From this the audience is meant to understand that Zola is giving James two options: either he wears a condom during sex or Zola will not have sex.

As The Empowered, Zola has educated herself about HIV transmission and knows that having sex without a condom puts her at risk for transmission. Therefore, she does not accept James' statement that he'll only do it skin on skin. Instead, Zola takes control of the situation and sets the rules for their sexual interaction. Again, we see a construct of a woman as educated, in control and making positive choices to protect herself against the irresponsible behaviour of a man.

As will be discussed at greater length in the next section, constructs of women as empowered and in control of their own situation are highly positive in loveLife. Both Lindi and Zola, constructed as empowered women, are in line with the positive lifestyle brand that loveLife represents.

Analysis:

In effect, The Empowered appears to be loveLife's challenge to constructs of women as subordinate to men. In other words, constructions of women as able to stand up for themselves and control their sexual behaviour and the sexual behaviour of their partner will help women to internalise a feeling of empowerment, which will then help them to act to protect themselves. Women will then be better able to protect themselves against transmission of HIV. This construction is not without merit. Certainly, young women do need to internalise the notion that they are not less than men are.

This construction, however, replicates discourses of female responsibility and empowerment in which women alone are seen as responsible for sexual behaviour. This construct presents a young woman who has educated herself about sex and contraception. She has also educated herself about how to protect herself from the negative consequences that may come with sex. Alone, this sort of self-education is not negative. However, it becomes the responsibility of both Lindi and Zola to not only educate themselves, but to also be responsible for their behaviour and the behaviour of their partner. Lindi is responsible for protecting herself against Thabo and Zola is responsible for protecting herself against James. Neither man takes on any responsibility and so, this construct of women shows women as the keepers of responsibility for sexual behaviour.

The impact of this is dual. First, Women become responsible for implementing safer sexual behaviour and men are absolved. The second impact, however, is a contribution to discourses of blame and stigma. As Strebel points out, if women are responsible for stopping the spread of the virus, then “They are also by implication responsible for spreading the virus.”¹⁰⁷ Thus, constructions of women as responsible for transmission of HIV/AIDS also overlap with discourses of blame and stigma. Furthermore, as explored in Chapter IV, discourses of blame and stigma increase women’s vulnerability to transmission of HIV and vulnerability in living with HIV/AIDS.

Constructs of women as empowered are also dangerous in that they ignore structural inequalities and power differentials. As discussed previously, the paradox arises in that women are made responsible for controlling sexual interactions, but are often without the power to do so. Thus, these constructs render women culpable in situations where there is often little space for them to take action. Furthermore, there is an overlapping of education discourse that assumes knowledge translates into the power to implement behaviour change.

Finally, it is also useful to explore the names that loveLife chose to represent this empowered woman: Lindi and Zola. Both names clearly connote that these are black women. Again, while I do not believe that it was a conscious choice on the part of loveLife

¹⁰⁷ Strebel, Anna (1997) “Discourse Analysis in AIDS Prevention” in *Culture, Power and Difference: Discourse Analysis in South Africa*. Burman, et al (ed.) Cape Town: Zed Books, p. 115

to locate responsibility for transmission of HIV with black women, the unfortunate consequence of choosing these names succeeds in doing just that. Yet, while the choice was likely not conscious, loveLife is remiss in not acknowledging that women, and primarily poor, black women are often the repositories of both blame and stigma as it relates to HIV/AIDS in a South African context. In choosing these names, loveLife reproduces black women as such.

What is also highly problematic is that constructions of women as empowered seem to be the sole construction to align positively with the loveLife brand. Consequently, loveLife has done little to create alternative constructions that transcend dominant HIV/AIDS discourses, and therefore that transform responses to HIV/AIDS.

6.3.2 The Disempowered

If women are not empowered they are not able to make positive choices, and consequently they are not able to live positive lifestyles¹⁰⁸. These are the Disempowered: constructions of women that do not align positively with the loveLife brand. The Disempowered woman is, essentially, the polar opposite of The Empowered woman. Here women are constructed as lacking control in their lives. They have not educated themselves about living positively, or they are simply unable to act on any of that education. They are largely passive about protecting their sexuality. That they are disempowered precludes them from making positive choices for themselves. Their choices are construed negatively by the dire consequences they face. In the print campaign four representations of The Victim are illustrated through Sandy, Suzette, Renee and Thuli.

“I wanted to wait, but Abram was inside me before I could say no” Sandy 15

“Sssho...did I rape her? Now that we talk, I understand love is not just sex”

Abram 17

This advertisement shows statements from both Abram and Sandy after they have had sex. Sandy is regretful. She states, “I wanted to wait”, but instead of speaking up and telling

Abram this, she kept quiet. Conversely, Abram is worried. He is not sure if he forced Sandy to have sex. He questions himself, stating, “Sssho, did I rape her?”

Two central questions emerge. First, was Sandy raped? Second, whose fault was it? Neither question is addressed, but is instead left up to interpretation by the audience. What we do know about Sandy, however, is that she did not want to have sex with Abram at the time that they had sex. She says, “I *wanted* to wait”. The reason she gives is that Abram moved too quickly, and “was inside me before I could say no.” Was Sandy forced to have sex by Abram? Was she confused about what was happening? Why did she not speak up before they came close to having intercourse?

However, Sandy doesn’t speak up about her feelings and it is only in the aftermath that it becomes clear that the sex was not consensual. Sandy is constructed as a victim of her own silence and passivity, and, while the audience does not receive answers to the questions listed above, the negative consequences are made clear by the advertisement. At best, Sandy’s sexual experience was highly negative, at worst the audience is introduced to the possibility that Sandy may have been raped as a result of her passive behaviour. In effect, she is constructed as a victim of her own disempowerment, who then suffers the consequences.

There is a possibility that the advertisement also attempts to empower Sandy in the aftermath of her sexual encounter with Abram. This is evidenced through Abram’s statement that, “Now that we talk, I understand love is not just sex.” If, in his statement, the “we” is referring to Sandy, then we see a transformation in Sandy. Her new-found ability to communicate with Abram about the situation aligns with the loveLife directive to “Talk About It” and, in effect, aligns her as a positive embodiment of the brand. Thus she is able to change herself into one who is empowered. However, because the “we” is not clarified, it leaves the interpretation to the audience. Regardless, I still argue that the print campaign produces two primary constructions for women. Either women embody the loveLife brand through their empowerment or they do not. And, again, there is room for movement between either of these constructions. Yet, I argue that alternative constructions of women do not emerge in these advertisements.

¹⁰⁸ The term “positive lifestyle” is one loveLife chooses to express someone aligned with the brand.

“Sex is sex: show me the money” Suzette 17

“Suzette was da bomb...shame man...her sugar daddy also gave her HIV” Jacob 17

In the next advertisement the audience is introduced to another woman who is not a positive embodiment of the loveLife brand. Much like Sandy, Suzette is also constructed as disempowered. The audience is introduced to Suzette’s pragmatic view regarding sex through her proclamation, “Sex is sex: show me the money”. Sex is a means to getting money and little else to Suzette. We know little else about her circumstances. Whether she is simply exploiting men for money or if she has no other way to make money matters little in this case. What does matter, however, is that Suzette constructs her view of sex so narrowly. This shows that she has not educated herself fully about the consequences of sexual interactions. In effect, she is disempowered by her lack of knowledge and her consequent approach to sex.

Again, like Sandy, Suzette becomes a victim of her disempowerment, despite her assertive approach to her sexuality. In this case, it is clear that her approach is simply not in line with the loveLife brand. In this, there begins to emerge a set of values framed by a Judeo-Christian, heterosexist view of sex. As a victim, she also suffers dire consequences. Jacob points out that, “...her sugar daddy also gave her HIV”. In other words, in addition to giving her money, her sugar daddy also gave her HIV. Furthermore, Suzette essentially undergoes an erasure through contracting HIV. Jacob states, “Suzette was da bomb”. The use of the past tense here is ambiguous and we do not know if Suzette has died or merely just stopped being “da bomb” as a result of contracting HIV. However, we do know that she is no longer “da bomb”, and it is a direct consequence of contracting HIV. The ad constructs Suzette as a woman either unable or unwilling to empower herself against HIV. The result is that she then becomes a “victim” of HIV.

“Eish...I’m doing too many funerals nowadays” Renee 18

“They say the late had so many partners...what’s sex gotta do with it anyway?”

Thuli 15

In perhaps the most confusing of the print executions, the audience meets Renee and Thuli. Renee’s statement that she is doing too many funerals nowadays is, presumably, meant to help the audience understand that many young people are contracting HIV and dying of AIDS-related illnesses. Her use of the word “Eish” expresses her dismay and her frustration. Beyond that, however, Renee does not seem to be taking any action to stop these funerals. Again, passive behaviour leaves her disempowered and she is left with her dismay and frustration to continue to attend funerals.

Thuli, meanwhile, is reflecting on a person who is recently deceased. The one thing that we are told about the late is that they “had so many partners”, but beyond that we are told nothing. Thuli goes on to ask, “...what’s sex gotta do with it anyway?” Clearly, loveLife is asserting that if one has multiple partners they are more likely to contract HIV and die. That Thuli is unable to answer her own question regarding the connection between sex and death also constructs her as The Disempowered. Not being able to answer this question may even put Thuli in the same situation as the deceased.

In each case, both Thuli and Renee are constructed as passive. Neither has asserted herself in any way that would educate her about how to stop going to so many funerals. A further implication, however, seems to be that without action it may be their own funeral that Thuli and Renee need to worry about.

In each of these cases, the women are constructed as victims of their own disempowerment, unable to make positive choices. And, for each, there are consequences to the negative choices they do make. It is clear that constructions of women as disempowered are negative and, thus, not supported by the loveLife brand.

Analysis:

The Empowered and The Disempowered are effectively two sides of the same coin. The disempowered are merely the women who receive the blame for not changing their situation. Again, there is a reproduction of the discourse of blame and stigma.

This is particularly evident in the case of Suzette. As the medium is limited in its ability to expand the characters, Suzette's character is one-dimensional and the audience does not know why she wants or even needs money in exchange for sex. There is no discursive space to explore Suzette's motivations and, again, loveLife does not explore the implications of structural inequalities and power differentials between men and women. Instead, Suzette simply goes from being "da bomb" to experiencing erasure by Jacob due to her HIV status. This reinforces negative representations and serves to further stigmatise people living with HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, as Suzette experiences the worst of the consequences, it is apparent that she has moved farthest from the loveLife value system; this system works to normalise a Judeo-Christian, heterosexist view of the world. However, while Suzette is narrowly framed, it is also clear that this set of values is also narrowly framed and does not allow for a greater exploration of Suzette's context.

Sandy, Renee and Thuli experience blame and stigma on a lesser level. Nevertheless, they each are depicted as ignorant and passive in their respective situations. It is apparent that their passive behaviour lends only to negative consequences. Again, this reinforces discourses that place women solely responsible for sexual behaviour. It also does little to acknowledge the point made in Chapter II that, placed in context, the general picture for women in South Africa shows that the inequalities are not relegated merely to HIV infection, but instead are diffused throughout South African society.

This is especially apparent in the advertisement featuring Sandy and Abram. This ad virtually erases any discursive space that could begin to explore violence against women experienced in the form of rape. While Sandy describes a non-consensual situation, Abram dismisses it by conflating issues of rape, sex and love. Had Sandy been able to "Talk About It" before they even came close to a physical relationship, she would have been able to control and direct the situation accordingly and not put herself in danger of being raped.

That loveLife constructs women through only two primary representations is highly problematic. Certainly, it constrains their ability to effect behaviour change as it relates to values and attitudes toward sex, sexuality and gender relations. If the gender constructs offered are merely reproductions of already existing constructions and if those constructions have also been shown as damaging, not transforming, in serving as barriers to safer sexual behaviour, then loveLife may be only espousing, rather than practising, their mission for transformation.

6.4 Constructions of Men

Interestingly, while there are two very clear examples of constructions of women that align positively with the loveLife brand, the constructions of men as positively aligned are not only scarce but also more ambiguous. However, constructions of men not positively aligned with the loveLife brand are rife throughout the loveLife print advertisements. Again the reason for the discrepancy will be left for discussion in my analysis.

6.4.1 The Reformed

The Reformed is a construction of a man who is undergoing a change in perspective about sexual behaviour. He formerly acted or thought in a way that was not aligned positively with the loveLife brand. However, in this construction he has been influenced in some way or by some event to change his perspective. His new perspective aligns positively with the loveLife brand and his reformation makes him a more positive embodiment of the brand. The characteristics for positive alignment are less clear in constructions of men, however it seems to be enough that they have undergone some level of change in their thinking or behaviour.

“I wanted to wait, but Abram was inside me before I could say no” Sandy 15

“Sssho...did I rape her? Now that we talk, I understand love is not just sex”

Abram 17

I return to the advertisement with Abram and Sandy. While Sandy represents the disempowered, Abram represents a young man in the process of reforming his beliefs.

At first, Abram was not aligned with the brand because of his actions with Sandy. While the question of whether a rape occurred remains vague, it is evident that Abram was willing to engage in sexual intercourse with Sandy without former discussion. This stands in opposition to the loveLife directive to “Talk About It”. There is no time for Sandy to speak up – as we know, “Abram was inside me before I could say no.” Thus, Abram is constructed as hungry for sex, regardless of the consequences. Before he is reformed, Abram acts like the “playas” that I will discuss in the next section.

Yet, as I previously stated, the constructions are not static and there is room for movement within. Since his initial sexual encounter with Sandy, some time has elapsed in which Abram has reflected on several things. First, he has questioned his behaviour, querying, “Sssho...did I rape her?” He does not answer the question directly, but Abram is now constructed as a man willing to undergo self-examination.

Next he states, “Now that we talk, I understand love is not just sex.” Since their sexual encounter, Abram has clearly had a conversation with someone about his attitudes towards sex and love. Again, it is not clear if this person is Sandy or someone else. It is clear, though, that Abram has broadened his understanding of love as no longer simply synonymous with sex. While the gap between definitions and connections of rape, love and sex is highly problematic and will be discussed at greater length in the examination of loveLife discourses, it is enough to note that Abram has begun to think about his own actions as well as his relationship to sex and love. Critical to constructions of the reformed, Abram is now open to discussion and reflection of his own actions and attitudes. This reformation allows Abram to embody the loveLife brand and becomes the primary positive construction of a man within the loveLife print campaign.

Analysis:

In looking at this construction, I return to an earlier point that positive constructions of men are in short supply and they are also not entirely clear. For example, the positive construction of an empowered woman is fairly straightforward: she is someone who has educated herself and protected herself against sexual behaviour that may put her at risk for

STI's or teenage pregnancy. On the other hand, there is not a clear, concise construction for men. This absence alone replicates an environment in which women's responsibilities are clearly defined while men's are quite vague, if not altogether absent.

While he is largely absolved of responsibility, it does seem, however, that loveLife is trying to represent Abram as a man who has become more informed about relationships. This is evidenced by his statement "Now that we talk, I understand love is not just sex." However, his preceding statement, "Sssh...did I rape her?" largely negates this. Abram is not made to take responsibility for the possibility of rape; he is only made to gain a greater understanding of how sex fits into a loving relationship. Furthermore, Abram is only able to reach this understanding after this incident. Couched within the dialogue is a replication of discourses of control in which men are not able to control their sex drive, and therefore not responsible for their behaviour. Abram is readily pardoned in the aftermath.

Finally, as mentioned previously, it is highly negligent, indeed, even harmful that loveLife, as an organisation attempting to educate around positive sexuality, conflates an incidence of rape with meanings around love and sex. Not only does this advertisement confuse the issue for young people, it also lends to a normalising of rape and gender-based violence.

6.4.2 *The "Playas"*

In my examination of gender constructs, constructions of men as highly sexual beings unable to control their sexual appetite were revealed as all too common. These constructions are replicated within the loveLife campaign and are meant to be viewed negatively. The Playas are constructed as irresponsible in their attitudes towards sex. They do not concern themselves with contraception. They also do not concern themselves with their partner and, in many cases, have multiple sexual partners. The Playas do not fall into line with living a positive lifestyle and are in direct conflict with the loveLife brand. The consequences of their behaviour and the judgement of women in the advertisements confirm that they are not in line with the brand.

"I can score with any chick I want...am I the man?" Thabo 17

"Thabo was my man, 'til I found out he's just a playa" Lindi 16

The quintessential embodiment of The Playa comes in the form of Thabo. Thabo is not just telling the audience that he can score with any chick he wants, he is bragging about this. Here we see a blatant disregard for women and a blatant disregard for responsible sexual behaviour. His rhetorical question, "...am I the man?" is, however, answered by loveLife through Lindi. While Thabo brags that he can score with any chick, Lindi contradicts this. When she finds out that he is "just a playa" Lindi rejects Thabo and Thabo suffers the consequences of being a "playa".

"I only do it skin on skin" James, 18
"I told James to wrap it or zip it" Zola, 17

Like Thabo, James is also constructed as a "playa" through his statement that he will only "do it skin on skin". From his statement, the audience learns that James will not have sex with a condom. This statement indicates that James is irresponsible in his approach to sex, and consequently, irresponsible regarding his own life as well as the lives of his partners.

Again, The Empowered woman metes out the judgement of his behaviour. In this case, Zola does not allow James to take his stance with her. Her cool retort, "I told James to wrap it or zip it" makes James' behaviour of having sex without a condom seem uncool, certainly not in line with the positive loveLife lifestyle.

"Sex is sex: show me the money" Suzette 17
"Suzette was da bomb...shame man...her sugar daddy also gave her HIV" Jacob 17

Inasmuch as Suzette reaped the consequences of her disempowerment, her sugar daddy does as well. Although he is not one of the characters who speaks in the advertisement, his behaviour also represents that of a "playa". In this context, the sugar daddy is constructed as an older man who exchanges favours of money, gifts, protection or even car rides for sex with a younger woman. Clearly, his sexual appetite is such that he is willing to give up

material goods in order to have sex. That his sexual appetite is so strong renders him “playa”, willing to give Suzette money for sex.

Furthermore, because the sugar daddy gives Suzette HIV, we also see that he is irresponsible during sexual intercourse. Had he used protection, he may not have contracted HIV. Or, he may have prevented transmission to Suzette. Again, however, that he is not an embodiment of the loveLife brand is evidenced by the consequences of having contracted HIV and having also infected Suzette.

Thabo, James and the sugar daddy have all created negative circumstances through their lack of regard for their partners and their lack of regard for themselves. They would exist as unchecked sexual creatures were it not for the empowered women who put them in line or for the consequences they confront due to their behaviour.

I argue that what each of these advertisements makes clear is that being a loveLife woman or being a loveLife man reaps positive rewards. Those who are empowered or reformed have taken time to educate themselves and make positive choices about their lifestyle. However, constructions of men and women who operate outside the loveLife brand are construed as negative. Those are the men and women who are irresponsible or passive about their sexual behaviour and will suffer the consequences. Thus, I argue that constructions of men and women in this print campaign are narrowed to whether or not they align with the loveLife brand.

Analysis:

I have little doubt that loveLife’s intentions behind constructing men in their advertisement as “playas” were to challenge constructions of men as irresponsible, sex-driven fanatics. As stated previously, these constructions simply do not align positively with the loveLife brand. However, this representation does not always work to challenge the construct, but instead may in fact replicate it. I will explore this possibility at greater length in my exploration of loveLife’s discourse of shared responsibility.

Again, however, the medium of communication and the pre-existing environment seems to have been ignored by loveLife. In other words, as a medium of communication, these advertisements provide very little space for follow-up dialogue. Moreover, they are being communicated into spaces where dominant discourses can easily overwhelm the challenges. In other words, the representation of the “playa” may only replicate dominant discourses that construct men as having unsafe sex with multiple partners because they simply cannot help themselves. Furthermore, because Thabo and James are held in check by the women with whom they interact, there is, yet again, the reproduction of discourse in which women are responsible for monitoring sexual behaviour and men are able to be irresponsible.

After reviewing the constructions of gender in the billboards as I have outlined, it is important to make two final points. First, these constructs largely represent a hetero-normative value system in which there is little room for exploration of context. The result of this is that men and women are narrowly defined and also, provide very little in the way of alternative or challenge to dominant constructs for young people to emulate. Second, however, while the billboards are seen by loveLife as vehicles to brand awareness, I argue that as advertisements, these texts convey an entire set of values to youth. That the texts are static gives youth the opportunity of an in-depth, critical reading. These representations do not simply raise brand awareness but are also resonant in leaving an impression about gender constructs that further dictate behaviour as either good or bad within the loveLife value system. I believe, also, that the power of these static texts and their gender constructs, is that they are seen, acknowledged, and infiltrated throughout other parts of the organisations. In the next section I will explore the emergence of HIV/AIDS discourses in the loveLife brand, and further explore how the gender constructs I have outlined above have been infiltrated throughout the brand.

Chapter VII: The loveLife Discourse of Consumerism

7.1 loveLife as a site for production of discourses

As an organisation loveLife is a producer of discourse. These discourses are not necessarily a reflection of lived realities, but are instead versions of reality as constructed by the organisation. This holds true with alternative and similar discourses of HIV/AIDS operating outside of loveLife. Yet, I will argue, what is interesting is how these constructions of reality become reflexive. In other words, within the organisation, these discourses take on the experience of verisimilitude and have a real impact on how the organisation functions and, consequently, how its audience is influenced. Most importantly, for the purpose of this research, these discourses also influence loveLife's engagement with gender.

In the following two chapters, I have identified and named the dominant discourses that I believe contribute to the homogenisation of the loveLife audience, which further replicates gendered inequities and, that assume sexual choice as a product for consumption available to all. Furthermore, these discourses also perpetuate the constructs of gender, as outlined in the previous chapter, that also further replicate gendered inequities.

I will argue that these are primarily organisational discourses that originate with the loveLife staff. These discourses are both supported and contested by groundBREAKERS. I have included data from the focus group to help explore how these discourses intersect with a small sampling of loveLife's target audience. In some cases they are supported, in some they are contested and in some they are simply absent. Certainly, these discourses are not static, but instead manifest differently at various locations throughout the organisation. Because these discourses are many-layered from both an interpretative and contextual standpoint and that there are many layers of complexity to each discourse, I have attempted to highlight dominant, alternative and competing discourses within the organisation.

Furthermore, I argue that none of these discourses is wholly unchallenged within the organisation. At times there are explicit contradictions of the discourses, at other times

alternative, competing discourses exist simultaneously. I have tried to give evidence of both. In the final chapter, which focuses solely on analysis, I will attempt to highlight more explicitly how the discourses I have outlined and analysed intersect with the previously reviewed constructs of gender that render men and women as either aligned or unaligned with the loveLife brand.

7.2 The discourse of consumerism: The loveLife brand as all-powerful

In this chapter I will focus on the production of what I have termed loveLife's discourse of consumerism. This is not a term employed by loveLife, but instead one that I have used to help categorise the discourses that emerged in my interviews with loveLife staff. I have borrowed the term from Eve Bertelsen, however I note that the context in which I use it is changed to focus on production of discourse as it relates to the loveLife brand.

In her examination of black advertising in the new South Africa, Bertelsen gives a cursory review of the effects of consumerism and its role in the construction of new social identities. She states:

New forms of practice and social and mental habits follow from a profound modification of the political economy, issuing in a more plastic and 'performative' sense of the self. Consumer capitalism creates its 'necessary subjects' by eroding occupation and class as determinants of identity, and ensuring that distinction is increasingly conferred by possessions and appearances. Robert Bocock puts it strongly: 'Consumption [has] become established as the characteristic socio-cultural activity par excellence of late twentieth century post-modern capitalism ... Consumption is a, or even the, major characteristic of postmodernity (1993, 77). While the world's (or indeed South Africa's) poor and unemployed may not be able to afford to buy, their desire for commodities is just as great, and their 'interpellation' by the discourse of consumerism is no less achieved.¹⁰⁹

In effect, Bertelsen argues that in selling products, consumer capitalism focuses on the driving force of consumption as a replacement of social identity; a resultant erasure of all other forms of identity occurs. I will argue, that through their decision to employ branding as a means to communicate their sexual health message, loveLife has engaged in a discourse

¹⁰⁹ Bertelsen, Eve (1998) "Ads and amnesia: black advertising in the new South Africa", in Sarah Nuttal and Carli Coetzee (eds.) **Negotiating the Past: The making of memory in South Africa**. Cape Town: Oxford University Press., p. 223

of consumerism that has effectively erased other social identities, and that has also shifted the focus of the organisation from sexual health messaging to consumer consumption. This has worked to bury gender issues under those that privilege consumer consumption and moved loveLife away from its express mission to change behaviour as it relates to values and perceptions of sex, sexuality and gender.

What is also problematic about this discourse is that loveLife assumes that consumerism translates readily from a capitalist market economy to a social health realm. Because consumerism is seen as such a powerful, driving force in capitalist markets, loveLife has simply assumed that approaching youth through a branding strategy based on consumer consumption will work equally well in a social realm. I will argue, however, that much greater scrutiny of the brand strategy needs to occur before the transfer from capital market to social market can take place. Otherwise, the brand strategy simply shifts loveLife's primary focus from one of behaviour change to one of consumer consumption. Instead, however, I will argue that loveLife has ignored this shift, and instead imbued branding with a power that suggests it can transcend into a social market realm without any difficulty (indeed, this is not even questioned). Furthermore it also imbues the brand with such power as to believe that it can reach and effect all young people in South Africa, regardless of their identity.

As loveLife sees it, they are more than an HIV education organisation working to educate young people around HIV. They are a brand promoting a product – in this case a new lifestyle. As discussed in Chapter III, brands sell products by aligning the brand with the needs (perceived or real) or lifestyle of the target audience in order to better sell the product. As a brand organisation the onus on loveLife is to create a marketable product, one that has more resonance with the target audience than with other competing brands or products. This is a vastly different directive, and perhaps an even greater task, than more traditional HIV/AIDS organisations encounter. Moreover, in building their brand, loveLife has employed a discourse of consumerism that privileges consumption above all else to support this construction. And again, the discourse has had a profound impact on the strategies and executions that loveLife employs to reach its target goals.

In my findings, the discourse of consumerism was produced primarily by the staff of the organisation. Interestingly, many of the staff whom I interviewed had a background in marketing or media organisations, and, subsequently, were already familiar with marketing discourses that view consumer consumption as their primary goal. This gives evidence of how the discourse of consumerism has affected the organisation in that hiring senior staff was often driven by those who had marketing and media backgrounds and were well-versed in marketing and branding as disciplines. More importantly, however, through the discourse, the primary staff function is to position and drive the brand in order to sell the product.

The discourse of consumerism, which creates branding as an all-powerful tool toward consumption, does make an appearance with groundBREAKERS. groundBREAKERS support discourses related to driving and positioning the brand as well as loveLife as an agent of change. However, there is some contestation with relation to the One Size Fits All sub-discourse

The Y-Centre participants do not explicitly engage in production of the discourse of consumerism. However, I have juxtaposed some of their responses with the discourse created by loveLife staff and groundBREAKERS to further explore the intersection. I will explore how the discourse of consumerism affects how the loveLife staff perceives the organisation and its audience, and also how these perceptions dictate their subsequent actions. The discourse of consumerism within loveLife manifests in a variety of sub-discourses. I have named these sub-discourses:

- *The discourse of consumerism: One Size Fits All*
- *The discourse of consumerism: Positioning and Driving the Brand*
- *The discourse of consumerism: loveLife as agent of change*

Below, I will summarise each sub-discourse and discuss how it operates within the organisation. Then I will provide a cursory analysis to inform how the discourse affects the organisation and how it resonates with its target audience.

7.2.1 The discourse of consumerism: One Size Fits All

loveLife's target market is young South Africans between the ages of 12 – 17. When asked whether they segmentise their market in any way, the answer from staff is a resounding no. According to loveLife, while they may be different in many ways, young people speak and understand the language of the brands. The discourse of consumerism, then, has created the notion within the organisation that through its link to consumerism, the power of branding is such that it will inevitably relate to and affect all South African youth. This resonates with Bertelsen's statement that, "Consumer capitalism creates its 'necessary subjects' by eroding occupation and class as determinants of identity, and ensuring that distinction is increasingly conferred by possessions and appearances."¹¹⁰ Although, in this context, the 'necessary subjects' undergo erosion of race, class and gender and are united by the powerful drive of aligning with a 'cool' brand. loveLife's Head of Information and Communications, Fiona Hodges, reflects the discourse, stating:

We don't segmentise at all. We looked at what was the common thread that ran amongst 12 – 17 year-olds, be they black, white, coloured, Indian, rural, peri-urban, urban, wealthy, poor, the whole catoot. We looked and that one common thing was that they were so aware of brands. So that's why we chose to go the brand approach. And definitely the research is saying that across the board that is something that young people all identify with.

While they may or may not relate to their target audience, there is an organisational discourse that suggests that, through branding, loveLife has harnessed the correct approach in reaching young people. The discourse of consumerism supports loveLife's hypothesis that the power of branding is such that it "fits" all South Africans between the ages of 12 – 17.

The proof, according to loveLife, lies in the research that shows young people had turned off to traditional HIV/AIDS messaging, but had not turned off to consumer culture through branding. Again, Fiona Hodges notes:

Before we launched loveLife that was the concern that people had switched off. And 95 percent awareness but still 10 percent condom usage still rates, you know, on the major upward swing, and people were turned off because we had traditional HIV/AIDS carols: condomise, protect yourself, all

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 223

of that stuff. And the common thing was that a young person across the board was listening to branded advertising and marketing. They aspired to things like Levis, Nike, Diesel – that's the message, that's really where young people are at.

Young people have not responded to HIV/AIDS messages. Young people have responded to brands that market consumer products. Within this discourse, then, the leap is made to suggest that young people respond to HIV/AIDS messages when they are communicated through a brand. It is interesting to note that it was this assumption upon which loveLife was founded. In effect, the discourse of consumerism has manifested itself within the organisation in such a way as to set as one of its primary tenets that positioning loveLife as a brand privileges loveLife over other approaches. This discourse also assumes that all young people "speak" branding language.

However, while the notion that one size fits all is supported at some sites within loveLife, there are other points of contestation.

7.2.1.a One Size Fits All: English as transcendent

One example of contestation lies with the notion that all young people will relate to loveLife's branding, in spite of the fact that it is all in English. That all South Africans can understand or want to understand English and, consequently, understand loveLife's branding messages is maintained by some but challenged by others. loveLife executes all of its youth marketing and advertising in English. Again, an organisational discourse has been created that assumes that all young people will relate to branding. Implicit in this assumption, is that communicating with young people solely in English will not be a barrier.

Again, Fiona Hodges supports the discourse, stating:

The language of advertising is English and that's how you get the aspirational brand because that's what they're all into.

She also notes that, if there are barriers to English, young people want to overcome them:

You know the young people love the billboards with the colour and they are a talking point, they do like pictures they do read them and they learn English from them. It is one of the things that is considered cool and hip if you understand the billboards. So, there is this mad rush to find the translation – did I get it right? And share that information. Which is part of the billboards is the fact that you are encouraging somebody to think about it and talk about it and phone.

So, not only does Fiona Hodges conjure an image of young people in a “mad rush” to see the latest billboard, she also suggests that they learn English from the billboards, and are regarded as cool and hip by other young people if they understand them.

However, Fiona Hodges does allow a parallel discourse to emerge that, while one size fits all youth, this isn’t necessarily the case with parents. To that end, loveLife has printed “parent materials” in Zulu, Sotho, Afrikaans and Xhosa. She claims:

The reason we did it for the parents was because we knew that there was illiteracy, or literacy problems around reading in English. So, if we’re truly going to get the buy-in it needed to be in the home, more of a home language.

Within this discourse, the belief seems to emerge that youth publications are only in English because youth can, somehow, transcend issues of English literacy, however parents cannot. Pozisa Ngema, loveLife’s School Projects Coordinator, also supports production of this parallel discourse:

All the people don’t really identify or understand what it’s all about. And it’s kind of influencing young people. When you’re living in a household where the mother doesn’t understand what loveLife is all about then you don’t go there, cause it’s about sex and you’re not allowed to go there and that’s their limited understanding of loveLife. That’s where I think we face a challenge. But now I think we’re realising that most parents were not educated about this, so that’s why we’ve translated our parent publications into Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa and Afrikaans to give them more understanding of what loveLife is all about.

With Pozisa Ngema, however, a shift occurs. She seems to acknowledge that one size doesn’t necessarily fit all youth or parents, because as she states, “All the people don’t really identify or understand what it’s all about. And it’s kind of influencing young people.” However, like Fiona Hodges, Pozisa Ngema also shifts the blame onto the parents. If

loveLife is not understood, it is due to influence of misunderstanding on the part of parents, not that the loveLife branding messages do not relate to all South African youth. Therefore, the assertion that one size fits all is maintained.

Additionally, groundBREAKERS also re-produced organisational discourse in which parents were positioned as interfering with loveLife's marketing efforts to reach young people.

groundBREAKER, Helen Sinyanya, states:

Some people have a problem with the way they are written like "Show me sex, show me the money"...Like, some parents don't get the message. Like if you are passing in the car and even me, myself, when I pass the billboards it says something else than what we bring to people. If you come to loveLife centres you come to find out some parents take it so personal like they don't want their kids to come here at the Centre because they think this is what we teach children but it is not basically it is not we are giving them choices.

Additionally, groundBREAKER Mpho Mabalane states:

I think what is a challenge getting parents to understand you know getting involved that is why we were using public leader people and trying to show them that, no, it is not about teaching your child to do sex but making them aware of sex and if you are like doing sex these are the consequences of it

Again, however, a shift in the discourse has occurred between staff and groundBREAKERS. While, the loveLife staff seems to hold that the reason that parents do not understand is primarily based on the fact that loveLife's marketing materials are not all in home languages, the groundBREAKERS production of this discourse posits that parents do understand the marketing, however, they misinterpret the motivations of loveLife as promoting sex among young people.

In turning to the Y-Centre participants, there is both support and disagreement regarding whether loveLife should only use English to speak to its audience.

A female respondent both disagrees and supports English as a medium for communication. She states:

Okay, I think it wouldn't be appropriate to everyone for it [loveLife billboard] to be written in English. But, loveLife is basically reaching out to the majority of the people, and since English is the international language.

A male respondent also disagrees and supports the use of English. He suggests:

Okay, like here in the township, like I think maybe have like the billboards like three in Xhosa and then three in English.

Finally, another male respondent argues for Xhosa to be used as a medium:

I was going to say, like, they could write it in Xhosa, because here in Langa, for example, there are only black people to read. So here there's like in Khayelitsha and Gugulethu it's only black people so they can do it in Xhosa.

However, while there is mixed support, it is significant to mention that Y-Centre participants struggled to understand some of the billboards. These are participants who spend a considerable amount of time at the Centre, where the billboard messages are displayed throughout the premises and in the surrounding communities.

In one exchange, two respondents was confused by the billboard with James and Zola:

LT: Okay, so let's go to the next one. James is 18 and he says, "I only do it skin on skin" and Zola who's 17 says "I told James to wrap it or zip it."

Male Respondent 2: Zip it?

Male Respondent 1: Yeah (gestures with hand to show putting on a condom) wrap it.

LT: There's confusion about it? Oh, not understanding what wrap it or zip it means?

Female Respondent 2: Either you wrap the penis with a condom or you put it back where it was.
(Laughter)

Male Respondent 1: Wait, which one is the girl?

LT: You tell me.

Male Respondent 1: Oh, is it Zola? First, I thought it was James. I thought that James was the girl. I was gonna say, like, okay, I see now if James is the boy.

While one respondent was confused by the language and one by the sexes of James and Zola, it is clear that there are incidences of confusion that have little to do with parental interference.

7.2.1.b One Size Fits All: But Sometimes Alterations Must Be Made

Because the discourse of consumerism within loveLife supports the idea that one size fits all, the loveLife staff seems to be somewhat conflicted in how to speak about the very real differences that do exist in the target market. In other words, because this discourse is dominant within the organisation there is little space to raise the possibility that a homogenous message may not work for all South Africans. I found instances in which both staff and groundBREAKERS struggled with this conundrum.

Thandiwe Siyongwana, Programme Officer for the loveGames, explains loveLife's approach to recruiting for loveGames:

And a lot of the schools that we touch come from disadvantaged areas, um, you know where extra-curricular activities are a privilege, where you don't get them, some of them travel on the tar road for the first time in their life. So, um, you know, just, we also have what we call a disadvantaged and an advantaged, um, priorities, or rather categories, where, um, young people from disadvantaged schools are given the opportunity to, like, start at the beginning of the league.

She also explains:

And we have, we've just introduced rugby, cricket, boxing and swimming, which are predominantly sports, sport that you would find at predominantly white schools, and it's really, it's the introduction of these sports are really, to, um, to get the integration process going, because at the moment we don't have a lot of white schools participating at the loveLife games.

Of significance, is that loveLife's actions deviate from the discourse. In operation, they have strategized ways to include students from disadvantaged areas and they have strategized to include more white participants. They have had to market the loveGames differently to different audiences in order to increase participation. Yet, while they are actually marketing differently in certain areas of their organisation, loveLife does not alter their stance that they employ a uniform message and that the target market responds to a uniform message. There is a profound incongruity caused when staff will maintain that they don't speak differently to their 12 – 17 audience, but then talk about the ways they are required to adjust their marketing to bring in different audiences.

This problem arises not only with disadvantaged and advantaged communities, but also with boys and girls. Thandiwe Siyongwana states:

...with the loveLife Games, just with gender relations, we found that a lot of young girls are beginning to participate. And that's really been a struggle for us at the beginning because girls would feel that it's not really for them, they also feel that, no they should stay home and cook and do whatever, but we're seeing more and more of them participating. And we've got girls' soccer, most have girls' soccer so that they also get those equal opportunities at the Games.

Also, Fiona Hodges points out:

We did find, and it seems to be getting easier, but when we initially launched a Y-Centre, I know this was a big one, initially there were a lot of boys coming to the Centre and the girls weren't coming and we started questioning why. And it was the issue around the parents didn't want the girls to come because they had their chores. So they go to school, because schooling is very important, but then after school they clean and cook, et cetera. And if they were now coming to the Centre and not doing their chores then their marks would also suffer too. So, they, um, were being kept away from the Centre. So it was a matter of visiting parents, visiting schools, explaining what the concept of a Y-Centre was.

While the discourse of consumerism does not explicitly state that South African youth are a homogenous block, it does contribute to an erasure of other social identities and suggests that because young people respond to branding, they will respond to loveLife in a like manner. It does not, however, provide discursive space to discuss how young people might

be affected differently by loveLife messages or why young people might respond differently or even how gender may influence access to the loveLife branding. However, this very real fact of difference among the target market cannot be entirely ignored by the organisation. There are emergent articulations and actions within loveLife that are accountable to the heterogeneity of South African youth. So, while the discourse of consumerism within loveLife is dominant and does not account for the heterogeneity, the actions taken by loveLife to market differently to advantaged and disadvantaged schools, to white schools and black schools, to boys and to girls does inevitably act as a challenge to the discourse.

Analysis:

Choosing the brand approach

In explaining why loveLife is sold universally to young people as a brand, loveLife's Head of Communications, Fiona Hodges, explained that young people were turning off to other messages, but not to branding. That young people would respond to consumer culture, however, was confirmed by preliminary loveLife research. So, loveLife chose branding as a strategy to reach young people, and, consequently began to privilege a discourse of consumerism within the organisation to support the choice of the brand. In doing this, loveLife made two primary assumptions. The first is that all young people will speak this "brand" language and respond in a uniform manner. The second is that branding in a capital market realm translates readily to a social market realm. There is an assumption that when young people respond to a brand they respond not just to the product, but also work to further align their behaviour and lifestyle with the brand.

The first assumption, that there is essentially a homogenous "South African" teenage market that is united in its understanding of branding language is erroneous. The diversity of contexts based on language, ethnicity, class, race, culture, geographic location and gendered mores within the country would certainly seem to argue against this. However, more importantly, loveLife's own actions also contradict this dominant discourse. While it may not be acknowledged, all young people cannot respond similarly to loveLife's brand message. Because of this, loveLife has taken action and, in practice, they do talk to different markets differently. The allowances made for the disadvantaged teams speak to this as do the inclusion of "white" sports such as cricket and rugby. Additionally, loveLife has faced a

problem in recruiting young women to participate in their sporting events and at their Y-Centres. Clearly, young women are not responding exactly the same as young men. These examples make it apparent that discourses of consumerism within loveLife are lacking specifically because they treat their target market in a way that suggests that one size fits all.

The second assumption, that the brand technology translates readily into a social market realm is also flawed. Certainly, I do not argue that young people are turned off to brands or to marketing. However, I think it is important to make a distinction between product and brand lifestyle. Do young people who buy Nike shoes also buy the Nike branding that suggests they embody the lifestyle of a professional athlete or do they buy Nike shoes because they think the shoes look cool? Either way, in the case of Nike, it is more important that people buy the shoes because the end goal is to produce a monetary profit. However, for the loveLife brand to succeed, young people must buy into the entire notion of a brand lifestyle. For loveLife to be successful, young people must not only respond to brand language, but also change their behaviour to align with the messages of the brand. That young people may be picking and choosing the parts of the loveLife brand they wish to incorporate into their lifestyle seems to be a possibility that exists only outside of loveLife's hegemonic discourse of consumerism. Again, I am not suggesting that loveLife's brand messages have fallen on deaf ears, nor am I suggesting that consumerism is not a powerful motivating tool. However, I do believe that loveLife needs to pay stronger heed to the distinction of consumerism in a capital market and consumerism in a social market. Because, while consumerism is indeed powerful, it is not necessarily proven that the loveLife brand has successfully created consumer demand for young people to fundamentally alter their sexual behaviour.

Mere assumptions that behaviour change will occur through association with the brand not only underestimate the savvy nature of a youth market that takes what it wants and leaves the rest behind, but it also underscores loveLife's inability to question whether the power of brands has an effect on behaviour change. Instead, the assumption that loveLife's approach works is unquestioned and pervasive within the organisation. Thus, organisational discourse that creates consumerism and branding as all-powerful tools in reaching their market has blinded loveLife to the realities of the market.

English as transcendent, Parents as the enemy

Focusing on either English or parents as barriers to understanding loveLife, I contend, actually obscures the larger issue. In essence, the issue is, again, whether branding can reach all South Africans. Can one size fit all? Because the discourse of consumerism positions branding as such a powerful tool there is no room to question this notion. The result is that loveLife produces excuses to account for its failure to reach all South Africans. I am not suggesting that loveLife has consciously attempted to obfuscate this issue. I do suggest, however, that because loveLife has experienced confusion amongst its target audience about the loveLife messages and resistance from young people to align with the loveLife brand, there has been a need to locate culpability outside loveLife. This is evidenced in how this discourse is modified within loveLife. For example, in some instances because parents are not literate in English, they have a hard time understanding loveLife messages. In other instances, it is because loveLife is misinterpreted by parents as a promoter of sex among young people.

That the brand message may be interpreted differently based on the very diversity of the audience is not considered. In some cases, English may be a real barrier – but not just with parents – even a Y-Centre participant had difficulty understanding the “wrap it or zip it” ad that uses colloquial speech uncommon in many South African contexts. In other cases, attitudes and relationships to sexuality based on race, gender, class or even religion may determine why loveLife is seen to promote sex for young people. However, because the discourse of consumerism venerates loveLife’s brand strategy, the discourse has firmly entrenched the idea that one size fits all. loveLife seems unable to examine these possibilities and instead places the blame in the wrong places.

We speak the same to everyone (but we don't)

Through the discourse of consumerism a version of reality within the organisation has been created. This version of reality contends that loveLife markets uniformly to its target audience. Yet, there is another reality that suggests otherwise. As discussed previously, this is evidenced by loveLife’s recruiting approach with the loveGames. This highlights how the production of a hegemonic discourse has cloaked other realities that directly challenge the

hegemony. In this case, the reality is that loveLife has been obliged to speak differently to its target audience to increase participation.

However, what also must be raised about discourse that creates a uniform brand and expects a uniform response is that it may further entrench positions of dominance and subordination in the target audience. For example, in returning to Fiona Hodges, she states, “I know this was a big one, initially there were a lot of boys coming to the Centre and the girls weren’t coming and we started questioning why. And it was the issue around the parents didn’t want the girls to come because they had their chores.”

Because the discourse effectively erases social identities, it does not look at gender differences. In many South African contexts, in addition to their school responsibilities young girls, much more than young boys, are often required to contribute to household chores that include cooking, cleaning and taking care of younger children. In merely visiting parents, loveLife has done little to understand or alleviate the girls’ situation. Instead, by visiting the parents and pressuring them to allow girls to go to the Centre, their solution may inadvertently contribute to the burden of existing schedules and responsibilities for young girls who may now be required to do the chores and attend the Y-Centre. loveLife has not catered to the needs of young women, but instead to their own needs to increase participation, or rather, to increase consumption of the brand. Again, however, this problem is obscured by the discourse. Participation as a driving force in loveLife will be explored in the next section. Overall, however, it is apparent that while the staff has created a discourse that imbues branding with the power to reach all South African youth and impact on their sexual behaviour, the reality is that the diversity of youth within South Africa can simply not respond to a uniform message. The reality is also that changing sexual behaviour does not necessarily translate into a consumer product, and operates outside the realm of consumerism to which Eve Bertelsen refers.

7.2.2 Discourse of Consumerism: Positioning and Driving the Brand

Inasmuch as the discourse of consumerism has created branding as an effective tool in reaching young people, loveLife has set positioning and driving the brand as its primary goal in order to drive consumption of the brand. To begin with, rather than explaining the

organisation's scope of services to its audience, loveLife has spent a great deal of time "positioning the brand". The purpose of positioning the brand is to make clear the "product" they sell, but also to make clear how this product fits into the consumer's world. Once they have positioned themselves, loveLife then has to work to "Drive the Brand". The purpose of driving the brand is to raise market awareness of the product, maintain the effectiveness of the brand and ensure that the target audience continues to "buy" the brand product. They must do this through a variety of channels. Much organisational discourse within loveLife is centred on positioning or driving the brand.

loveLife positions itself first and foremost as, "...a new lifestyle brand for young South Africans promoting healthy living and positive sexuality." In loveLife parlance, the shorthand for this definition often becomes "positive lifestyle brand." The creation of loveLife as a brand has, according to this discourse, been powerful in both how the brand relates to young people and in how the brand affects their behaviour. The discourse suggests, again, because loveLife has positioned itself as a brand it is best-equipped to relate to young people. Additionally, the discourse has also created loveLife as a pioneer in its approach that it is able to affect behaviour change in young people.

7.2.2.a Positioning the brand: The brand approach as pioneering

Throughout the organisation, there is a perception created through discourse that loveLife is a pioneer in South Africa in youth HIV/AIDS education. Staff view both the media used and the messages employed as radical, new approaches that are successful in reaching young people and changing their sexual behaviour.

First, approaching HIV/AIDS awareness through branding is touted as revolutionary. loveLife portrays itself as harbingers of a movement. Fiona Hodges states:

But then we use the media because that's what young people...I meant it's a pioneering programme and the reason being is that it's a brand approach to HIV/AIDS awareness. So you use the media to get the message and awareness out. And that's a strength because young people are actually taking notice of it – they haven't switched off to it.

Again, Fiona Hodges reinforces the discourse of consumerism that suggests that because young people respond to media, that they will respond to a sexual health message delivered through the media. Somehow, because loveLife is the only organisation that calls itself a brand, this has seemed to also create the perception that loveLife is the only organisation employing media to deliver their messages to young people. The discourse creates the idea that they are pioneers in the field, without a great deal of examination of others who may also be using media, but who may not be calling their organisation a brand. Simultaneously, however, while loveLife portrays itself as a pioneer there is also recognition that they came into being based on the existing infrastructures of other organisations. Fiona Hodges explains:

In fact, just going back to another strength, the reason we've been able to move at such a fast level is the fact that we didn't have to recreate things that, or build up a new infrastructure. So there are three organisations that run loveLife as a programme of theirs ... It's Planned Parenthood, Health Systems Trust and the Reproductive Health Research Unit. So, for example the Reproductive Health Research Unit does the research and evaluation as well as implementation of adolescent friendly clinics. And Health Systems Trust is the infrastructure, IT, finance, legal entity as well as the media. That's the managerial type. And Planned Parenthood does the outreach, so the call centre, the Y-Centre, the franchises, the groundBREAKERS.

Even though in practice loveLife employs pre-existing organisations to carry out tasks that replicate work that other organisations have been doing for years, the discourse does not allow space to suggest anything other than loveLife as “the” pioneer in the marketplaces.

7.2.2.b Positioning the brand: The brand that relates to young people

loveLife's discourse of consumerism posits that, as a brand, loveLife is best-equipped to relate to young people. Both staff and groundBREAKERS create this discourse. In order to relate to young people, loveLife must be like young people in how it communicates. This has affected loveLife in that it works hard to be perceived as young and hip by its target audience. Discourse creates loveLife as more than a delivery vehicle for sexual health messages, but also as a site for entertainment and fun. As Cheryl Abraham, editor of S'camto print, states:

And um...we decided to make it a very entertainment based medium because we found that young people don't want to be taught in their free time. So, um, we try to package it in such a way so that it looks like an entertainment magazine and they get all their entertainment, their book reviews, quizzes, all that kind of thing but also within that there is packaged a very comprehensive sexual health or lifestyle message.

While Cheryl Abraham is speaking specifically about S'camto, the newspaper execution for promoting the brand, she shows the real effect that the discourse of consumerism has had on loveLife executions. loveLife has packaged itself to be cool and fun. What should be highlighted about the discourse of consumerism is that there is an underlying assumption that the audience will absorb the sexual health message along with everything else that the brand has to offer.

Part of this assumption is also tied in with loveLife's strategic approach to delivering the sexual health message. loveLife sees itself more like a cooler, wiser friend than like a parent. Personified, the brand is described almost as an anti-parent, more a friend that you love to hang out with rather than a controlling didact. Discourse of this sort is very common within loveLife. For example, Cheryl Abraham states:

I think that [their approach] has worked for us because young people see parents as their enemy. Because we are so open and straightforward about everything but um...young people see us as sort of on their side because whenever we are descriptive we give you all the choices and hope that you obviously make the better choices but we are very descriptive.

Here loveLife aligns itself with young people by disassociating itself from parents. According to Cheryl Abraham, parents are "the enemy". Positioning loveLife as an anti-parent is likely an effective strategy as young people often find themselves at odds with their parents or with figures of authority. Again, parents are raised in an adversarial fashion.

However, what should be emphasised is that whether it is successful, this is not simply a strategy at loveLife, but an organisational discourse internalised by its staff. Rather than being a possible strategy for educating around HIV/AIDS, this brand positioning is perceived more as a solution than as a strategic approach. Tshepang Mashawu, loveLife's

Information Coordinator, evidences this. Her statement is matter of fact in its delivery, emphasising her complete belief in the approach:

For example, while I was growing up if my mom came to me and told me not to do it I would go ahead and do it, but if you give me a certain way but my uncle was my friend and played soccer with me and when we talked about issues and stuff I was more prone to listen to him because I was free to ask questions and I would take what he was going to tell me. And if I knew I wasn't going to do it I could ask questions why I wouldn't do it. That is how young people are, they rebel when you tell them what to do. So that is one of our strengths and also that our approach is not to say "Don't have sex because it kills" or "Don't have sex because you will get HIV or AIDS and you are going to die." We are not using scaring tactics, we are giving them facts about issues about HIV/AIDS, STI's, teenage pregnancy, and also um...alternatives and also um...and how they can um...how they can um...go out and seek information about these issues we are sort of arousing their curiosity surrounding these issues rather than scaring them away from it.

In Tshepang Mashawu's case, she has personalised the positioning. She relates her experience growing up to the loveLife positioning. She is certain in her conviction that the uncle-friend, who rendered no judgement on her actions, but instead allowed her room for discussion, was a better guide than her own mother against whom she rebelled. For her, loveLife has become this uncle-friend – an excellent guide for any adolescent. What Tshepang Mashawu creates through her statement is not aggrandisement about loveLife's approach, but instead a reinforced and internalised belief, brought forward through her own experiences, in the brand positioning.

What is also created by both Cheryl Abraham and Tshepang Mashawu is the notion that loveLife gives the "facts" to young people. Cheryl Abraham says, "we are so open and straightforward about everything," and Tshepang Mashawu states, "We are not using scaring tactics we are giving them facts about issues." The assumption is that parents, while possibly well intentioned, are likely to obscure facts or put their own agendas before those of their children. Alternatively, loveLife is much more like a friend. This friend has only the interests of the young people at heart and is, therefore, better positioned to give the "facts".

What is also assumed is that loveLife's version of "facts" about the choices for young people are fundamentally sound. Indeed, loveLife prides itself on being able to present "all the

choices” to young people. In other words, it is able to be all-encompassing regarding all the situations young people may encounter and all the choices they may make. There is no room for questioning of loveLife’s “facts” within this discourse or their choices.. Instead this discourse turns the focus to loveLife’s effectiveness as a communicator with young people. That they have taken on the role of the uncle-friend as described by Tshepang Mashawu, or the anti-parent as described by Cheryl Abraham, has made them more equipped to deal with young people. They merely give “all the choices” and hope that you make the “better choices.”

While the facts presented are not necessarily questioned, one alternative discourse does emerge regarding loveLife's ability to deliver the facts. Cheryl Abraham contends:

I would say that there have been occasions that we had to sort of...how can I put this...um...if for example we are criticised openly and publicly whether it be here or in the States by our funders we often have to be toned down or...just shy away from because we are so dependent on funders. I think that definitely is a weakness because we can't really stand up and say, well this is what we do so we are going to do it.

This is a challenge to the organisational discourse that suggests that loveLife can present all the choices and talk straight to young people. However, it is not an attack on the brand per se, but rather an acknowledgement that the organisation can reach limitations in what it does because of those who control their funding. Interestingly, however, this only reinforces loveLife’s alignment with its target audience. Inasmuch as young people are not necessarily financially independent and, therefore, controlled by their parents, loveLife also encounters a similar problem. It also reinforces loveLife’s belief in itself as a pioneer in the marketplace, working through myriad difficulties (e.g. funders) to reach the target audience.

Thus, loveLife has positioned itself not only as a cool brand that young people want to listen to, but also a brand that is best suited to speak to young people, because it uses the language of branding – a language to which all young people relate.

7.2.2.c Positioning the brand: The HIV/AIDS brand that doesn't mention HIV/AIDS

What the discourse of consumerism and the subsequent positioning of the brand also create is an absence of discourse around HIV/AIDS within the brand positioning. Although loveLife is an organisation whose primary goal is to reduce HIV transmission by 50 percent among young people, loveLife only positions itself as a “positive lifestyle brand”. There is no mention of HIV or AIDS at all. This relates back to Fiona’s fear that young people were becoming “turned off” to traditional HIV/AIDS messaging. Therefore, loveLife’s brand position has not been explicit in promoting itself as an HIV/AIDS organisation. That is not to say that the target audience is unaware of loveLife’s messages around protecting yourself against HIV. Nor is it to say that loveLife does not work very hard to educate young people about HIV/AIDS. However, it is not a component of the brand positioning, other than through a veiled mention of “positive sexuality”. Fiona Hodges evidences this again in one of our interviews:

LT: If you actually had to describe loveLife to a potential investor or partner in 2 or 3 sentences, what would you say?

Fiona: New lifestyle brand for young South Africans. It’s the world’s largest HIV/AIDS youth programme. And that’s where we specifically mention HIV and AIDS programmes, otherwise it’s always the lifestyle brand for young South Africans.

Mention of HIV/AIDS is relevant only when talking to a potential investor or partner. It is my assumption that branding oneself as, “the world’s largest HIV/AIDS youth programme” holds more weight with an investor audience than with young people. However, with all other audiences, but mostly with their primary target audience, Fiona Hodges reiterates that, “it’s always the lifestyle brand for young South Africans.” So, while it is at the core of their mission to reduce HIV transmission, it is not tenable within the brand positioning to raise either HIV or AIDS due to the fact that young people turn off. In effect, the discourse of consumerism creates concern most strongly around positioning the brand so young people will enjoy it and align themselves therein. That HIV/AIDS may turn young people off to the brand then justifies its absence in the brand position.

This brand position has also infused itself throughout the organisation. This was evident in a conversation I had with Helen Sinyanya, a loveLife Groundbreaker:

LT: And what has loveLife taught you about HIV/AIDS?

Helen Sinyanya: HIV/AIDS...we don't talk about HIV/AIDS a lot. But we are promoters who say to protect yourself of getting HIV positive and that you have to use condoms and you have to like, if you don't want to get pregnant you have to use protections. Yeah and use a condom."

While my question is meant to gauge what kind of knowledge on HIV/AIDS Helen Sinyanya has taken away from her interaction with loveLife, she does not actually answer my question. Instead she states, "we don't talk about HIV/AIDS a lot". She caveats her statement with an acknowledgement that groundBREAKERS do promote safe sex and advocate the use of condoms both for protecting against STI's and pregnancy. Yet, primarily Helen Sinyanya is echoing the brand position that promotes a "positive lifestyle" not one that promotes education around HIV/AIDS. In this case, it is interesting how, in Helen's reply, the discourse of consumerism helps to eliminate the question asked.

7.2.3 Driving the Brand

As stated previously, once they have positioned themselves, loveLife then has to work to "Drive the Brand". Again, the purpose of driving the brand is to raise market awareness of the product, maintain the effectiveness of the brand and ensure that the target audience continues to "buy" the brand product. To drive the brand, loveLife uses various executions to raise awareness through television, newspaper and radio. loveLife also partners with other organisations or corporations in an effort to deliver their message. Indeed, the discourse of consumerism dictates that the goal of branding is consumption. Within loveLife, consumption is achieved through driving viewership, readership and participation in all brand activities. What is created out of this discourse is a goal focused on mass consumption of the brand. Again, this is discourse that is created almost exclusively by loveLife staff.

7.2.3.a Driving the brand: Consumption through Viewership and Readership, Community Participation

Examples in which the goal of the brand is to drive participation are found with loveLife's television producer and loveLife's newspaper editor.

Nicola Petersen, Executive Producer of loveLife television spoke at length about how content development is driven at loveLife. She states:

Well, we um...we obviously...um...look at the outcomes we want to have we look at the top [twelves] and the weeks research. We do a lot of formative and post evaluation of the series all around the country. So we gather data from that and the questions we asked about what they found interesting and challenging, what types of topics we should explore when it comes to relationships and teenagers. And we obviously look at different formats of television and try to see if it is working at this time and try to capture a sense of what is dramatic for the audience or either we are being too didactic and it comes across as just being more lifestyle.

The television that loveLife is producing is driven largely by audience response. Furthermore, loveLife's method of evaluating the effectiveness of their television programming is essentially a method employed by corporate television programming: evaluation of the numbers, and feedback from target audiences on what they liked and what they did not like. As Nicola states, they review what the audience finds interesting and challenging and work from that point. They also strive to be entertaining, rather than didactic, in order to keep audience attention.

loveLife's S'camto newspaper supplement employs a similar approach. Cheryl Abraham states:

So we started out with a four-pager, which is very sexually health focused going into sexual issues: masturbation, after sex, contraception, so much more sexually health focused than this one. Um...we then after a few months decided it wasn't working because we weren't getting any feedback from our readers and found that it was because they thought that they were being educated so they looked at it – too heavy and threw it away. So we re-launched this year into an eight-pager where we put a lot more entertainment into it and tried to make it much more friendly to read.

In this case, an initial approach that did not garner a larger readership was replaced with a version that was more centred around entertainment than education. In each of these cases, levels of viewership and readership – consumer consumption – drive the content choices for television and radio. They were not driven by responses to behaviour change or sexual health messages. Furthermore, in each of these cases, the assumption produced by

loveLife's focus on consumerism is that the young people inevitably incorporate the underlying sexual health message that accompanies the entertainment. Thus, what becomes paramount is not the sexual health message, but driving consumption. Here, then, is a direct example of the impact of the discourse of consumerism impacts on the functioning of the organisation.

This is also made clear in how loveLife relates to community participation. loveLife works to drive consumption of the brand within communities through a variety of executions. As outlined in Chapter II, there are loveLife Y-Centres, loveLife Tours, loveLife Trains and the loveLife Games. Again, however, through the discourse of consumerism, driving participation is created as the primary goal, and loveLife drives their participation largely through entertainment. Tshepang Mashawu, Information Coordinator at loveLife gives an example of this. She explains:

Right now, what do we call it...it is a project where we get South African celebrities like musicians, actors, performers, DJs, ah...we because most of the times when we have our events especially in our outreach initiative you find that we...we...we... we use them as people that attract young people so what we do we will invite a performer to come and perform and we...we...we take that singer and get them to sing and in between we get them in between rehearsals to communicate the loveLife message in the hope that young people know they see them on TV and when they see them talking to them about sexuality, self-esteem, about being motivated and taking care of themselves enough to make sure that whatever choices, that they are making in love they are positive choices, relevant and good for them. And when they hear them say that they take it seriously and internalise it and they believe that if he can do that I can also do it.

In this case, loveLife hopes to drive participation through entertainment personalities known to be popular with young people in the hope that they will internalise loveLife's sexual health message.

7.2.3.b Driving the brand: Play the games, get the stuff

Finally, it is also evident not only through the loveLife discourse of consumerism, but also through their practice, that loveLife drives the brand by offering adolescents access to material goods, spaces for play and entertainment. Identifying with the loveLife brand does not have to start with discussions of sexuality or HIV/AIDS, but rather with offers of

“stuff”. Of course, it is clear that these are merely points of entry into the brand, and the sexual health messages follow afterwards.

Accordingly, when I asked loveLife staff how most young people get involved with the brand, the answers primarily focused on the entertainment at the Y-Centres or on the brand accoutrements offered by loveLife. Pozisa Ngema, School Projects Coordinator, discusses young people’s reasons for becoming involved with the brand, she notes:

And then comes the clothing, you know when, when they see someone wearing a loveLife T-shirt and they also want to get one. Not knowing what loveLife is all about, but just because a person is wearing a loveLife T-shirt and it’s just something they think is cool, then you know they make an effort to get it and then they become exposed to loveLife.

What is worthy of note in Pozisa Ngema’s statement is that it is not necessary for young people to have an understanding of the loveLife brand. Indeed, all that is important is that loveLife is perceived as cool and that young people want to be associated with it. loveLife comes to hold a certain cachet for young people. The idea is produced that, while they may not even know loveLife, there is a general perception among adolescents that it is hip and cool. Subsequently they want to be associated with this hip, cool brand. Thus, if there is a T-shirt, they have to have the T-shirt in order to “be” the brand, in order to associate with the status that the loveLife brand affords young people.

loveLife Groundbreaker, Kabelo Ndlovu reinforced this discourse when asked about why young people attend Y-Centres:

And the sporting courts that we have because most young kids like basketball so they come here for the basketball and others are here for the computers...and when they come we just tell them thanks for coming but we just can’t give you the computer skills without being trained you know you just can’t leave the house without permission. They have to go to the workshops for positive lifestyle and after you have graduated you can go to any company that you want to go to. We no longer do that because the kids are flocking...we just send the person to the company that he or she wants to be in and then where there is a space in the workshop room okay we say, this group is finished, the group that is playing basketball can come to the workshop.

Again, the point of entry into the brand is largely driven by entertainment. groundBREAKERS assert that young people attend Y-Centres because they want to play basketball or work on a computer. They are not driven by sexual health workshops. Indeed, while the sexual health workshops were once mandatory for young people to become involved at the Y-Centre, they have now become a secondary consideration because the Centres have become so overloaded and there are not enough workshops held to accommodate the increasing population. Again, driving the brand through mass participation appears to take precedence over imparting information about sexual health. Through this discourse, which places a premium on consumerism, entertaining and holding the attention of young people is a primary concern and maintaining a status of cool seems to take precedence.

7.2.3.c Driving the brand: Partnerships

Inasmuch as traditional marketing drives to increase consumerism have seen a trend toward leveraging partnerships to promote their brands, so too has loveLife followed suit. Again, through the influence of the discourse of consumerism, loveLife has sought partnerships in a further attempt to drive consumption by its target group.

In one instance, loveLife promoted itself through a Levi's promotion. Fiona Hodges describes this:

...we have been running a competition for Levi's, for Levi's shoes, footwear, and the number of um...competition entries that we've received it is just phenomenal – absolutely phenomenal. Um...so you can just see that again they have bought into the brand that they understand that one because that's what they are responding to. So, those are the kind of things that get people hooked into it because there is the chance of winning and that's how we are reaching people across the board.

Fiona Hodges overlooks that young people may have been motivated much more strongly by the Levi's brand and by the acquisition of Levi's shoes. Instead, it is assumed that competitions such as this one further tie the participant to the loveLife brand.

What is made readily apparent by the discourse of consumerism is that because loveLife has positioned itself as a brand, it intends to function as a brand. Brand discourse produces an

environment in which positioning the brand and driving the brand become the primary goals of the organisation.

7.2.3.d Driving and Positioning the brand: Y-Centre participants

As stated previously, discourses of consumerism were not explicitly re-produced by loveLife Y-Centre participants. Indeed, that is not to suggest that they are not influenced by the loveLife brand. However, there was simply no acknowledgement of loveLife as a brand or of themselves as consumers of the brand. Furthermore, loveLife Y-Centre participants did not echo sentiments created by staff that loveLife is cool, young or hip. Indeed, their motivations for involvement with loveLife were centred primarily on access to loveLife resources. However, it is important to make the distinction that young people were not asked specifically about being drawn to the brand, but instead about their reasons for coming to the Y-Centre. Still, however, throughout the focus group the discourse of consumerism, as created by staff and groundBREAKERS, was absent amongst participants.

In the table below, both boys and girls express their reasons for being drawn to the brand.

Table 7.1 Participation at loveLife Y-Centre

Participant	Statement	Reasons for attending
Female Respondent 2	Well for me, I heard about it from friends telling me about what's happening and so I was just, decided to come and check it out . . . Well it keeps me away from the streets. You know it keeps me occupied a lot of the time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Heard from friends ➤ Keeps her off streets ➤ Keeps her occupied
Male Respondent 2	Uh, right, so like I heard about it from my friends, but like I didn't know what loveLife was. I came here the first day and I found out the stuff going on and what I could be doing. So like when I came here the first day they told me you had to join a group, like so when I came here I learned you could do stuff like playing basketball.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Heard from friends ➤ Could play basketball
Male Respondent 3	You know, I'm staying around here so that's why I came. They told me to come and, like, I'm a peer educator, and I like to come here cause sometimes I don't have something to do, and I was staying around	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stays near Y-Centre ➤ Has nothing else to do ➤ Fun and games

	the corner at my house, so, like, when the centre was established, like I come here for fun and play – games and stuff.	
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The primary reasons for attending the centre seem to be: influence from friends, the ability to play games at the centre, and lack of anything better to do. The female respondent also noted that it keeps her off the streets, while Male Respondent 2 pointed out that the proximity of the Y-Centre to his house drew him there.

None of the respondents mentioned that they were motivated to come to the Y-Centre because they perceived loveLife as young and hip.

Analysis:

I will argue that the discourse of consumerism lends credence to the loveLife positioning that it is the organisation best-equipped to relate to young people, even though it may not be. Brand discourse has produced an atmosphere in which both staff and groundBREAKERS preach the merits of the approach and, furthermore, internalise the discourse. Both Helen Sinyanya and Tshepang Mashawu evidenced this. Tshepang Mashawu had made loveLife equivalent with her uncle-friend, while Helen Sinyanya answered a question on HIV/AIDS with a loveLife brand positioning. The result, then is that loveLife staff have created a hegemonic discourse of consumerism that is not questioned. It is also internalised to the point that staff re-produce the discourse through personal experience and also that they silence other discourses in lieu of this consumer discourse. The discourse has worked to create total acceptance of the loveLife brand positioning and strategic approach with both staff and groundBREAKERS.

This is also evidenced by the underlying assumption that the “facts” that loveLife presents to young people and the “choices” it provides are relevant to the lives of its target audience. This, however, also relates back to the erroneous assumption that all South African youth must be treated as a homogenous group. A cursory examination of the status of youth in South Africa reveals that the word “choice” is problematic itself. Structural inequalities and lack of access to resources strengthened by poverty, gendered power differentials, racial

power differentials and HIV status are only a few of the factors encroaching upon a young person's ability to make certain choices or even implement those choices. Again, however, the assumption produced and supported by staff through a consumer discourse, is that all young people can relate to a brand in the same way. Therefore, the discourse mistakenly creates a reality that a choice presented by loveLife to one young person is exactly the same choice presented to another young person living in a completely different context. Again, in doing so, considerations of gendered power differentials are completely ignored by the organisation and, therefore, attempts to change pervasive values and attitudes towards gender cannot be sufficiently challenged.

In the same way that loveLife has created discourse around the power of the brand approach with young people, it has also created discourse around the importance of driving the brand. Because driving the brand is paramount, the loveLife staff speaks often about the importance of viewership, readership and mass participation. Effectively, these are loveLife's markers of consumption. Staff also speak of the benefits of leveraging the loveLife brand through partnerships with other brands and organisations. In creating this discourse, loveLife shifts its primary goal of reducing HIV transmission among youth by 50 percent to a goal of mass interaction with the loveLife brand. It seems that loveLife would argue that the latter reacts to create the former. Again, the assumption is made that interaction with the brand will ensure behaviour change.

And, again, I would argue otherwise. I believe that discourse that focuses loveLife on driving the brand actually obscures the goal of curbing HIV transmission by replicating a silence around HIV/AIDS. In order to drive participation, the loveLife staff focuses on creating brand interactions that are infused with entertainment and fun. Whether it is with the loveLife newspaper supplement, its television shows or community events, loveLife entices young people with entertainment. It also entices young people through access to material goods and spaces for entertainment and play. Still, loveLife contends that their sexual health message is inculcated throughout all of their brand interactions. However, in driving the brand, rather than the message, the staff also reveals a slippage in privileging the message over the entertainment. This was evidenced by Petersen, loveLife's television producer, who showed that television viewership was up, but left the tracking of behaviour

change to the researchers who may reveal positive numbers five years down the line. Cheryl Abraham, who described a newspaper supplement that revamped its entire approach based on readership response, also evidenced it. Finally, it was evidenced by the decreasing importance of sexual health workshops at Y-Centres as they work to accommodate greater numbers of participants.

That loveLife is garnering a significant response to these entertainment based mediums is not necessarily in question. However, the organisational discourse created by staff leaps to the conclusion that mere brand connections with young people are creating behaviour change. This discourse also seems to preclude loveLife from asking questions around whether young people interact with the brand because it gives them t-shirts, gives them a place to play basketball, provides a good television show or whether it is because they are wanting to change their behaviour. The responses from the loveLife participants suggest that motivations are centred much more strongly on the fact that loveLife provides some access to fun and games.

Finally – and perhaps most importantly – what is most problematic about the brand discourse that the staff is producing is the resultant lack of discourse around HIV/AIDS amongst staff. In privileging discourse around positioning and driving the brand to increase consumption, I would argue that the loveLife staff has shifted the focus of the organisation from HIV/AIDS prevention to its efforts to position and drive the brand. Talking about the brand as it relates to young people's lives seems to have replaced talk about HIV/AIDS as it affects young people's lives. Brand discourse, then, seems to replicate silences around HIV/AIDS.

In replicating these silences, I would argue that loveLife also renders itself unable to challenge pervasive values and attitudes as they relate to sex, sexuality and gender relations. In Chapter III, which defined branding and discussed its evolution in the post-Industrial world, I raised the question of whether the translation of a brand from a capitalist, market-driven tool used to sell products, to being a tool of the social marketer whose goal is to affect behaviour change within society could be successful. The answer seems to be no. loveLife's goal to change behaviour as it relates pervasive values and attitudes to sex,

sexuality and gender cannot be reached when goals are centred on selling a product that refuses to name HIV/AIDS on the basis that it may turn off some of its target audience. How can young people be expected to challenge gender constructs that influence their relation to HIV/AIDS, when neither is named? loveLife attempts to veil its mission as an organisation focused on HIV/AIDS because it fears that this will turn young people off. Yet, in doing so, loveLife also constricts its own ability to effect behaviour change and also replicates the silencing around HIV/AIDS that has proven so problematic in the past.

7.3 The discourse of consumerism: loveLife as agent of change

Inasmuch as loveLife perceives itself best-equipped to effect behaviour change in young people, the organisation has created a discourse in which they see themselves as a site where young people experience a conversion through their interaction with the brand. This discourse suggests that, as consumers of the loveLife brand, young people will become cooler and hipper. Furthermore, they will come to know their “true” selves better and face brighter futures. I have termed this sub-discourse “loveLife as agent of change”.

This discourse is created by loveLife staff through multiple examples. However, the discourse of loveLife as an agent of change rests most strongly with groundBREAKERS. Each groundBREAKER with whom I spoke attested to a personal conversion through their association with loveLife. Y-Centre participants supported the first part of this discourse that suggests they align with the brand through various points of entry. They did not, however, fully support the discourse that suggests they have experienced a conversion as a result of their interaction with the brand.

7.3.1 loveLife as agent of change: Have a hipper, cooler, sportier life

As a site for change, the discourse posits that the more young people associate with loveLife, the more likely they are to have a hipper, cooler life. In a quote used earlier, Fiona Hodges claimed:

You know the young people love the billboards with the colour and they are a talking point, they do like pictures they do read them and they learn English from them. It is one of the things that is considered cool and hip if you understand the billboards. So, there is this mad rush to find the

translation – did I get it right? And share that information. Which is part of the billboards is the fact that you are encouraging somebody to think about it and talk about it and phone.

Fiona Hodges constructs loveLife as such a hip, cool brand that merely understanding their billboards infuses young people with the very same hip and cool status amongst their peers.

Cheryl Abraham reinforces the discourse when asked about the strengths of loveLife. She states:

...I think from the point of view of young people it is so fresh, so new, it is hip, it is happening. You know the label they can identify with that it is encouraging them to be themselves and to be better. A brighter future isn't just a don't do this, don't do that.

What Cheryl Abraham purports is that young people are drawn to the fresh, hip identity of the brand, and they themselves want to take on that identity. She also suggests that the brand encourages them to "be themselves and to be better." Association with the brand will not only reinforce their current identities, but will also lend to improving those identities. She also states, "A brighter future isn't just a don't do this, don't do that." In this statement, Cheryl Abraham is referring to the brand positioning that doesn't dictate to adolescents. The statement, furthermore, implies that identifying with the brand will lead to a brighter future. Again, while neither the "positive lifestyle" nor this "brighter future" are specifically defined, the discourse creates the idea that association alone will ensure both.

Thandiwe Siyongwana, loveLife's Programme Officer for the loveGames states:

And young people love that brand-driven programme. They love identifying it. The point is that when young people think of their association with loveLife they should think of equal opportunities and informed choices, um, young people are vibrant, have leadership qualities, all these things are associated to the loveLife brand.

Through her statement, Thandiwe Siyongwana suggests that the brand itself represents equal opportunities and informed choices. It also helps young people to know that they are vibrant and have leadership qualities. It is assumed that young people will begin to shape their own identity based on their consumption of the brand.

7.3.2 *loveLife as agent of change: The groundBREAKERS*

As examples of successful conversions, loveLife has provided young people with living embodiments of their brand – the groundBREAKERS. For the sake of review, groundBREAKERS are loveLife’s, “national network of 18 – 25 year old community mobilisers or what loveLife calls ‘groundBREAKERS’, working to mobilise local action to prevent HIV/AIDS, STI’s and teenage pregnancy, thereby extending loveLife’s reach at a local level.”¹¹¹

The name alone suggests that loveLife groundBREAKERS are pioneers in breaking new ground, thereby embodying the loveLife brand position. Beyond this moniker, the loveLife groundBREAKER symbolises the brighter future implicit in discourse that represents loveLife as an agent of change. The loveLife staff assumes that young people not only want to emulate the groundBREAKERS, but that they also want to become groundBREAKERS. Furthermore, staff and groundBREAKERS alike suggest that loveLife has acted as a critical agent in affecting change in their lives.

First, as much as the brand is like a wise friend whom young people are willing to listen to, groundBREAKERS are the literal translation of this wise friend. Thandiwe Siyongwana explains:

Um, we use groundBREAKERS, I’m not sure if you’ve been told about the groundBREAKERS. But they are our 18 – 25 year-olds who are unemployed and...um...have finished matric, and, and...um...they just want a year to do something and so loveLife takes them on and trains them through a motivational programme, a skills development programme and takes them through all these things, and then they are then used in all our initiatives to communicate, they are really community mobilisers, and then they would then interact on behalf of loveLife to young people because you know, “young people communicate to young people” always works better because then, you know, they are able to relate to each other and you can get more out of it.

¹¹¹ **LoveLife groundBREAKERS Training Manual Draft**, October 2001, developed by Melanie Pleaner, loveLife groundBREAKER Management, PPASA.

In essence, groundBREAKERS go through a series of trainings in which they are indoctrinated with the loveLife messages and the overall brand. Then, as the discourse suggests, “‘young people communicate to young people’ always works better”.

Yet, the perception is not only that groundBREAKERS are ultimately better equipped to relate to other young people, but also that young people will want to be like them. Nicola Petersen, producer of the loveLife television series “S’camto groundBREAKERS” maintains:

And people aspire to be a groundBREAKER...they want to become part of the programme, they want to know how to become a groundBREAKER. Whether people judge the behaviour change I don’t know because it’s hard to judge.

In the case of the groundBREAKERS featured on television, Nicola Petersen explains:

...we shot in a place called Woodspruit near Blyde River Canyon. It is an actual mountain range, the contours of where we are the houses are over here (pointing to map of area). They lived here and all of the activities happened in a 10-kilometre radius and they had to do...they did various things like mountain climbing to white-water rafting, hiking, horseback riding.

It should be noted, however, that the S’camto groundBREAKERS on the television series are different from the youth volunteer corps that works for the organisation. Nevertheless, each is viewed within the organisation as providing positive role models that young people will want to follow.

7.3.3 loveLife as agent of change: Experiencing a conversion

loveLife staff and groundBREAKERS provide myriad examples of the loveLife conversion experience. From evidence of mass participation to state-led surveys to personal conversions experienced by groundBREAKERS, loveLife fully supports discourse that the brand acts as an agent to effect change in the lives of young people and to convert them into improved selves with more positive futures.

Fiona Hodges is effusive in her support of this discourse:

We need to see statistics are now standing up ... um ... supporting that ... um ... the latest survey ... um ... that was released this past month by government ... um ... ante-natal clinics, that is the people you get your number one AIDS figures, is saying that young peoples' incidence is now decreasing. Um, and it was quite a marked decrease – a 5 point something percent decrease – um ... which they are attributing to the affects of the youth organisations and the massive youth campaigns, which is quite clearly loveLife. They didn't come out and say that.

Thandiwe Siyongwana offers her version of what happens to youth that participate in the loveLife's motivational programmes:

For instance, our motivational programme, throughout, across all our loveLife programmes, the biggest part or the biggest component within the loveLife programmes, because it's within that programme where young people are empowered, their self-esteem is worked on and they identify who they are, and it creates some sort of self-awareness within them, and through the motivational programme, they are also able to see beyond their circumstances and see beyond what's happening now and they're able to see the future and they're able to see their goal and their vision and they're able to work towards that. And I think they suddenly have a reason to live and move on, because I think that young people in disadvantaged areas are so entangled in the spiral of hopelessness that they cannot think beyond their circumstances and I think that our motivational programme helps them to stretch and go that far and go beyond, and that's where they realise their purpose, they realise who they can become, they're not just part of their circumstances.

Finally, as stated previously, each groundBREAKER with whom I spoke testified largely to undergoing personal conversions.

Table 7. groundBREAKER conversion experiences

Name	Experience
Kabelo Ndlovu	And the thing I can say that I have learned from loveLife is to practice my mind to mental rehearsal to put positive things here and give positive things to the people and it is still what I am trying to do. I am even reading the international books now I wasn't used to reading books, I used to read magazines but now I am reading international books and rehearse my mind and have a vision and also applying that to young kids and even with my friends. When I am with my friends and when they hear something said about me when I am with my friends I sit with them I end up talking about positive

	<p>lifestyle and kind of motivating them. I don't know why or if it is because of the job I am doing because almost everyday and every hour I am positive to things.</p>
<p>Helen Sinyanya</p>	<p>Helen: I'd like to say that loveLife has changed my whole entire life by going to these trainings and development and knowing who you are. Now I can say I am worth it.</p> <p>LT: How did they do that? What was it that brought about this change?</p> <p>Helen: Okay. You kind of see how people act like we had this [responsible] development training that has to develop you inside and get to know who you are, the person who you are and the person you thought you were but you're not. It was very interesting and you can actually go out and implement to the other kids who we really are. That was basically it that was the change.</p> <p>LT: So who did you think you were and now you know who you really are?</p> <p>Helen: Yeah, it is funny, cause you think you are somebody else but when somebody says something to you, you think, "No, I am not the person that I thought I was."</p>
<p>Mapula Tshabalala</p>	<p>Um ... I think since I've become a groundBREAKER it has been a great experience for me and I think I have changed a lot. I was not a person who always – very quiet and I was very shy. I didn't want to talk to people but now I am able to do that because now I know I am a groundBREAKER. I am supposed to say what I feel and I must walk the talk because most of the time I go to school I must workshop and motivate young people. I know that I am a role model and I must practice what I preach. And with this training that loveLife gives us – because if there is a training all groundBREAKERS are there – so we learn a lot and we gain a lot of experiences from other groundBREAKERS from other provinces. I am able to do what I know is right. And most of the time I practice what is [] so trainings and loveLife has changed me a lot.</p>
<p>Mpho Mabalane</p>	<p>... on weekends for instance I also get invited to like, cause like people around my area before like, I was sitting at home like not doing anything and then since I have also got involved, it's like I made an impact. And also my community, my peers, and those who are older than me they kind of take me as [] because they come for advice and all that ... So, like on weekends I like to spend it there with them.</p>

So, while staff members merely speak of the conversion, the groundBREAKERS all talk about undergoing their own personal conversion based directly on their interactions with loveLife. Three of the four groundBREAKERS talk about no longer being the people they were prior to loveLife. One now reads international magazines and one is no longer shy and quiet, but instead a role model in the community. And all attest to being better equipped to impart their information to other young people and to effect change in the lives of the young people. In effect, consumption of the brand has brought on the desired changes.

7.3.4 Y-Centre participants: Production of loveLife as agent of change

While Y-Centre participants do view loveLife positively, they did not provide many examples to support productions of loveLife as an agent of change that had created a better future for them. That young people are drawn to the brand, or even simply drawn to the Y-Centres through promises of entertainment and brand party favours is supported through the conversations at the focus group. Moreover, they also readily admit that they have learned information through their interaction with loveLife. However, there was less discourse in the focus group around whether loveLife had provided a brighter future.

Again, I include the table from the previous section to highlight the Y-Centre participants' reasons for attending the Y-Centre.

Table 7.1 Participation at loveLife Y-Centre

Participant	Statement	Reasons for attending
Female Respondent 2	Well for me, I heard about it from friends telling me about what's happening and so I was just, decided to come and check it out . . . Well it keeps me away from the streets. You know it keeps me occupied a lot of the time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Heard from friends ➤ Keeps her off streets ➤ Keeps her occupied
Male Respondent 2	Uh, right, so like I heard about it from my friends, but like I didn't know what loveLife was. I came here the first day and I found out the stuff going on and what I could be doing. So like when I came here the first day they told me you had to join a group, like so when I came here I learned you could do stuff like playing basketball.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Heard from friends ➤ Could play basketball

Male Respondent 3	You know, I'm staying around here so that's why I came. They told me to come and, like, I'm a peer educator, and I like to come here cause sometimes I don't have something to do, and I was staying around the corner at my house, so, like, when the centre was established, like I come here for fun and play – games and stuff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stays near Y-Centre ➤ Has nothing else to do ➤ Fun and games
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The primary reasons for attending the centre seem to be: influence from friends, the ability to play games at the centre, and lack of anything better to do. Female Respondent 2 also noted that it keeps her off the streets, while Male Respondent 2 pointed out that the proximity of the Y-Centre to his house drew him there.

None of the respondents mentioned that they were motivated to come to the Y-Centre because they perceived loveLife as young and hip.

Respondents also stated some of the positive consequences of their interactions at the Y-Centre. These are laid out in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Association with the loveLife Brand

Participant	Statement	Consequences of Attendance
Female Respondent 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Um, for me, I do motivation, I do debating and I help motivate discussion ➤ And, you know it's helped me to grow as a person. ➤ When I was at SRH [Sexual and Reproductive Health], we learned, like what makes a relationship and what breaks one ... And that sex in a relationship. You don't always have to have sex ... And if you both are gonna have it, contraceptives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Does motivation and debate ➤ Grow as a person ➤ How to be in a relationship ➤ To use contraception
Male Respondent 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Well, like, before I came here, I don't like talking about HIV/AIDS. Then when we went o the SRH [Sexual and Reproductive Health] group, there, we got to know about HIV/AIDS and STI's, so like I learned so much on it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Now open to talking about HIV/AIDS ➤ Helps to debunk myths

	<p>➤ Yeah, a lot of myths, like even in the township, people tell you – People with AIDS, like they take a syringe and they draw that blood and they put it in the [oil] and if you take that oil it's going to give you AIDS. But now I know that all kinds of groups can get AIDS, but when I first came here I thought that was not true that it was just some.</p>	
Male Respondent 2	<p>Yeah, I heard something that is like about motivation. Like, they motivate me. Because my friend always talks about myths. Always lies and talks something that never happened. So that when I came here I learn about AIDS in a workshop. I learn about HIV/AIDS and other stuff and I know how to do it, to put the thingy on the thing.</p>	<p>➤ Is motivated by loveLife</p> <p>➤ Debunks myths</p> <p>➤ Learned how to put on a condom</p>

In one instance a participant explicitly states that loveLife helped her to “grow as a person.” Two participants note motivation as a consequence of their attendance. Two male respondents stated that attending the loveLife Y-Centre has helped them to debunk myths around HIV/AIDS and one has become more open to talking about HIV/AIDS. A male and a female respondent each claimed to have learned about the importance of contraception, while the female respondent also stated that she has learned how to be in a relationship as a consequence of her interaction with loveLife.

While respondents did note some of the positive consequences, none claimed that loveLife had created a better future for them. Although the statement made by one female participant that attending the loveLife Y-Centre had helped her grow as a person was certainly indicative that she did attribute that growth to loveLife. Additionally, while I did not explicitly ask participants about their desire to be like any of the groundBREAKERS at the Y-Centre, neither did they raise the topic.

Analysis:

My criticisms levelled below effectively affirm those levelled earlier. Once more, there is an underlying assumption that adolescents will take in all parts of the brand – including

messages around sexual health. Because the loveLife brand seeks mass consumption through participation, it drives this through a promotion of brand entertainment and accessories. It does not drive the brand through an emphasis on sexual health messages. The result, I would argue, is that the discourse of consumerism creates an identity focused less on practising positive sexuality and more on consumer culture.

However, what the consumer discourse also suggests, is that if adolescent South Africans do align with loveLife, they will inevitably create a brighter future for themselves. The discourse of consumerism has created a version of loveLife as a brand imbued with such power that it is able to entirely change lives and identities. This is problematic for two primary reasons. The first is that this shifts the loveLife goal. Rather than working to change adolescent sexual behaviour, loveLife is working to create better futures.

The second is that the promise of a “better future” is indistinct and unrealistic. Is this better future created because less people are contracting HIV or is it created because young people have gained, through loveLife, access to material goods and the status of cool amongst their peers? Furthermore, how can loveLife promise a better future through mere brand association to youth who may be in circumstances that disempower them? Thandiwe Siyongwana spends a great deal of time speaking about how loveLife has, through its motivational programme, offered “disadvantaged youth” the ability to “see beyond their circumstances ... to see the future and they’re able to see their goal ...” Yet, what happens after loveLife drops its message of envisioning a better future? Does the better future simply materialise through the will of the brand? In touting loveLife as the vehicle through which a brighter future is obtained, loveLife not only has a disproportionate sense of its power in the lives of young people, it is also remiss in making this promise to young people.

Somewhere in this discourse, however, loveLife seems to have confused consumption of the brand with behaviour change. That there is a great deal of response to the loveLife brand is not in question. Yet, their measures of success seemed based on little else than this participation. Indeed, in referring to the government’s report on ante-natal clinics, Fiona Hodges makes the leap that loveLife is credited for behaviour change. She is quick to point out recent reductions in transmission rates among young people as, “quite clearly loveLife.”

Yet, participation in loveLife's brand activities alone does not translate into behaviour change, particularly when loveLife privileges the entertainment aspects of the brand over the sexual health messages in an attempt to garner more participation.

As shown by the Y-Centre participants, alignment with the brand is largely based on access to resources and entertainment. Playing basketball and using the computers when there is nothing else to do seem to factor more strongly into attendance at the Y-Centre than association with the loveLife brand. While one participant noted that she had grown as a person, none of the participants suggested that loveLife had created a brighter future for them. Again, it seems that loveLife staff have internalised the discourse in such a manner as to believe that not only does branding positively affect behaviour change it also is able to promise a better future for young people. Certainly, this research is limited in being able to track the progress of young people at the Y-Centre. However, statements such as these appear grandiose in light of the Y-Centre participants' lack of response about the impact of loveLife in creating better futures.

Additionally, discourse that depicts groundBREAKERS as the people whom young people wish to emulate also seems to exaggerate. Again, none of the Y-Centre participants mentioned groundBREAKERS as an influence in their participation at the Centre. Of course, groundBREAKERS may have many positive interactions with adolescents in South Africa. However, they may be viewed less as embodiments of the brand and more as people lucky enough to have an engaging job. Again, however, more research is necessary to determine how young people are interacting with and being influenced by groundBREAKERS..

Finally, in examining loveLife groundBREAKERS as the embodiment of the loveLife brand, I would argue that loveLife is not creating alternative realities for the majority of South African youth.¹¹² On television, groundBREAKERS are shown in beautiful surroundings partaking in exciting adventures. At Y-Centres, groundBREAKERS are described as people with influence in their communities and with access to many different worlds through

¹¹² This idea originated with Msokoli Quotole when I interviewed him in relation to loveLife's marketing materials.

loveLife trainings and meetings that take them all over the country and all over the world. If young people make the “better choices”, if they make the loveLife choices, will they all be able to have lives like those of the groundBREAKERS? As Nicola Petersen states, “Well I mean obviously you can only have 10 young people in a series as opposed to everybody, which would be fantastic.” Only 10 people can be chosen for the television series and only 600 can be employed around the country in various capacities. It doesn’t seem like loveLife can make the promise of a better future. And in doing so, again, loveLife ignores the very real inequalities that South African adolescents face.

Certainly, however the “conversions” as experienced by the groundBREAKERS must be closely examined. It is clear, that groundBREAKERS have experienced a form of conversion as a result of their interaction with loveLife. Yet, upon closer examination, it is important to understand what the conversion has resulted from. groundBREAKERS, as described by loveLife, are previously unemployed youth between the ages of 18 – 25. If chosen as groundBREAKERS, these young people experience real changes in their situations. From being unemployed to travelling throughout the country, meeting and interacting with other young people, being regarded as members of a community and having access to all of the brand accessories, it is not surprising that loveLife groundBREAKERS attest to having experienced a conversion. They experience greater confidence in themselves, and are able to envision a brighter future for themselves. However, at no point do any groundBREAKERS speak of a conversion based on sexual behaviour change nor do they speak of a conversion in how they view gender relations. I would argue that the conversion experienced by groundBREAKERS is based more significantly on their increased access to resources and power through a consumer culture, and much less on access to sexual health knowledge as it impacts on changing behaviour around sex, sexual behaviour and gender relations.

While I am not arguing that loveLife has had no effect on the lives of young people, I am arguing that discourse that positions loveLife as able to change lives and identities is problematic and focuses on the wrong messages. Moreover, while this is supported by groundBREAKERS, the reasons should be further explored. I also contend strongly, that the discourse of consumerism does not work to affect changes in gender relations or in

pervasive attitudes to sex and sexuality, but may, in fact, further replicate those pervasive values and attitudes in the attempt to drive mass participation. Again, this is related to the fact that gender was largely absent from discussions with staff and groundBREAKERS and, instead replaced by discourses concerned with consumerism. This erasure of social identities, but in particular, gendered identities precludes loveLife from spearheading significant transformation in gender relations, particularly as they relate to HIV/AIDS.

University of Cape Town

Chapter VIII: The loveLife Directives: Discourses of Choice, Communication and Shared Responsibility

8.1 The loveLife messages

As shown previously, loveLife is positioned as a young, hip brand that is best-equipped to relate to young people and that changes their lives for the better. Existing simultaneously are the loveLife directives that, they contend, allow them to reach and change the lives of youth in South Africa. According to loveLife, these directives are message platforms crafted as a result of research conducted with their target audience. The directives that I will explore are the loveLife messages centred on choice, communication and shared responsibility.

While they are message platforms, I will also argue that, within loveLife, they extend to create discourses unto themselves. As discourse, they shape loveLife's views of communication, choice and shared responsibility, and influence how the staff and groundBREAKERS relay their views to young people. I will also argue, however, that the messages as communicated through these discourses confuse the target audience as a direct result of the intersection between their lived realities and the discursive realities as presented by loveLife.

8.2 "Talk About It": Discourses of communication

In every advertisement, loveLife's tagline is displayed. The tagline reads, "Talk About It." In displaying "Talk About It" on all of its materials, loveLife works to emphasise the critical importance of communication as a step toward behaviour change. In essence, the underlying message that loveLife hopes to communicate is that if loveLife can succeed in getting youth, parents, and everyone to just "Talk About It" stigma around HIV/AIDS will begin to disappear and young people will be better equipped to examine their behaviour and face their future.

According to loveLife, this tagline emerged out of research that showed that stigma and fear around HIV/AIDS issues prevented people from speaking about HIV/AIDS. In a direct challenge to discourse that led to silence around HIV/AIDS, loveLife chose the "Talk

About It” tagline. However, within loveLife this tagline has developed into something more than a directive for communication. In employing “Talk About It” as a key message, loveLife has created itself as the primary site at which communication has been promoted and fought for. In essence, a discourse has emerged within loveLife staff that creates loveLife as the principle catalyst for bringing sex and HIV/AIDS issues into the open in South Africa. The discourse has fashioned loveLife into a revolutionary organisation that works to combat the conservative elements that threaten open communication about sexuality. Whether those elements are parents, governments or business partners, the loveLife staff believes that the organisation is a forerunner in battling those conservative elements through its ability to “Talk About It”. Cheryl Abraham states:

I think it is openness. I think that loveLife brought it out in a country where the word sex was taboo and if I can just look at my experience just working with the *Sunday Times*, which is quite a conservative newspaper and the challenges we faced so there, so now we have become so open and so fully into what we do.

Thandiwe Siyongwana also reinforces this discourse:

I think the main strength of loveLife is the fact that, um, it encourages people to talk about it, and it’s such a strength, cause it’s something that society is not ready to do and yet, it’s been proven in other countries, like Uganda, that it is the way to go about it ...

This discourse was not prominent in my interviews with any groundBREAKERS, however, it did take shape with Y-Centre participants. For example, in looking yet again at Abram and Sandy, the following discussion took place:

LT: Okay, there is disagreement in the room. What do you think this says about Abram?

Female Respondent 2: That, okay, Abram didn’t really know that, okay, since Sandy said that she couldn’t say no and Abram didn’t know that, okay, maybe, before okay if she had said no then he probably wouldn’t have done it so now he’s thinking to himself that if a girl says no and I actually go ahead it’s rape, so now he’s worried that, oh my gosh I did actually rape her? Maybe she did say no afterwards.

LT: Okay. Anyone else? What do you think about Abram?

Male Respondent 1: I think he must first ask a girl, "Are you sure you want to do this?" Do you know the consequences of doing this?

Female 1: Communication.

LT: So communication is important in a sexual relationship?

Male Respondent 2: He was learning after it happened that that might be rape.

LT: So how did he get the knowledge afterwards?

Male Respondent 2: Maybe he went to a loveLife Centre.

What is privileged in this discussion is the importance of communication. However, more than that, it is clear that among the participants, loveLife is seen as the site where communication takes place.

In another exchange, loveLife is also positioned as a catalyst for communication about HIV/AIDS:

LT: Tell me, what kind of things have you guys learned here at the centre?

Male Respondent 1: Well, like, before I came here, I don't like talking about HIV/AIDS. Then when we went to the SRH [Sexual and Reproductive Health] group, there, we got to know about HIV/AIDS and STIs, so like I learned so much on it.

LT: So, for example, what? What did you learn?

Male Respondent 1: Uh, well there's that thing that you can get AIDS from a mosquito bit. But from here I learned that you can't get AIDS from them.

LT: Anyone else?

Male Respondent 2: Yeah, I heard something that is like about my friend always talks about myths. Always lies and talks something that never happened. So that when I came here I learn about AIDS

in a workshop, I learn about HIV/AIDS and other stuff and I know how to do it, to put the thingy on the thing. (Laughter from group.)

Thus, we see Y-Centre participants re-produce discourse that loveLife is the catalyst for communication.

Analysis:

That loveLife sees communication as critical to the lives of young people is made very clear, not only through their tagline, but in many subsequent expressions by loveLife staff. Furthermore, loveLife's creation of itself as a site for communication is supported by staff and Y-Centre participants alike. However, it should be noted that communication in isolation does not necessarily impact on behaviour change. Again, this idea is a re-production of education discourses that assume knowledge equals power. But, more importantly, loveLife seems to have shifted focus from the importance of what is being communicated to the importance of loveLife as a site for communication.

Because loveLife has taken an apolitical stance by positioning itself as an older friend who does not tell you what to do, communication may be understood as important but there remains a great deal of ambiguity in loveLife's talk and vast room for interpretation. For example, in reviewing the conversation with the Y-Centre participants, it is very evident that loveLife is viewed by the participants as a place where communication takes place. However, while communication itself is privileged, the participants remain very conflicted over definitions of rape. There is little consensus about whether Sandy was raped, or even if she was responsible for the incident, and there is a complete absence of discussion of incidences of violence against women. All participants seem to know is that there was not enough communication between Abram and Sandy and so both must accept culpability for the situation. Similarly, the knowledge that the participants have garnered from loveLife about HIV/AIDS also reveals that there is an absence of discourse concerned with how pervasive attitudes and values towards sex, sexuality and gender relations impact on transmission of HIV.

your partner, et cetera, and it's important to talk about every issue and share responsibility. So going into sexual relationships there are two of you and it's important that you both are, you know, communicate openly and honestly. Share the responsibility for discussing contraceptives if that's the way you're wanting to go. And right down to if you do get pregnant it's both of your responsibility. So take responsibility for the choice that you have made. And then the last one being positive sexuality. Being aware that sex and sexuality are different. You are a sexual being. Being aware of your feelings, that kind of thing. Because being aware of that, you know you don't have to be the extrovert but you can be confident in yourself. And being happy with your sexuality leads to the positive sexuality. And if you add those in your sexual decisions, choice and sharing responsibility, they lend to positive sexuality.

Delay, Reduce, Protect

So, delay your sexuality until you have information to make an informed choice and that you share responsibility for it. Delay the next time you have sex until you do have protection. So it's not a dictatorial campaign, it's delay until you are ready for your next sexual encounter or delay your first sexual encounter until you are ready. And the reduce element can be reduce the number of sexual partners, reduce the number of times you have unprotected sex. And protection is protect yourself emotionally and physically and protect yourself from going into a situation in which you know you're going to have to make an informed choice or feel pressurised into doing something that you're not keen on. And protect yourself by putting on the condom. Have the contraceptive. And, once again, nothing is dictatorial in that. It's all about information and choice.

I will argue that each of these primary messages is based on an underlying discourse that is based on choice. Essentially, within this discourse, loveLife perceives that all young people are in an environment in which they are faced with life's choices and if they make the best choices they will have a better future. In effect, and also in collusion with the loveLife discourse of consumerism, sexual choice is positioned as a product choice available to all.

This discourse is produced by loveLife staff, but also contested therein. It is also re-produced and supported by groundBREAKERS and Y-Centre participants.

As stated previously, sustained within the discourse, is the notion that if one chooses wisely, a better future will follow. According to Cheryl Abraham:

loveLife does not specify what the “It” in “Talk About It” means. The assumption, then, is that “It” stands for anything. Talking about HIV/AIDS may help to break down myths and decrease stigma. Yet, there is an assumption that talk alone is enough to lead to this breakdown. Furthermore, combined with loveLife’s positioning as a cool, hip brand that doesn’t evangelise, there is not necessarily room for loveLife to express an opinion or a political belief on its approach to HIV/AIDS or even on its approach to gender relations. Therefore, young people are left with an understanding of the critical importance of communication, yet a gap remains in loveLife’s subsequent ability to change behaviour based on its refusal to take any sort of moral or political stance. The ramifications of the overlap in these discourses is that young people are left talking about it, but are also left to create their own conclusions. Moreover, it would also seem that loveLife is paradoxically positioning itself as the site where communication takes place, while simultaneously making absent discourses that are critical to changing behaviour, especially as related to gender.

8.3 The Sexual Health Message: Discourses of Choice

I have raised the loveLife “sexual health message” often, but have yet to explore it at length. In effect, throughout its first year, loveLife focused on promoting three primary sexual health messages to its target audience: Informed Choice, Shared Responsibility, and Positive Sexuality. These messages were based on research that articulated the barriers to sexual behaviour that young people experience. As loveLife grew and as its messaging became more sophisticated, the messages to: Delay, Reduce and Protect were also incorporated.

In the following excerpts, Fiona Hodges defines the messages:

Informed Choice, Shared Responsibility, Positive Sexuality

Informed choice is around go and get sexual information so you can make a choice for yourself. We don’t dictate what is the right or wrong choice because everybody is different. And I think that’s where we also are very different so that would be strength as well. We don’t dictate. You know, young people buy into us because we are not the motherly fatherly figure that says this is the way it should be. It’s rather the friend. So everything in life involves a choice. The choice to get up in the morning and get out of bed. It’s your choice to have sex or not. And make an informed choice. Obviously we know a lot girls get raped, et cetera. But, you know, as much as possible make a choice that’s an informed one. And the second element, shared responsibility ... it’s respect for peers, adults,

Yeah, pretty much I guess the way the [statistics] of the whole loveLife scheme of things is about you know, well-rounded people, um ... well-informed I think very much from the information point of view where we are coming from and we are very much about promoting you know a good self-esteem, believing in yourself, making good choices, having hope for the future – it is what you make of it, so ... it is kind of what we ... the philosophy that we follow.

Pozisa Ngema states:

I'm the type of person who strongly believes in choices, you know? And when I got here it was something that I never had when I was growing up, so I thought, you know, wow, if something like this, then I'm 100 percent behind it.

Interestingly, and inadvertently, Pozisa Ngema reveals a fissure in the discourse. She says, "...it was something that I never had when I was growing up". It is not made clear what it is that Pozisa Ngema did not have – was she missing choices or the ability to discuss choices? However, what it does make clear is that the loveLife staff is confronted with having to acknowledge that sexual choice might not be available to all South African youth. For example, in outlining the informed choice, shared responsibility and positive sexuality platforms, Fiona Hodge recognises, "Obviously we know a lot of girls get raped, et cetera. But, you know, as much as possible, make a choice that's an informed one." Fiona Hodges also quotes loveLife's own research that revealed:

...young people say that they have problems getting condoms. 20 percent say that they are too expensive, 18 percent say they are too embarrassed, and 23 percent say they battle to get condoms. If one is looking at sources for condoms we see that pharmacies are most likely with urban, more wealthy, white and Indian. But clinics are more likely to be rural, poor, African and coloured.

So, while loveLife presents the choices, such as making informed choices about wearing a condom during sex, loveLife research also reveals that young people may simply not have the choice to get a condom based on their geographic location or their race. Yet, there does not seem to be discursive space to further explore this fissure in the discourse in which the choices, as loveLife has presented them, may not be open to all. loveLife, instead seems to lay responsibility on young people for the choices they make in their lives. In the following

exchange, Pozisa Ngema is directly confronted with this challenge and comes out to support strongly that choices are available to all:

LT: You were talking a lot about just the idea of giving young people choice, and that they always have a choice. What about, you know I'm just thinking about situations with some young people, you know, who may be in poverty or may be in the kind of situation where they're in an abusive household or whatnot and they feel so little ability to have choice, or that it might compromise their safety, or anything like that. Can loveLife reach them? Do you think ... or is that just the audience that loveLife just can't focus on, I mean they have to just focus on the people whom they can reach?

Pozisa: I think every young person has a challenge of some sort in their life, and, it's all the choices that they make, that will really influence the outcome of the situation. So, you know, we encourage them to call the thethajunction's toll-free number if they're needing to speak to someone. Or our Centres, there are counsellors there who can help, and by helping, we just hope that they'll make the right choices. We always give them the options that there are. You know and so you make the choice. You can't force them to make a particular choice, even though it will influence, or even if it will, what's the right word? Compromise their safety or their well-being, you always have to tell them that this is what there is and the choice is theirs really.

In this exchange, Pozisa Ngema equalises all young people by suggesting that every young person faces challenges. While this is true, she ignores that there isn't necessarily parity amongst young people, particularly as choice pertains to gendered identities, in access to resources or power, and therefore there also is not parity in decision-making abilities. Her discourse instead shifts from focusing on the inability, perceived or otherwise, of young people to make certain choices in their lives (such as the choice to wear a condom) to loveLife's inability to force young people to make the right choice. This seems to result from the fact that loveLife positions itself as the hip, cool friend who will not tell you what to do, but will merely present choices. That these discourses have focused more strongly on young people's aversion to being told what to do, has shifted focus away from the actual ability of young people to make the choices that loveLife presents.

This shift is also largely present when choice discourse is produced by groundBREAKERS. groundBREAKERS strongly support the loveLife discourse of choice, particularly as it

relates to discourse that positions loveLife as a neither interventionist nor domineering in its communication strategies that relay the “choices”. Helen Sinyanya states:

I have learned a lot about how to live a positive lifestyle. How a young person has choices because loveLife is not saying “Do it”, they are saying “Do it but you have to protect yourself”. Because when you are telling a child don’t do it, obviously a child will want to do it, but if you are telling her you can do it but this is going to come up after doing it, basically what I have learned at loveLife ... is giving you choices and you have a life you can choose what you can do with your life. It’s make better choices in life, that’s basically it.

However, similar to staff members, groundBREAKERS choice discourse seems to have stymied their ability to further discuss barriers that may prevent young people from making choices. Instead, the discourse again shifts from the barriers young people face in making choices to choice created as simply a matter of free will. The following exchange with Mapula Tshabalala confirms this:

LT: In South Africa there is a high level of violence against women so sometimes that may put a young girl in danger if she tries to ask her boyfriend to put a condom or things like that. How do you address violence against women when you talk to young people?

Mapula: I always say to young people, especially girls, that they must stand up for what they believe is right. It is time for us to wake up his opinions because they know that they don’t or there are people who are always expressing what they feel or they know we always don’t want to lose them. We must always think of yourself in order for you must be true to yourself. Know what you want, knowing what your reason when you are making a choice. So, even if I run this workshop I spend most of the time, females are not speaking [with] or what you are or not speaking a lot. But females are always, they don’t want to talk, knowing they are afraid of the boys, I don’t know why. So it starts from them not wanting to talk in front of people because if you don’t want to talk you don’t want to share our opinion, you’re not able to say no to your boyfriend. So, it is very very important sometimes knowing who you are first. Liking yourself, self-respect, talking to yourself. Start from there, within you and then you will make others know who you are and knowing what you want so all your communication is one: knowing yourself, loving yourself, respecting yourself and others will start respecting you and standing up for what is right for you and it will help you at the end of the day.

Again, rather than confronting issues of violence against women, the discourse shifts to young women making conscious choices to be vocal, know themselves better and assert

themselves. As Mapula Tshabalala produces this discourse, it is evident that not doing this – speaking up and asserting oneself – has consequences, and the consequences are a result of the young woman’s choices, nothing more.

It is clear that this discourse has infiltrated down to Y-Centre participants. However, the discourse has created confusion over issues of culpability. In other words, if young people, particularly young women, have these choices, and can make these choices are they then responsible for negative consequences when they make the wrong choices? The participants seem to struggle with this notion and the conflict emerges in the following examination of the Abram and Sandy advertisement:

LT: Tell me, what does this say to you about Sandy? What do you think about Sandy when you read this?

Female Respondent 2: Um, I think Sandy didn’t want to have sex when you read that. It says that Abram was inside her before she could say no, so if she had a chance to say no, she would have said no.

LT: Did you want to say something about that?

Male Respondent 2: Yeah, like, I disagree with her, because, like the moment Abram started taking her clothes off she could have said no. Abram, before he took his clothes off, she would have said no.

LT: Okay, so you think once a woman has taken her clothes off she can’t say no?

Female Respondent 1: (Laughs and nods head) Once she says no than that’s rape.

LT: Okay, at any time?

Female Respondent 1: Yeah.

Male Respondent 2: But here it says, “before I could say no”. He was inside me before I could say no. He watched him taking his clothes off, why doesn’t she say no right then? (Much noise from all members of the group.)

Female Respondent 2: Um, there is such thing as thinking.

Within this dialogue is couched a great deal of conflict. Female Respondent 2 seems to sympathise with Sandy, however, she doesn't seem to have sufficient words to counter Male Respondent 2's assertion that, at many times in the encounter, Sandy had the choice to speak up and say no. The power of the choice discourse seems to overwhelm any acceptance or excuse that other issues may have been at play in the situation beyond Sandy's choice to speak up or keep silent. It ignores power differentials between men and women, particularly as they may be present in sexual situations.

The discourse also further confuses Female Respondent 2 again when looking at the advertisement with Suzette and her sugar daddy. The following exchange highlights this:

LT: Okay, what do you think? Did Suzette have a choice?

Female Respondent 2: Well, Suzette did have a choice. And she chose to go for the sugar daddy.

LT: Okay.

Female Respondent 2: Or maybe she thought she didn't have a choice, you know? Her sugar daddy provided for her needs and whatever she needed, so now, at the end, there has to be a payback. So, he's probably like, okay, it's payback time so come on. And she probably felt like, okay if I don't do this, this is all going away or this is all going to waste or I'm never going to be like this. I'm never going to be treated like this. Maybe she didn't have a choice, but at the end of the day, she did. It was her choice to go ahead and be with him.

Thus, while Female Respondent 2 outlines explicitly a situation in which Suzette may have had very little choice, or even none at all, she is ultimately drawn back to the power of the choice discourse as created by loveLife that suggests that life is simply a series of making choices – good ones or bad ones, and it is incumbent upon each person to make those choices.

Furthermore, some interactions with participants suggest that some of the respondents may simply be parroting the loveLife platforms, rather than expressions of their true feelings.

For example, when asked about Thabo's choice to have many girlfriends, the following exchange occurred:

Male Respondent 1: Okay, I think Thabo is doing a very wrong thing. Cause if you, cause if Thabo don't go and talk to all the girls – (Male Respondent 2 interrupts with laughter and whispers to Male Respondent 1).

LT: All right, what's going on here, why are you laughing?

Male Respondent 2: He has about five girlfriends, so I don't know why he's saying this.

This exchange suggests that Y-Centre participants have absorbed the loveLife messages, but the messages may not necessarily bear relevant in their lives. Mark Thorpe terms this an "education responsive discourse", and states, "This way of speaking about HIV employs the learners' knowledge of what the 'correct' answers are – that is, the answers the facilitator or leader is looking for."¹¹³

Analysis:

What is clearly so problematic about this discourse is the suggestion that all young people have access to choice. This is symptomatic of the same overall problem in which loveLife treats the 12 – 17 year old market in South Africa as a homogenous entity. What is particularly fascinating, however is the choice discourse overwhelms any discussion around real barriers to the choices loveLife presents – even when loveLife's own research informs them of those very barriers. It would seem that loveLife is conflating the ability to make choices with assumptions that all have access to choice. Simply put, sexual choice is not a product that can be sold and bought in the marketplace. And, even if it were, not everyone has access to the market.

In this discourse, choice is perceived as positive as is loveLife for presenting the choices. Here, the emphasis is on loveLife as one who merely presents choices, unlike a parent who may force decisions on young people. Thus, it is easy for people to align with the discourse

¹¹³ Thorpe, Mark (2002) "Masculinity in an HIV intervention" in *Agenda* 53, p. 65

as it seems that loveLife is almost granting them an independence of sorts. Indeed, in a post-apartheid environment, having the ability to make choices is lauded – the government no longer makes the decisions for the population, instead people have the choice to direct their own destiny. In effect, this discourse plays into that notion. However, I would suggest this exploits notions of choice, particularly when the reality is that choice is not only a matter of free will, but also reliant on social, economic and other factors.

Further, there is, once again, a re-production of discourse that creates women as responsible for sexual relations. This emerges in Mapula Tshabalala's response to issues of violence against women. Positive constructions of loveLife women are those women who empower themselves and protect their sexuality. These women, then, take responsibility for sexual interactions. As Mapula Tshabalala makes clear, if young women do not make the choice to stand up for themselves, know themselves, and speak their minds, they put themselves at risk to be raped. If you "don't want to share your opinion" then you are "not able to say no to your boyfriend."

Furthermore, the exchanges with the Y-Centre participants highlight the problematic nature of the choice discourse. First, they struggle with being able to incorporate an understanding of how structural inequalities and power differentials may impact on the choices women make. Choice discourse, as it is a hegemonic and dominant discourse at loveLife, seems to silence discussion beyond why Suzette and Sandy may have made their "choices" – the final conclusion is that they were agents of their own free will. Education discourses that assume that knowledge equals power are echoed in this discourse.

However, the relevance of the loveLife "choices" need also be called into question. It is clear that Y-Centre participants engage in choice discourse as a kind of education-responsive discourse. Yet, is "Delay, Reduce, Protect" comprehensive enough to cover all the choices that young people have? For example, while Male Respondent 2 is able to frame Thabo as negative for having multiple partners, he also has multiple partners himself. Do Thabo and Male Respondent 2 have multiple partners because they are promiscuous and irresponsible, or are there other reasons? Selikow, et al suggest, "In the context of economic deprivation in the townships, there are very few ways in which status can be achieved. This is

exacerbated by the erosion of traditional values in urban townships and the declining importance of traditional ways of achieving manhood. One way of achieving status, prestige and popularity is through having multiple partners.”¹¹⁴ Thus, while loveLife expresses often that it creates “all the choices” and it’s merely up to the young person to make the right choice, it seems that loveLife’s array of choices are not only narrow, they seem to have been shaped out of common constructions of men as promiscuous and women as responsible for sexuality. Furthermore, these choices, so narrowly framed, do not encompass for alternative approaches toward sexuality outside of a Judeo-Christian, heterosexual, monogamous sexuality.

8.4 Approaching Gender: A discourse of shared responsibility

The final discourse that I would like to highlight evolved from loveLife’s sexual health message of: Informed Choice, Shared Responsibility and Positive Sexuality. While, it also overlaps with discourses of choice, loveLife’s discourse of shared responsibility goes further than that. Indeed, I will argue that the tenet of Shared Responsibility has developed into the loveLife discourse that encompasses all of loveLife’s approaches to gender. Again, as Fiona Hodges describes shared responsibility:

So going into sexual relationships there are two of you and it’s important that you both are, you know, communicate openly and honestly. Share the responsibility for discussing contraceptive if that’s the way you’re wanting to go. And right down to if you get pregnant it’s both of your responsibility. So take responsibility for the choice you have made.

However, in contrast to brand discourse that suggests one size fits all, loveLife does alter their shared responsibility message slightly for girls and boys. This is explained through loveLife’s ability to understand the different situations that boys and girls face. Fiona Hodges explains:

Not really differentiating, but realising the different issues. So, yes, when there’s an article on peer pressure it will have more of a stance to boys, because we know that’s the big issue for them. When it’s around coercion, etc. then the stance is slightly more to girls. But, um, very very important

¹¹⁴ Selikow, Terry-Ann, et al (2002) “The ingagara, the regte and the cherry: HIV/AIDS and youth culture in contemporary urban townships” in *Agenda* 53, p. 24

component of all the loveLife is looking at mutual respect and responsibility. That it is the responsibility of both boys and girls and the talking about it. So it's not one has more of a responsibility than the other.

The belief then, is that boys have sex because they feel pressure to do so from their peers. In the case of girls, loveLife frames their reasons as either issues of coercion or self-esteem. The following statement from Fiona Hodges evidences this:

We are looking at why young people have sex. In girls' cases sometimes it's about coercion. With boys it may be peer pressure. In some cases, but mostly with girls, it has to do with sex work. In our messaging we are working to empower girls to be more confident. With boys we are trying to get the message out that it's not hip and cool to force someone to have sex. These are things we subtly bring in to the messages.

The solution, as framed by the shared responsibility discourse is that both boys and girls need to take responsibility for sexual behaviour, but in different ways. Girls must empower themselves and build their self-esteem so that they will be able to assert themselves in sexual situations. Boys, on the other hand, must learn that they should not force girls to have sex. To reach these goals, loveLife asserts that young people must build their self-esteem and get to know themselves better. So, for example, a loveLife motivational programme will ultimately build self-esteem in a young girl and help prevent her from being coerced. Fiona Hodges states:

So we do run a motivational programme at the Y-Centres so that young people can get involved so that they are feeling more confident especially young girls because we know it is around self-esteem issues that pulls them into having sex. If I have sex he will love me more if I do it.

Pozisa Ngema also creates this idea of self-esteem as a tool to battle sexual coercion:

We had also, the billboards, I don't know if Fiona Hodges showed it to you? The one that said, "Are you happy with yourself?" And shared responsibility. And you know, it got through to the young people, you know that a relationship is between two people, and if you need or if you have to say something because you feel it's right for you, then say it at that moment and know that you always have a choice. Don't ever settle for less. You know, know who you are and believe in what you believe in. That's the only way you can ever know who you are. And that's what I say when I go out

there. And you know, you know young girls, especially from rural areas, they think, “Okay, I can never say anything. He’s more powerful than I am.” But you know, try. You know, try showing them. You know if you can’t say it, you know do something that will show him that this is what you mean. Maybe go to the clinic yourself and get the condoms, you know, stuff like that.

So, then, shared responsibility discourse creates shared responsibility as girls getting to know themselves better so that they can assert themselves. And, boys must learn to accept the assertions made by the girls. groundBREAKERS also re-produced this discourse. For example, Kabelo Ndlovu tells girls how and when to assert themselves with boys:

Yeah, you know what I usually do when I am busy doing the talks, I always tell the girls that there is only one time to tell your boyfriend what you want and what you don’t want on that first day when you first saw him is when you have to tell him, “Are you interested in me? Yeah, sure, thanks, I am also interested but this and this and this is going like this and this and this.” And if you told that guy what you want and what you don’t want it isn’t going to be easy for him to change what you said to him. So I tell them to talk about it and be open because when you get yourself in a relationship there is that point that you build with that person and there is trust between you and there should be no reason why it is going to be difficult to talk about what you want.

Or, Mapula Tshabalala explains the directive she gives to boys:

So they must try to understand that it is best to communicate to the girls if the girl doesn’t want to do something once you put your condom on, try to understand her and give her a chance. Don’t do what you are told by your friends because most guys, they take the wrong information that they heard from other ... from their friends and they try to do it in their own relationship. So their relationship ends up be violent and they become both of them [].

Shared responsibility discourse creates the idea that both boys and girls must take responsibility for what occurs in a relationship. The discourse assumes an understanding of how and why boys and girls act; girls have sex either because they are coerced or because their self-esteem is low while boys often force girls to have sex because they are pressured by their peers. Furthermore, the discourse assumes an understanding of how to overcome these circumstances. Girls must build their self-esteem and assert themselves and boys must learn to communicate and listen to girls.

Shared responsibility discourse is pervasive in loveLife and the discourse was fully re-produced by the Y-Centre participants. They assert that sexual relations are the shared responsibility of both boys and girls. Girls who are constructed as aggressive are perceived positively, while boys who force girls to have sex or don't follow safer sex directives are perceived negatively. However, again, while participants easily re-produce the discourse, there is further evidence that theirs is an education-responsive discourse, and that the constructions of men and women, as produced by the shared responsibility discourse, are not in full accord with the lives of the Y-Centre participants. In other words, they may give the answers they know loveLife is looking for, but they don't necessarily integrate those messages into their lived realities. This is evidenced by the emergence of alternative discourses.

In reviewing the advertisement on James and Zola participants re-produce shared responsibility discourse:

LT: Do you think, do you think a lot of boys only like to do it skin on skin?

Male Respondent 2: Yes, they say here on the street that with the wrapper on the candy doesn't taste as sweet.

LT: So, is that a problem?

Male Respondent 2: It is a problem. It's a problem with us boys mostly. It was just like, I came here to the loveLife and I know that it's wrong to do it skin on skin and James was 18, he should understand the consequences of it and his future.

LT: Do you think James might know that? Do you think James knows?

Male Respondent 3: Maybe James knows, but, but he doesn't care. He might only think afterward. Maybe he has a packed condom at home. But he knows how to use the condom, he knows how to put the condom on, but he only thinks about it afterwards. He's supposed to know that too.

LT: So you share responsibility?

Male Respondent 3: Yes.

LT: So both the boys and girls should use condoms?

Male Respondent 2: Maybe James, maybe James is trying to be cool.

Male Respondent 1: Peer pressure.

LT: And, do you think this says different things to boys and girls? This advertisement?

Male Respondent 1: Yeah, to the girls, like, all right, send out the message to girls that you must be aggressive to say no. Like the other one [Sandy], like she never, she was scared to say no and Zola is more aggressive like that.

LT: Does it say anything to boys?

Male Respondent 1: I think that boys also took a message from Zola, either wrap it or zip it.

Shared responsibility discourse is also re-produced in their examination of the advertisement with Abram and Sandy:

LT: Tell me, does it have a different message for boys and girls?

Female Respondent 1: I think it's the same message.

Male Respondent 2: Sandra, Sandra yeah, okay, like for the girls née, they can say no before they boy puts his thing inside her and for the boys, they must ask first, like, do you really want to do this?

In these a full reproduction of the discourse is present. First, the idea that the problem of boys forcing sex without a condom lies primarily with boys is present. Also, the notion that boys are influenced largely by peer pressure is present. Finally, the idea that girls who assert themselves will garner more positive results and not become victims is also here

Participants positively associated with girls who assert themselves and negatively associate with girls who do not protect their sexuality. Additionally they negatively associate with boys who force sex or have sex without a condom.

However, beyond the shared responsibility discourse, there were also positive associations with boys who have multiple partners and negative associations with boys who are virgins.

Male Respondent 1 suggests:

Okay, from my point of view, it's just guys right, here in the township, if a guy is 17, 18, you're still a virgin, like, your friends don't appreciate, what can I say? Appreciate you as a boy. But if you're not a virgin, you are like a man, cool and all that. Mature.

Male Respondent 1 seems to disassociate with the loveLife context by stating, "here in the township." It seems that he understands the shared responsibility discourse, however, to better explain his opinion when it does not fully align with the loveLife discourse of shared responsibility, he seems to take the context into the township and away from loveLife in order to justify his understanding of why it is not cool to be a virgin.

There also seems to be a negotiation between loveLife's shared responsibility discourse and the lived realities of the participants when the group reviewed the advertisement with Thabo and Lindi:

LT: Let me ask you a question, do you like Thabo better than Lindi or Lindi better than Thabo?

All: Thabo! (Laughter.)

Male Respondent 2: Yeah, Thabo!

LT: How come you all like Thabo better?

Male Respondent 1: Thabo's a playa. (Male Respondents 1 and 2 give each other high fives.)

LT: Okay, Thabo's a playa, and that's good? Now you're giving each other high fives, okay. So, why is that cool, to have a lot of girlfriends? Cause you started out by saying it's not, but at the same time, maybe, maybe it is? What do you think?

Male Respondent 2: Yeah, like most of my friends like, like this is my friend (slaps Male Respondent 1 on the back) he goes with like six to seven girls. Also my friend over here (indicates Male Respondent 3) he has like four or five girls. Also, me I have like five girlfriends. So many of us, it's

like, yeah I'm going to number one, I'm going to number two, I'm going to number six, yeah, it's like that. Yeah, but I know that it's very wrong. But mostly I told myself –

Female Respondent 2: It's, they know it's peer pressure. It's status.

Male Respondent 2: but I tell myself that if I'm not sleeping with all of them it's fine.

Male Respondent 1: Yeah, like, us, like every weekend we must go out. If there's a party, you must go to that party. And one thing we make sure, never bring your girlfriends. Cause if you find another girl you like.

Male Respondent 3: So Thabo can score! He's Thabo!

LT: Okay, so you guys are all Thabo?

Male Respondent 2: Yeah, Thabo's doing the right thing. (Laughter.) What, what, what I'm saying is if, if like you don't sleep with all the girls, it's cool.

So, while there is still an acknowledgement of the shared responsibility discourse through Male Respondent 2's statement, "Yeah, but I know that it's very wrong" there is also a justification for being like Thabo. Each male participant identifies with Thabo, indeed they *are* Thabo.. Regardless of the shared responsibility discourse that sends messages to boys that it is not cool to act based on peer pressure, the "playa" identity does not only have negative connotations with both the male and female participants. Again, however, Male Respondent 1 mediates the discourse with his statement, "But I tell myself that if I'm not sleeping with all of them, it's fine."

Thus, while shared responsibility discourse has been fully absorbed by participants to the extent that they can parrot it back, it has simply not been fully integrated into the lives of the participants.

Analysis:

In essence, shared responsibility discourse integrates fluidly with the constructs of gender as laid out in Chapter VI. While the billboards are limited by the medium and create a static and narrow text, it becomes evident that this static and narrow view of men and women

infiltrates throughout the rest of the organisation and largely remains unchallenged and unquestioned. Men and women must share responsibility, but the responsibilities are different according to gender, with constructs of empowered women as positive and constructs of “playa” men as negative. What is largely problematic with the discourse and with the resultant constructs of men and women is the narrow perspective on both gender and sexuality.

Again, I do not suggest that constructions of women as assertive and empowered individuals are negative. Instead, I suggest that they are too narrow. The assumption made by loveLife is that empowerment alone can overcome every obstacle. Furthermore, the assumption that women have sex based on a low self-esteem not only frames women solely as victims, but is also entirely too confining.

Women have sex for many different reasons, some positive and some negative. However, in framing the motivations of women in such a limited context, loveLife exposes its inability to view gender in any kind of complex form. The same holds true in how loveLife constructs men and their relationship to sexuality equally narrowly. There is little discursive space to explore women as highly sexual beings, nor is there space to explore men as anything but highly sexual beings. There is little space to look at how socio-economic contexts may impact on sexual behaviour, or even how emotions impact. Overall, I argue that loveLife represents gendered relationships to sexuality in a manner that is both confining and exclusionary, and that also assumes fully rational behaviour on the part of individuals.

Additionally, in the same way that constructs of the empowered woman replicate discourses of female responsibility, so too does the shared responsibility discourse. Again, the discourse creates the notion that it is women’s responsibility to take responsibility for sexual behaviour. They must assert themselves or suffer consequences. And, again, men simply act as passive recipients of women’s sexual directives.

The overall result, however, is that in both producing discourses dealing with sexual responsibility and constructing gender in such a narrow manner loveLife inevitably distances itself from its target market. In other words, as the Y-Centre participants evidenced, young

people's sexual activity is influenced by a variety of factors beyond those outlined by loveLife. And, there is a point at which the narrowness of the discourse forces participants to operate outside its boundaries.

As Selikow, et al, suggests, the young men in the focus group may relate to Thabo as a result of the context of their situation in which having multiple partners is an expression of status in an environment where there is little other access to status. That loveLife can only frame this as a negative choice for young men limits further exploration about the reasons why young men have multiple partners. Y-Centre participants seemed conflicted in that they know loveLife views negatively men with multiple partners, yet they also receive confirmation from having multiple partners. It would seem from the exchange about Thabo, that loveLife participants learn the shared responsibility discourse at loveLife, yet they do not necessarily integrate it into their lives. At some point, when the discourse is no longer relevant, nor does it seem to apply to their situation, it becomes clear that participants readily drop it. Even more problematic, it is clear that male participants end up identifying with Thabo and his motivations, rather than questioning them. Moreover, female participants are also drawn positively to this representation of the playas – all the participants agreed that they like Thabo better than Lindi.

In sum, shared responsibility discourse replicates discourses that render women responsible for sexual behaviour in contexts where they are often not empowered to be responsible. The discourse is also narrow and is unable to encompass the lived realities of South African youth in which sexual situations are a result of many circumstances, not just those narrowly presented by loveLife. The intersection with this particular focus group would suggest that the end result is that loveLife will only hold its audience's attention for so long. When they lose relevancy, however, there is little brand allegiance, and the loveLife brand fails in its mission to change pervasive values and attitudes towards sex, sexuality and gender relations. Again, more research needs to be carried out with loveLife's target audience to realistically gauge levels of impact. Nevertheless, the intersections of the discourses with this particular focus group suggest that loveLife should consider shifting its focus to deal more directly with gender.

Chapter IX: Constructs of Gender and Productions of Discourse: A Summary Analysis

9.1 Reviewing the purpose of the research

As stated in the Introduction, the primary purpose of this research was to examine productions and re-productions of gender constructs and HIV/AIDS discourses within loveLife, and to explore the intersections of the loveLife productions and re-productions of gender constructs and HIV/AIDS discourses with the target audience. Furthermore, as I stated in the preface, my reasons for engaging with this research evolved out of a concern that gender was constantly being produced and re-produced by loveLife. However, whether this was done in a way that challenged the structural inequalities and power dynamics between men and women in a way that empowered both men and women to protect themselves against HIV was unclear to me. This seemed particularly relevant in light of the fact that loveLife is the world's largest youth HIV/AIDS organisation.

As I also stated in the introduction, and as I have attempted to highlight throughout the course of this research, I found three primary factors that, I argue, inhibit loveLife from implementing its strategy to reduce transmission of HIV through affecting behaviour change in young people as it relates to pervasive values and attitudes to sex, sexuality and gender relations. First, beginning with their billboard campaign and infiltrating throughout the organisation, loveLife's constructions of men and women are narrow and problematic in that they further replicate gendered inequities that have been shown to negatively impact on HIV transmission. Second, loveLife's strategic positioning as a brand has created a discourse of consumerism within the organisation that homogenises its audience and overtly silences discussions about gender, race, class and other differences, thereby ignoring and replicating the ramifications of unequal access to power and resources among its target audience. Finally, through this process of homogenisation, loveLife assumes sexual freedoms as a product of choice. That these sexual freedoms are framed within a context that is based within a heterosexist, monogamous, Judeo-Christian framework ultimately works to make loveLife less relevant in the lives of young people. Acting in accordance with one another, through these factors loveLife replicates gendered inequalities, silences further discussion or understanding of those gendered inequalities and impedes alternative explorations of

approaches to changing pervasive values and attitudes among adolescents to sex, sexuality and gender relations.

9.2 Constructs of Gender: Narrow and Problematic

My research revealed that constructions of men and women narrowly confine male and female identities as either aligned properly with the loveLife brand or unaligned. Identities outside of those representations are not readily available and loveLife offers little alternative in the way of gender transformation. Furthermore, these constructions served to further entrench dominant discourses that render women responsible for sexuality and normalise men as irresponsible in all of their sexual behaviour. loveLife does not offer greater contextual understanding that might explore and challenge these dominant discourses. Indeed, it becomes quickly clear that loveLife does not explore, but simply renders judgement on those who do not align with the brand.

Adding to this, the loveLife discourse of shared responsibility suggests a limited type of sharing between men and women. Men are merely passive recipients of women's sexual directives, and women are directed to assertively protect their sexuality. Again, this also relates back to constructs of gender in which women are empowered or not and men are "playas" or not. There is little room for exploration of gendered identities within these constructs.

In looking at Sandy and Suzette, Female Respondent 2 only reluctantly aligned with the brand idea that insists women must empower and protect themselves. However, this seemed to result more from a lack of other alternatives than with a strong understanding or support of loveLife's choice or shared responsibility discourses or even with a positive association with loveLife's constructs of the empowered woman. There was little room for dialogue about the situations of Sandy and Suzette.

Furthermore, male participants ultimately identify with Thabo, rather than condemn his behaviour. In effect, their advertisement has normalised Thabo – certainly not what loveLife intended. Yet, that male participants identify with Thabo does not necessarily indicate that they have an amoral approach to sexual relations. It does, however, indicate

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that loveLife has only a narrow understanding of who Thabo really is. His identity is defined narrowly and understood even less. Yet, male participants have created Thabo in such a way that they a deeper understanding of Thabo and his motivations. It is only until loveLife is able to further explore its own constructions and allow for myriad complexities and contexts to accompany gendered identities, that loveLife will be best-equipped to relate to its target audience. Until then, loveLife merely works to reinforce and collude with existing gendered inequities.

9.3 *The Discourse of Consumerism: Shifting the focus and Homogenising the Audience*

In my research, I found that loveLife does have a comprehensive understanding that transformation of gender relations is at the core of changing behaviour as it relates to HIV/AIDS. Indeed, as has been expressed several times, loveLife explicitly states, "Behaviour change requires internalisation by the target group of the desired changes. To be successful, loveLife has to change pervasive values and attitudes among adolescents to sex, sexuality and gender relations."¹¹⁵ Through its recognition of the importance of the need to transform gender relations, this statement reveals a highly political and activist agenda on the part of loveLife.

However, research also revealed a gap between this political and activist agenda and implementation. Indeed, while loveLife may have some understanding of the importance of changing values and attitudes, I argue that through its brand strategy and accompanying discourse of consumerism, loveLife has effectively de-politicised its actions and moved away from an activist agenda.

While my original intention was to explore loveLife discourses as they related to HIV/AIDS, I quickly discerned that there is an absence of HIV/AIDS discourse at loveLife. Indeed, inasmuch as I had hoped for an assertive and activist stance towards behaviour change as it relates to HIV/AIDS, I found an absence of discourse therein. In lieu of HIV/AIDS discourse, however, emerged a discourse of consumerism that appeared to motivate perceptions, values and actions at loveLife. I contend that this replacement has precluded

¹¹⁵ loveLife Brochure, "Our Story"

loveLife from taking an assertive and activist stance on how to change behaviour related to HIV/AIDS.

My research showed that the production of the discourse of consumerism produced a shift at loveLife. This shift has moved loveLife away from being an HIV/AIDS organisation educating South African youth to being a brand that creates its audience as a homogenous consumer mass. This shift has privileged consumer consumption over HIV/AIDS discourse, and the organisation focuses more strongly on driving the brand than on making sure that its sexual health message is absorbed. Any talk about HIV/AIDS is largely overcome by the discourse – indeed, mention of HIV/AIDS is discouraged as it may turn consumers off of the brand. This is particularly ironic considering loveLife has positioned itself as the leader in getting young people to “Talk About It”. It would seem they need to follow their own directive. However, the discourse has also shifted talk from reducing transmission of HIV to promising better futures for its participants. Not only is this promise overblown, but most importantly, it detracts loveLife from HIV transmission reduction.

As was evidenced by Y-Centre participants, however, association with the brand, doesn't necessarily ensure the integration of sexual health messages into their lives. Moreover, it calls into question reasons that young people associate with the brand. While I recognise that further research is needed, I believe there are many indications that young people are aligning with the brand due to access to material goods, spaces for play and entertainment rather than because of loveLife's marketing success as a cool brand or because of the impact of the organisation's sexual health message.

Furthermore, I argue that loveLife's brand positioning, that portrays loveLife as a cool, hip friend who doesn't preach is also detrimental to efforts to transform gender relations. While it is made evident that this stance comes out of a strategic approach to reach young people, I will argue that it renders loveLife unable to take the highly political stance that recognises the need for transformation in gender relations in order to effect behaviour change. This stance for transformation is interventionist and also activist. It cannot be reached through some sort of osmosis that young people are expected to absorb. Yet, in privileging this brand

positioning of loveLife as the cool friend who doesn't preach, loveLife is precluded from taking any definitive, political stance. Whether loveLife chooses to accept the political nature of transforming gender relations, I argue that it is highly necessary to their express goal to changing behaviour as it relates to pervasive values and attitudes towards sex, sexuality and gender relations.

Research indicating that young people, across the board, respond to brands served as loveLife's reason for choosing to be a brand and served as their justification for not segmenting their market and speaking to all with a uniform brand message. In treating their target audience as a consumer mass, however, loveLife has created the false assumption that its target market will respond in a homogenous manner to branding. Simply put, 12 – 17 year-olds in South Africa represent an extraordinarily diverse group of people with a diverse set of circumstances and contexts. This diversity informs the diversity of their response. Through creation of this discourse, loveLife, however, has ignored this reality, even though difficulties in understanding loveLife's messages and purpose have been numerous not only among parents but among their target audience as well. Furthermore, loveLife has ignored the possibility that treating their market as a homogenous entity may further entrench gendered inequalities, such as how they have ignored the circumstances of young girls attending Y-Centres and possibly have even added to their burden or responsibility.

loveLife has simply not paid heed to the large majority of social scientists studying behaviour change around HIV/AIDS who make the point, time and time again that, "Youth, however, are not a homogenous social category. Interventions that work with the complexities of gender identity and are cognisant of the social and institutional contexts in which young people live, have the best chance of success."¹¹⁶ In ignoring the myriad contexts that exist within their target market as well as the complexities of gender identity, loveLife lessens its chance for successful behaviour change as it relates to gender and HIV/AIDS.

9.4 *Sexual Freedom as a Product Choice: Unequal access and dictating choice*

¹¹⁶ Guest editors Moletsane, relebohile, et al "What kind of future can we make: education, youth and HIV/AIDS" Agenda 53, 2002, p. 3

However, I also believe that, although the discourse creates loveLife as a non-judgmental entity, merely presenting choices, that, instead, loveLife has framed its “choices” in a heterosexist, monogamous, Judeo-Christian framework that ultimately excludes many in its target audience, and, further, does not really explore alternative approaches to gender transformation.

Replete throughout loveLife’s sexual health message is the creation of discourse that contends that all young people are faced with choices and it is their responsibility to make the better choices in order to ensure a better future for themselves. Inasmuch as loveLife makes the mistake in treating its market as homogenous, it does the same in relation to its sexual health messages. The “choices” that loveLife has created are framed in a narrow context that is just not relevant in all circumstances. And, again, these choices have evolved out of a value system that reflects a dominant hegemony.

The youth of South Africa are located in many different contexts. Thus, while some have the power to make certain choices in their lives, others do not. This is particularly true for young women in sexual situations. Because loveLife assumes, however, that all young people have the same access to power and choice, the result is that loveLife lays culpability with young people when they do not make the “right choice” and achieve a better future. This is particularly harmful in that it does not expand young people’s understanding of gendered inequalities. For example, Y-Centre participants struggled with unpacking the “choices” made by Suzette and Sandy. Ultimately, loveLife discourses of choice prevailed, and Suzette and Sandy were deemed responsible for their circumstances. Little exploration took place, however, to further understand how or why women may find themselves in positions in which they feel they have little power to change their situations. There was simply no exploration of the structural inequalities that privilege men over women, or exploration of how those inequalities also intersect with race, class or geographic location.

9.5 *Summary Conclusion*

An examination of loveLife’s discourses and constructions of gender reveals that their intentions to affect behaviour change as it relates to pervasive values and perceptions among adolescents to gender relations, sexuality and sex are impeded by loveLife’s own inability to

overcome the very same pervasive values and perceptions. Their limited constructions of gendered identities do not allow for deeper levels of complexity or understanding. Furthermore, the discourse of consumerism has made manifest an approach that neither privileges HIV/AIDS discourse nor does it privilege alternative sexual health messages or constructs of gender. loveLife operates from a point of view that treats its audience as homogenous with equal access to sexual choice, and this lack of context also detracts from its goals. Ultimately, loveLife does not serve as a voice for gender transformation, which is critical in attempts to change behaviour around HIV/AIDS – a point that loveLife itself explicitly acknowledges.

Certainly, loveLife has given voice to the importance of gender transformation, yet they have not transcended their own relation to gender. loveLife must first examine and broaden its approach to gender, and further examine dominant discourses that privilege discourses of consumerism over explorations of transformative behaviour in relation to HIV/AIDS. Of course, these observations are made with the recognition that much more research needs to take place to fully assess the impact of loveLife's productions of discourse and constructions of gender on its target audience. However, I will argue that until these discourses and constructs are examined and furthermore revealed and acknowledged as dominant and influential in loveLife's perceptions and approaches, loveLife will continue to reinforce the status quo of society.

Still, there is reason for hope. While it is evident that the transforming gender relations as they relate to HIV/AIDS is a task both powerful and overwhelming, recognising the need for transformation at the level of dealing with gendered inequalities is a start. Mere recognition will not lead to transformation of its own accord. There are simply too many obstacles. Nevertheless, it should be viewed not as a failure, but as a movement in its infancy. That there is increasing recognition of the fundamental importance of gender constructs and relationships as essential to behaviour change around HIV/AIDS is itself a testament to some degree of change. It is the hope of the researcher that loveLife will continue to push boundaries and learn from its mistakes. So, too, the hope is that its audience will also join in the learning, and eventual change process geared toward transforming our relationship to HIV/AIDS in an attempt to eradicate the virus.

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University of Cape Town

Appendix

LoveLife Staff Interviews

LoveLife Staff
Fiona Hodges
3 June 2002

Phone interview with Fiona Hodges (LL staff), Alex Boyce (UCT MBA student), Eike Puck (UCT MBA student), Laura Templeton

LT: We just wanted to start out finding out about your relation to loveLife, maybe what your job responsibilities entail, position and whatnot.

FH: All right. I head up the Information and Communications Department, which means anything that is branded loveLife comes through this department. So, it involves billboards, TV adverts, public service announcements, publications, and for the programmes all the materials and information that they need to run effectively. And obviously strategic direction. How can we make sure that as many people know about loveLife as possible and if the communication message is, in fact, working.

LT: Ok. How do you monitor that?

FH: Every bit of loveLife work is thoroughly researched. So before we implement something we do formative research. So, for example take billboards. We do the formative research and while they are up we are asking people, we are taking down information about what people say about it. And then post the event we will also do thorough research. We go out and do focus groups about it, one on one interviews and then we save that information for future campaigns. So we can rectify it as fast as possible, if there is something wrong.

LT: Can you tell us a little bit about loveLife's actual mission?

FH: Our goal, which is the mission in a way, is to reduce by 50% both HIV, teenage pregnancy and STI's – being sexually transmitted infections – within the age group of 15 – 20.

LT: How did you come up with that mission?

FH: What we were finding is that the age group 15 – 25 is the group of young people that are infected fastest. That's where the epidemic is actually hitting young people. So, that was the target audience.

LT: What is loveLife doing to achieve this mission of reduction by 50%?

FH: Well, the target audience being 15 – 20 years in order to reach that goal we target 12 – 17 year olds, so we have a slightly younger target audience. And all of the programmes that we introduce are to reach that target audience. So, we've got the loveLife games, the love tours, love train, which are outreach programmes. We have 12 youth centres, which we call Y-centres, fully serviced, multi-purpose centres.

But the actual strategy is a three-pronged one. We start with media, which raises awareness and creates the call to action and the interest in loveLife and starts the debating of these issues, so that people start internalising the message and want to find out more. And then they find out more by interacting through the one on one outreach and support services. Even through our call service, which we call the theta junction – theta means to talk – that's also a service. They will interact with the TV programmes, they can call and find out more about how to get involved. We also have a Groundbreaker programme, which is for 18 – 25 year olds who are otherwise unemployed. And they join loveLife for one year on a voluntary basis. We do pay them a stipend, but then they get involved in, you know, all the different loveLife activities and do trainings.

LT: Sounds like a good programme.

FH: Yeah, so the main structure is the media, supported by outreach and support services and then underlying both of those is the evaluation and research. And then one, well two other programmes that I haven't mentioned are our franchises – so any other youth organisation doing similar work to ourselves can join the loveLife family as a franchise holder and promote the message. And then we work with government clinics. The ultimate aim is to work with all 5000 government clinics to make them youth-friendly. Because if you're working with young people and motivating them to go get help and information then the clinic is the one place they would go to and they would obviously get protection there and they need to be youth-friendly.

LT: Ok. What do you feel are some of loveLife's main strengths with the set-up that you have?

FH: Quite a few. But I think that the main strength is that we did do thorough research. We looked at what had worked, hadn't worked in other countries around the world and so the programme is implemented on a thorough public health background. But then we use the media because that's what young people ... I mean it's a pioneering programme and the reason being is that it's a brand approach to HIV/AIDS awareness. So you use the media to get the message and awareness out. And that's a strength because young people are actually taking notice of it – they haven't switched off to it. And we position the HIV/AIDS awareness campaign as part of a healthy lifestyle approach. That's what we actually promote.

LT: Rather than a negative approach that would turn them off?

FH: Yeah, it's all done on positivity, so have your aspirations and setting your goals can get involved in this. The future is what you make of it. That kind of thing. Very motivational and positive approach as to a negative approach, which we do know young people switch off to. And that's a strength.

Another strength is the buy-in of young people. It's run by young people. Young people interact at all levels. Our advisory board is made of young people. We do have the public health – you know the doctors – that are sitting on the board. But it's also prominent people from all walks of society: entertainers, faith-based people as well, so it's a nice mixture. And then the biggest element is always including the young people at every decision-making level.

LT: And how do you do that? Through interviews or are they giving actual input at your meetings?

FH: Both. Input at all levels from the advisory board. Obviously the young people who are part of the Groundbreakers who are part of loveLife will be involved at all levels. Meetings and yeah, one on one focus groups. For example, the print-out, 16 page insert into the Sunday Times, that is a group of young people who on a weekly basis meet and discuss topics that they want to read about.

LT: On the flip side, can you talk about what some of the weaknesses of the organisation might be?

FH: In fact, just going back to another strength, the reason we've been able to move at such a fast level is the fact that we didn't have to recreate things that, or build up a new infrastructure. We used existing infrastructure. So there are three organisations that run loveLife as a programme of theirs. So we were able to pull out their expertise and get that kind of buy-in. But I think that's also kind of a weakness in that all three organisations have very different philosophies and ways of operating. So quite often one is having to go back a step and discuss everything with them because loveLife moves very fast. And it can cause a little bit of friction.

LT: Can you tell us what the three organisations are?

FH: It's Planned Parenthood, Health Systems Trust and the Reproductive Health Research Unit. And there are the different areas. So for example the Reproductive Health Research Unit does the research and evaluation as well as implementation of adolescent friendly clinics. And Health Systems Trust is the infrastructure, IT, finance, legal entity as well as the media. That's the managerial type. And Planned Parenthood does the outreach, so the call centre, the Y-centre, the franchises, the Groundbreakers.

LT: Are there any particular challenges in getting your message out? In reaching your target audience?

FH: Well the fact that we're having to work at such an incredibly fast pace. So, we do have to implement programmes maybe faster than we're actually getting the research, because there are no health measures in dealing with a major epidemic. More than 5 million are positive. And at the current rate of infection we're looking at 40% of the population below the age of 15. And with the current rate of infection, 1 in 2 of them will die. They will contract HIV. So we do have to implement very fast. We don't have the luxury of, you know, really being able to stand by and see what does and doesn't work. We really have to go full swing and hope that it does work. And that's why in the process you're asking questions all the time.

LT: Or even why it works as opposed to just that it's working?

FH: Yeah. Another challenge for us is because we're such a pioneering programme for the world, we are the world's largest HIV/AIDS youth programme, we have an incredible number of visitors on a monthly basis from all over the world. So, the challenge is to share that information with as many people to see if they can implement in their own countries. Because they also are dealing with the issue and need to implement as fast as possible.

LT: How are you dealing with that right now? Is that primarily some of the responsibilities of where you're working?

FH: Yes, well in fact it falls on all of us to share information as fast as possible. But it does sidetrack one in that you're having to host a lot of people, whereas actually you could have written another publication or something like that. So that is a challenge, but in a way it's a great credit to the organisation that so many people are interested in coming to visit us.

LT: Absolutely. But in that, it sounds as if your resources are stretched to the limit at this point.

FH: They are. Most definitely.

LT: I can't imagine anyone working in this field whose resources aren't stretched to the limit.

FH: That's right.

LT: You said that the target group is 15 – 20, but also starting even younger with the 12 year olds as well. Is that right?

FH: The target audience are 12 – 17 with the goal of reducing HIV infection in the 15 – 20 year olds.

LT: Now when you are looking at that target audience is there any kind of segmentation across race, class or culture that you're specifically talking about within the organisation?

FH: We don't segmentise at all. We looked at what was the common thread that ran amongst 12 – 17 year olds, be they black, white, coloured or Indian, rural, peri-urban, urban, wealthy, poor, the whole catoot. We looked and that the one common thing was that they were so aware of brands. So that's why we chose to go the brand approach. And definitely the research is saying that across the board that is something that young people all identify with. They watch TV, they listen to the radio, they are fully aware of magazines – you know what clothing is in, what clothing is out. So that's why we don't segmentise. We reach across the board. And, we set the message for round about 16 year olds, because 12 year olds are looking at what 16 year olds are wanting.

And we don't change, from a media point of view, we don't change the language at all. The language of advertising is English and that's how you get the aspirational brand because that's what they're all into. But our workshops at local levels are all done in English plus a mixture of the local language. We do work with 10 of the African language stations with talk shows so those would be with indigenous languages.

LT: And what about your Groundbreakers?

FH: They speak a wide variety of languages. But the main business language is English. They also all speak English.

LT: Do you operate in your marketing on the premise that you are marketing specifically to HIV negative youth?

FH: No, we are targeting, across the board, 12 – 17 year olds. Negative or positive. Whatever.

LT: Promoting a healthy lifestyle.

FH: Yeah. And also, all the different sexual orientations as well.

LT: I just wondered if you could tell me, in the target, what are the core messages that you are bringing across?

FH: Underlying absolutely everything is talk about it, you'll see on all the loveLife logos. So that underlines everything. The next message is through motivation. So we've got a strong motivational programme for young people. Motivating young people to take responsibility for their life, to take action, to go find out information. So, very much a motivational, aspirational element. Within the big themes, we have informed choice, shared responsibility and positive sexuality. Informed choice is around go and get sexual information so you can make a choice for yourself. We don't dictate what is the right or wrong choice because everybody is different. And I think that's where we also are very different so that would be a strength as well. We don't dictate. You know, young people buy into us because we are not the motherly fatherly figure that says this is the way it should be. It's rather the friend. So everything in life involves a choice. The choice to get up in the morning and get out of bed. It's your choice to have sex or not. And make an informed choice. Obviously we know a lot of girls get raped, et cetera. But, you know, as much as possible make a choice that's an informed one.

And the second element, shared responsibility, it's respect for peers, adults, your partner, et cetera, and it's important to talk about every issue and share responsibility. So going into sexual relationships there are two of you and it's important that you both are, you know, communicate openly and honestly. Share the responsibility for discussing contraceptives if that's the way you're wanting to go. And right down to if you do get pregnant it's both of your responsibility. So take responsibility for the choice that you have made.

And then the last one being positive sexuality. Being aware that sex and sexuality are different. You are a sexual being. Being aware of your feelings, that kind of thing. Because being aware of that, you know you don't have to be the extrovert but you can be confident in yourself. And being happy with your sexuality leads to the positive sexuality. And if you add those in your sexual decisions, choice and sharing responsibility, they lead to positive sexuality.

But even going further into those themes, those by the way are all the messages that we carried on billboards last year, getting that out. But this year, the messaging is driving even deeper into it. So the easiest way to say it is around delay reducing that we put back into all the loveLife pillars. So, delay your sexuality until you have information to make an informed choice and that you share responsibility for it. Delay the next time you have sex until you do have protection. So it's not a dictatorial campaign, it's delay until you are ready for your next sexual encounter or delay your first sexual encounter until you are ready. And the reduce element can be reduce the number of sexual partners, reduce the number of times you have unprotected sex. And protection is protect yourself emotionally and physically and protect yourself from going into a situation in which you know you're going to have to make an informed choice or feel pressurised into doing something that you're not keen on. And protect yourself by putting on the condom. Have the contraceptive. And, once again, nothing is dictatorial in that. It's all about information and choice.

LT: And these are messages that you're coming up with from the ongoing research that you're doing with some of the young people that are involved?

FH: Yes, from around the world, well, in some countries, I don't know if you're aware of the ABC: Abstain, Be Wise, Condomise message? A number of governments have adopted that. It has worked in the Uganda experience, but it hasn't worked in a number of other countries because it does come across as too dictatorial

and, for example, in South Africa that has been the message that has been promoted for the last 10 years. But it hasn't had an impact on sexual behaviour. So, we had to look at what would actually impact on sexual behaviour and definitely that's: Delay, Reduce and Protect. So, delay your first sexual experience. Reduce the number of sexual partners – which is a big one because the more partners you have the more likely, in terms of statistics, to get HIV, and when young people are having between 1 and 5 partners on average a year, so we need to reduce that number quite substantially. And protect. Condom usage after five years of HIV messaging is still not working. So the behaviour isn't there although there was a lot of talk about HIV. And so that's why we're now hardhitting in terms of delay, reduce, protect in a non-dictatorial way. So we're falling within choices and sharing responsibility.

LT: That sounds great as a beginning. Do you guys have any questions?

EMT: We wanted to know if we could talk to your marketing department if we have questions or should we just talk to you?

FH: Well we don't have a, well the marketing department is, in a way, our information department. And we do have a structure that within media we've got a media director, we've got an executive TV producer who handles TV. Print there's an editor in chief, you know the normal media titles. And we have a variety of different ad agencies and communication experts who obviously work with us on specific campaigns. But not just one dedicated campaign house. So you are free to ask me anything.

LoveLife Staff
Fiona Hodges
8 June 2002

Phone interview with Fiona Hodges (LL staff), Laura Templeton

*Due to taping difficulties the first half of this interview was transcribed from notes and not from tape recording.

LT: How many people does loveLife employ?

FH: I'm not sure of the exact numbers, but we employ around 80 or 90 people and that includes our Y-Centres and franchises.

LT: Are women, and even more specifically women of colour and South African women in positions of leadership at loveLife?

FH: Oh yes. Yes. We have a complete mixture and representation across the board.

LT: In your messaging, is there a way that you're talking to men and women, boys and girls differently?

FH: It's part of the delay, reduce, protect strategy that I think I spoke with you about last week. We are looking at why young people have sex. In girls' cases sometimes it's about coercion. With boys it may be peer pressure. In some cases, but mostly with girls, it has to do with sex work. In our messaging we are working to empower girls to be more confident. With boys we are trying to get the message out that it's not hip and cool to force someone to have sex. These are things we subtly bring in to the messages.

And a lot of this is stuff that we discuss in gender training. Particularly at our Y-Centres and our Groundbreaker training. We make gender a big component and work to make everything gender sensitive.

LT: Is there a particular manual that you use for the training?

FH: We have a sexual health manual, but it's still a draft. That's how we work, we use it and then iron out problems.

LT: Could I have a look at the manual?

FH: I don't think that's a problem. It is still in draft form. But that shouldn't be a problem. Actually I think it's going to be printed after this month.

LT: Do you have someone specifically working on gender or is it something you feel is simply incorporated through your system?

FH: Yes, definitely incorporated throughout the system. We don't have someone allocated specifically to gender.

LT: Why aren't young people using condoms?

FH: You can have a look at our impact survey. I will send it to you. The biggest reason, we've found, has to do with access. I think it's 25% who say they have no access. We have government condoms available at our Y-Centres in the clinics. But we're finding from the impact survey that condoms just aren't everywhere, such as in places where young people can't get to the clinics. This is a concern for us. We need to get more into condom distribution.

LT: Fiona, some of the research I've been looking at states that suggesting condom use may put young women at risk. Some other research suggests this may just be theoretical. Is there a way to address this in your messaging?

FH: Well, just going back to some of the other things, young people say that they have problems getting condoms. 20% say that they are too expensive, 18% say they are too embarrassed, and 23% say they battle to get condoms. If one is looking at sources for condoms we see that pharmacies are most likely with urban, more wealthy, white and Indian. But clinics are more likely to be rural, poor, African and coloured.

But going back to your question about women and being assertive. We're finding that women are insisting on condom use more. And they are being more assertive. I'm not pulling up statistics on if condom use is linked to violence, but we are seeing women more aggressive.

LT: In light of some of these struggles, and some of the economic struggles for young South Africans, is building a healthy lifestyle brand possible for everyone?

FH: We recognise that there are different levels. We do know that a lot of young people are being forced into these things. So it's a matter of being able to negotiate to a certain level. So, for example, somebody who is experiencing sexual abuse on a regular basis – well, how do you actually stop that? More than likely completely out of the realm of possibility to stop it for the young person. But to see if they can raise the possibility of negotiating to put the condom on. If you're going to do it, well do it. But can you protect both of us. So it's that kind of thing. But also realising that everyone's at a different level as well. So this is our overall message to try to increase condom usage, the more assertiveness, delaying and things. But obviously for some people this isn't a possibility.

LT: You receive your funding primarily from international sources, mostly the Gates and Kaiser foundations?

FH: Yes. Kaiser being the largest.

LT: Can you talk a little bit about what some of the advantages of working with those organisations are?

FH: Well the Kaiser Foundation is very proactive. They sit on our executive committee. It's a hands-on programme because we are a pilot programme for the world. Also, we get incredible feedback from them and it's nice having someone so on board with it, because it also helps financially. Often there might be things that wouldn't fit the budget and they say, no we'll make allowances for that. And that's really to our advantage. And, in fact, all of our funders are very proactive. They visit a lot. UNICEF, the Gates Foundation. And a lot of people who contribute to them, who give funding to those organisations also come and visit the programme, so there's a nice feedback to and fro.

LT: I used to work in New York City for a small strategic marketing corporation called Shepardson Stern and Kaminsky and they have been doing a lot of work with the Gates Foundation and that was how I originally heard about loveLife and some of the things you have been doing. They clued me into it and told me about some of the things going on.

FH: And also they market us very well overseas. Both the Gates and Kaiser Foundations. I mean, UNICEF as well. Really doing nice PR/marketing stuff for us. That's a help.

LT: On the flip side are there tensions that might come from working with such large, international organisations?

FH: I think with the hands-on sometimes you wish it might not be. But we really value everybody's input from all sides. The only thing, because we have so many visitors we tend to get sidetracked from that, the actual working on the grant. Because there are certain ones of us who have to be dedicated to that on the job as well. I mean the same way, you know, helping you out here. Those are the kind of things because loveLife is so high-profile I think we feel that a lot more than other NGO's as well.

LT: Do these relationships manage to keep you from having to keep looking for other potential investors or partners?

FH: I think that definitely with the funders we have they are looking for potential partners and investors, yeah. So, in a way our hosting a lot of people, there is always spin-off. It's great. And having two major funders like Kaiser and the Gates, um, they know where the next bit of funding is going and can be quite an influence as well.

LT: If you actually had to describe loveLife to a potential investor or partner in 2 or 3 sentences, what would you say?

FH: New lifestyle brand for young South Africans. It's the world's largest HIV/AIDS youth programme. And that's where we specifically mention HIV and AIDS programmes, otherwise it's always the lifestyle brand for young South Africans. And it's across the board. And I think the biggest thing at the moment is that the last three years we've shown that focusing on youth programmes is having a major impact on the course of the epidemic.

LT: Do you consider anybody or anything to be a loveLife competitor?

FH: No, we work with a lot of other youth organisations. I think it's just that our attitude and our look is that we don't treat them as competitors we all working together ultimately to achieve the same thing. And that's why we have the franchise component so that any other youth organisation doing similar work can come on board.

LoveLife Staff
Fiona Hodges
loveLife Head Office, Johannesburg
8 July 2002

(I have just been given collateral materials)

FH: The square publications are the ones for the parents. The youth ones – I think I mentioned how the parent ones look more fun than the young people's one and that's also just what people perceive. And then our two newspaper supplements.

LT: Who puts this together? (Referring to research book)

FH: The research was done, um, by Upton Associates, a research company. And they do the initial writing and then obviously we edit it, but it's coming from the researchers. Um and then we just lay it out and it's um, the research that's available in South Africa and then taking it all together and putting it into one thing.

LT: Putting it into one thing, okay. And do you put this together in-house, these things (referring to parent and adolescent info pamphlets)? Or is that outsourced?

FH: These are also outsourced in terms of giving a writer a brief. A very thorough brief on what are the objectives and things that the target audience is and the kind of things that they need to do. And there's quite an extensive editing process that it goes through as well on all the things. And then we need to take it back to the target audience – okay do you like it? What else do we need to add in? So for example, with the love Facts, when we first launched they were just little pieces of paper, not even as thick as this. Um, just two sides. And young people would read it and then chuck it. It didn't have any shelf life at all. And then they came and said they needed additional facts and things. So the original ones were condom use, contraceptives, uh, so the need to deal with peer pressure. And then the research is also showing that they wanted something that they could keep. Because part of the love Facts thing is that you might need it today, certain stuff, and then you chuck all the stuff that you don't need. And then when you are needing it you don't know who you can consult. So it's something then that people, they keep this booklet. And refer to it as they need it. So, okay, I'm at the peer pressure stage, okay, now I think I'm gonna do it, I'm ready for it so let me read up all about it. About pregnancy, contraceptives, STI's. Um, so they work their way through.

LT: And, now, where are these distributed primarily?

FH: All over the place. But anybody who phones through to the call centre or phones loveLife offices is able to get copies of these publications. Um...we package roughly 450 a day of different versions of it from the call centre side. And then there's a whole lot of – ours is mainly the bulk stuff. So, other organisations, youth organisations, companies, universities that request to get involved. Um, we don't charge to young people at all. It's all free for parents as well. The once off are all free. But I've got a little capitalist tendency, so if I know that a company has money, they have budgets for this, sure, pay the cover price for it cause it means that I can distribute more to other people. So we'll have given a whole – here's a hundred free but now start paying if you want ten more. And companies are happy to actually do that because they're next to nothing. I mean you're looking at paying R2 for this, so.

LT: What kind of companies are asking for it?

FH: Mainly the, the big national companies. So, like, Shell, Pfizer, the pharmaceuticals, the oil companies, the Anglos, DeBeers.

LT: And do most of those already have AIDS education programmes in place?

FH: Ja, and they combine –

LT: Your stuff with it?

FH: Yes. So they use our publications. And especially now on World AIDS Day a lot of companies are coming and saying "How can we get you involved? Can you come and speak?" It's not our target audience, but we can provide them with publications. Our target audience is 12 – 17. But obviously if we've got a spare day or weekend we'll do it. Um, but our resources are very limited with that. I mean, we're not a large organisation in terms of the number of people.

LT: Yeah, you said about 70. Didn't you?

FH: Ja, and then the way we're structured is obviously young people first. LoveLife initiatives first, other young people. So you'd rather go talk to a group of fifteen year olds.

LT: Yep, that's your first priority. Okay.

FH: And, um then we have set distribution to every loveLife initiative. They will have all the parent and youth publications. They've got these behind the scenes, but this isn't something you're going to put on display

because people just have a tendency to take as many publications – I mean it's that conference phenomenon, you just walk across every desk, take everything.

LT: Yes, I'm guilty myself.

FH: (Laughs). So we tend not to show any of the research stuff because it's not the target audience either. They have these (refers to loveFacts) and the posters, and then we also have the stuff for the parents and the parents do come into the centres, especially to the clinics they do. So it's S'camto, thethanathi, loveFacts and Tell Me More are always on display at the centres. So we distribute, what is it? It's one thousand of each of these publications every two months to the clinics, to the Y-centres, to the franchises, the train, the tours. And obviously if they run out, then they order more. But that's just ongoing. So anything loveLife will always have publications available. But when the people come and order in bulk, even if you're in Langa you will phone here and we'll send it down, because they aren't able to provide it in bulk. Also because we're trying to monitor these, it always feeds back into the research.

LT: Right, and your evaluation process. Now, are you getting any feedback or worries about these brochures being only in English?

FH: Um, the feedback has come from adults as opposed to young people. I still haven't had a young person pick up the phone and say, "Can I have a Zulu publication?" I've heard it by other loveLife initiatives that the parents are very chuffed because these (parent materials) are in Zulu, Sotho, Afrikaans and English. The reason we did it for the parents was because we knew that illiteracy, or literacy problems around reading in English. So, if we're truly going to get the buy-in it needed to be in the home, more of a home language. And those four cover 99% of the population.

LT: You said Zulu, Afrikaans...?

FH: SeSotho and English.

LT: Okay.

FH: Cause there's crossover, because if you speak Xhosa you will be able to read Zulu, and the same with all the Sotho – the North Sotho, South Sotho, Pedi, Venda can all read because of the similarity. So, um, um, there's been very very positive feedback around this from across the board and I've even had somebody who sat there with the publisher's guide, she's an Honours student in Publishing and went through it and just said from that point of view it just scores an A. It's clean, it's precise, we've bolded the words that need to be bolded. Um, it is easy to read. It's –

LT: It's compelling.

FH: Yeah, it's not written in a hard style to understand, you carry on reading it. It's also one of the ones that you like it enough to keep it rather than to just put it into the dustbin. And, um, so ja, generally very positive feedback. We do want to research the language issue. There was an organisation who offered to do it for us, but I haven't had the feedback from them, so it couldn't have been too much of an issue. Um, also, loveLife reaches enough young people in local languages. So at the Y-centres, it will be whatever local languages plus English as well. Um, our radio programmes are in local language.

LT: Now, are you finding it at all that you get more boys reading it or more girls? Or is fairly even, or can you actually tell?

FH: Fairly even, with a, slightly more leaning to the girls. And you'll see also the people who know about loveLife are slightly more leaning to young girls here.

LT: Why is that?

FH: Um, they have more information-seeking behaviour. It's something that is concerning them. Especially in that they do feel forced into having sex. They don't necessarily want sex at all. But it's actually been

pressurised. So they are more likely to go out and find information as well. It seems to be something across the world.

LT: Yeah? I wouldn't disagree. I wonder if it's an idea that sex is more the girl's responsibility? Or not? I don't know.

FH: It is the issue around, ja, pregnancy and protection and things, but it's not that big of one.

LT: Wait, in the research are you finding that they are more scared of pregnancy or more scared of HIV?

FH: HIV.

LT: Okay.

FH: HIV is top of the list. Followed by pregnancy, followed by crime. So, it's somewhere in here. (Looking through research)

LT: And how many do you survey?

FH: There were 2204. And interestingly enough the parents greatest concerns for the young people: AIDS first, sexual abuse second, crime third. So, also a pretty much similar thing.

LT: Okay.

FH: I think it's also in the vicinity of 53% of girls know about loveLife. Not too big a difference, if you're looking at the split between boys and girls, but it is in here. But, ja, for us TV and radio are the big ones that people are listening to and watching. So that's how we can reach them through the media. Raise the awareness of the brand. The call to action to get involved.

LT: And you don't in your marketing, or you said you do differentiate a little bit in these materials between talking to girls and talking to boys?

FH: Not really differentiating, but realising the different issues. So, yes, when there's an article on peer pressure it will have more of a stance to boys, because we know that that's the big issue for them. When it's around coercion, etc, then the stance is slightly more to girls. But, um, very very, important component of all the loveLife is looking at mutual respect and responsibility. That it is the responsibility of both boys and girls and the talking about it. So it's not one has more of a responsibility than the other.

LT: Sure.

FH: Just making people more gender aware. Very much the sexual health programme, the motivational programme is looking at how come it becomes acceptable that the boy can go out and play soccer and the girl stays at home and has to look after the other family members or cook and clean. Start questioning those things. Is that fair?

LT: And in doing that, do you reach any kind of resistance, you know, if somebody starts using, well "culture" is the reason that that happens, you know. Um, "In our culture, say, women are meant to do this and men are meant to do that." I mean, is that something that you confront often?

FH: Um, culture is a big one. But the main one is talk about it. "In our culture we don't talk about sex." And then that extends to the upper levels as well. But that's the biggest stumbling block that we had. Especially around getting parents to talk to their children. We did find, and it seems to be getting easier, but when we initially launched a Y-Centre, I know this was a big one, initially there were a lot of boys coming to the centre and the girls weren't coming and we started questioning why. And it was the issue around the parents didn't want the girls to come because they had their chores. So they go to school, because schooling is very important, but then after school they clean and cook, etc. And if they were now coming to the centre and not

doing their chores, then their marks would also suffer too. So they, um, were being kept away from the centre. So it was a matter of visiting parents, visiting schools, explaining what the concept of a Y-Centre was.

LT: Really? You had people going so far as to visit parents?

FH: Yes. And then the parents coming. So having open day for parents just to see what was available. And parents had started to see, especially around boys first, that marks were getting better. Discipline was getting better. They were starting to help more in the house as well. Um...and so there was now kind of a softening towards this, so girls started coming to the Y-Centre as well. Because you can come with your sibling. A lot of Y-Centres, you know, have a restriction on age. So it is only 12 – 17. But we don't have anything like that. So you will find at the youth centres, a lot of them are children. So, we'll say that it is acceptable because that's the way young people then come. Because they do have their family responsibilities. And that's how we also got the buy-in of the parents. So they were looking after the younger children. And the girls were still finding time to fit in everything as well. They were not getting help from the brothers and...so all and all a lot of positivity around it but then looking at, you know, if there is a problem so very quickly looking at a problem and then trying to find the means to rectify it instead of letting it just grow and grow.

And that's especially with the LoveLife program is we have to... there is no time to, okay, well let's see if it will start to resolve itself. We can't wait for that we have to step in and fix it. Um...which is why it is also very important the whole evaluation so, we know on a monthly basis how many girls how many boys that come in. Um...what are they enrolling in for? What do they say what will draw them all to the centers? In the beginning it was basketball. We chose basketball because of the uhhh, well, you know because both boys and girls can play it. The young girls were saying that only one girl came into it doesn't matter that the guys can't play netball we want to play netball so, you have to listen to what young people want and include that in. And one [] that some of these women are opposed to these things is beauty pageants they just love them. And if they got the line and that's what young people want after all the Y-Centres are for young people. So, yes you can have them in this LoveLife Y centre as far but you have to have the Mr. as well and, um...no swimming costumes and all the rest of it but you can have that show because it draws in young people. So, you can come from a fairly public health perspective. So, just listening to what young people want um...and we are quite open with it and with the mistakes that we make and we correct it.

In Orange Farm we went to a place where, um, this is a difficulty that we know from youth centres around the world, is that young people come in and so they start to join at age 16 and they still come in at age 20 which means that other young people are starting to feel, well, that, you know, that the center isn't for them. So, you have this [] group that stays uhh...the young people were starting to, you know, I have been here for 2 years so this is where I now belong even though they have moved on. So, dealing with that kind of thing where now you need to admit that you can't just come and visit the Y centre you need to get involved in the activities and start sharing your experience and that's how you see it turn around quite quickly.

LT: Uh, huh.

FH: So, yes, if we search to try to take the turn around times to improve and just tweak the programs as much as possible.

LT: Where are you around the country? Who are you talking to when you do the research?

FH: Um...I'm always doing this tour in rural areas and urban. People who are more exposed to that kind of [] know that in certain areas where there is a Y centre their level of understanding of loveLife should be higher than in areas where...uhhh...there isn't so much of a physical presence.

LT: Right.

FH: Um...we know as well from the latest research here that the more they are exposed to quite different programs that the better the messaging take out is. So, we need to make sure that there isn't just one initiative that they are exposed to but a whole mixture. So, how can we increase them to print to go everywhere so that they are listening to the radio program, getting stuff to print, and maybe the trainees to go. So, it's a nice mixture of programs.

LT: Right.

FH: So there is always that level of awareness- how can we triplicate the reach of the programmes throughout.

LT: Right to kind of get behaviour change to take place.

FH: So, I mean ideally there is a lack of billboard as the Y centre they will be listening to radio, they'll get stuff to print, that there is also a clinic working in the vicinity. The Y centres have clinical services but quite often you do need to refer. So, we can do things like testing, basic checks, blood pressure and things like that but we can't really get into the bigger clinical readings.

LT: Right.

FH: So it's kind of a first point of entry for clinical services. Umm...that also works nice when there is a clinic left. So that is the ideal to get all things into the community.

LT: How do you decide on your media buys and placement of billboards? I see a lot of them on the highways and I've been wondering how you actually decided where to place and when they come out?

FH: Well, initially the billboard campaign arised to raise awareness to be a year program and get people talking and than have the billboards withdrawn. Uh, but the billboards really are the ones that get people talking and initially we placed them in high density areas. So, we got to where most of South Africans live...Gauteng, in the townships, and that's where we positioned billboards. And, um, slowly but surely we would be changing that after we came out of the campaign. Obviously you can only have a billboard where an already existing billboard is or if the billboard company decides to lease the reach. Umm and we have been moving them more out to rural areas. Umm...we have 2,000 on billboards, I am going to get those figures because I can't remember the exact number, umm..but it is the largest rural holding of billboards. We increased it this year by a 1,000 in only rural areas.

LT: Again, is there a language issue on feedback that you get?

FH: Well, the language issue is from parents not from young people and our target audience 12 to 17...um... In certain areas it might be an issue, you understand, that if we put a word that is too...not a common everyday word that is when we have the problems. So, yes we have had problems -- I don't know if you remember we had a choice of billboard it was hot prospects called facts it had little pink boxes?

LT: No.

FH: Those are two bigger words "prospects" and, you know, understand that the ones "your body anybody" that worked beautifully -- it is called Red Cars that also worked really well. But [] that didn't so you got to have a good understanding of the word and that's why in the community we do as much as possible formative research before to see if people have that level of understanding. You know the young people love the billboards with the colour and they are a talking point, they do like pictures they do read them and they learn English from them. It is one of the things that is considered cool and hip if you understand the billboards. So, there is this mad rush to find the word, did I get it right and etc. and share that information. Which is part of the billboards is the fact that you are encouraging somebody to think about it and talk about it and phone.

Um, why we stuck with them it is still a source for people to go to the billboards to get Theta junctions number. We do know that in some communities the understanding is not there of Theta junction --the call centre. That's more within the industries, uhh, the theta meaning "to talk" is also, if you speak Zulu/Sotho you understand theta and also in the Afrikaans community they wouldn't necessarily understand theta.

LT: Do young people think LoveLife and think sex? Do they think LoveLife and think HIV/AIDS? Do they think LoveLife and think, ok, that's a cool place to go? Do you have any idea about that?

FH: It's a mixture of it but they do see it as it is something that is positive for South Africa, for young people AIDS comes into it. Ahh, across the board it seems they think we are an AIDS organization which essentially we are. Um..but we position ourselves as a lifestyle brand.

LT: Right, okay, right.

FH: And more important in the adult community they are seeing it as um, they are seeing it in isolation not really engaging in the programs. They see billboards [] interact more and their understanding....

LT: I wondered just because some of the students I had at UCT are so inundated with AIDS messaging that they are completely turned off to it. So, I wondered if they associated LoveLife with AIDS or if, for some of them it would be a barrier to entry because they just kind of go, you know, there's one more AIDS message.

FH: Before we launched LoveLife that was the concern that people had switched off. And 95% awareness but still 10% condom usage still rates, you know, on the major upward swing and people were turned off because we had traditional HIV /AIDS carols: condomize, protect yourself all, of that stuff. And the common thing was that a young person across the board was listening to branded advertising and marketing. They aspired to things like Levis, Nike, Diesel – that's the message that really are where young people are at. Um..they aren't worried about what is happening at a Government level this and that and the next thing they are living their lives. Um...that's why we positioned ourselves as a brand because – yes – they had switched off they weren't listening to these things. They were reading it but not internalising it and saying –Ok, well, that could affect me. So the messaging, um...we do get at that the more direct, say, AIDS bills. But that's going back to the past we had that message and so it hasn't changed.

LT: Right.

FH: Because as you say the students just switch off. Um...the doom and gloom and don't. You do switch off to it and it's part of positivity and things are more positive and people are more in tune. Um..Also, ours are more engaging...the billboard messaging which has carried out throughout and when you engage more with the LoveLife program things are discussed so, you will see the billboard – one of the billboard topics, as a topic on a radio program throughout as well so, so, I can score with any chick I want am I the man? So, are you the man if you are scoring and what does scoring mean? So, you start unpacking it all and actually it's not so great to be a player. So, it's like what guys think. So, you have the protagonist and you know um..and the greatest debate and the whole issue and it is something that people listen to. Because there are people who are players and they are quite convinced that that is cool. And, um, you are trying to change the mindset that that isn't actually a cool person. A cool person is someone who does, you know... and that is why we wouldn't put anything as direct as saying "Say No To Sex".

LT: Yeah. Yeah, those are interesting especially because – how just in reading them to me how they kind of...they're built-up around gender identity a lot of them, you know, a guy is cool if he has lots of partners and it's just kind of interesting debunking those myths across the board.

FH: So, these theories are very much around behaviour change and the reasons why young people are having sex, so [] and sex for money um..

LT: When did this launch?

FH: Um..last month.

LT: Okay. Definitely I can look at these and see the results of research and actually, I mean a lot of this – does it sound like the voice of young people?

FH: Mmmm. I think difficulty here it that there are a lot of words. Um. And in another words they are difficult terms to understand and they are still in colonial language

LT: Right.

FH: and political jargon. Um...we know our target audience is not driving so they aren't the ones concentrating on the road and they do have the time to look around. Um..they are also walking past billboards a lot. And the fact that they are supported by other media programs that's where we get the real bind in discussion and engagement. Um..they also aren't just...I know that people in the Ad industry, people are saying that the messaging is creative and sensationalism and all the rest of it. And there is a lot of research that goes into it like all the reasons why young people have sex those are expressed in the billboards. Um. The main thing that we want is behaviour change and delaying their first sexual experience or their second sexual experience.

(Tape Change.)

FH: ...that they may know what a research print looks like, um., the advertising page of the [] editorial um and we researched this too what the young people like. They love the competitions, they love the fact that they can write in to the letters page write to the editor. They like the Agony Aunt, [who is a Psychologist, the Agony Uncle. Um...we know that they like competitions so after our first year, um, we then refined it. Um..young people wanted a PenPal section so we introduced that after the first supplement. They wanted more things around celebrities so that's why we have bundled blurbs. We have even more young people get involved so now they go out and interview celebrities. So, you can write us and tell us who you want to interview and then we will make sure that that []. Um. Fashion big one the branding so, and then the centrefolds or the student lay-out billboards or something relating to that outlet people can keep as well. The LoveLife program or the activities that they can get involved in and part of the cool hip thing is what is the latest radio, TV, books, movies etc.

LT: And who comes up with these?

FH: And that's young people, as well so they write and they review. And it just reinforces...we have been running a competition for Levis, for Levis shoes-footwear, and the number of um..competition entries that we've received is just phenomenal –absolutely phenomenal. Um..so you can just see that again they have bought into the brand that they understand that one because that's what they are responding to.

So, those are the kind of things that get people hooked into it b/c there is the chance of winning and that's how we are reaching people across the board. Yes, you do get entries from rural areas and they do have chances of winning. Um..a big question around the distribution of our newspapers is the Sunday Times [is only popular with certain amount of people] we now produce 180,000 extras of these every edition and distribute it to the LoveLife initiatives. And also if you phone Theta junction today you will get the latest one as well. And so there is always that service – it is a free phone call and you will get a publication for free. So you are not disadvantaged if you do it that way.

LT: How often does this come out?

FH: Twice a month.

LT: I can't believe you only have 70 people on staff here for all that goes on here it is kind of a lot. It really is. And this is the centre of everything?

FH: Yes.

LT: And so how many people are employed here?

FH: Um..I am not too sure. People are coming and going there are about 40 of us and the call centre is actually 32 people and they are also on shift and they rotate from 1 to 9 and then weekends and public holidays as well.

LT: And how are they trained?

FH: And they are trained...um..they come from a counselling background and then they go through 2 weeks of sexual health training and the experience of the LoveLife program. Um..and then they also do or have a rotation so counsellors go to loveLife games and act as counsellors there and then they can also see how the games operate. They go on the train for awhile, the tours and all of those initiative too. Um. So they aren't just

behind the phones. And we are a bit short for the moment because we have a team in Barcelona for the AIDS conference. They had a very successful presentation yesterday. So we took 6 young people and 2 LoveLife staff, our CEO and our [treatment] manager.

LT: And what was the presentation? Was it primarily on adolescence and HIV?

FH: It was um..the impact of LoveLife from an evidence based program and the impact that it can have...and yeah, just presenting us.

LT: You said you have a lot of interest from around the world is anyone trying to replicate LoveLife?

FH: Yeah, We have delegations all the time. Um. To see if they can replicate but it's not something that you can just go and replicate around um. Ours had 2 years of research before we were launched. It was called the National Adolescent Sexual Health Initiative NASHI for short...um...while the research was taking place so pulling it all through checking -you know, what was working what wasn't working and that is how they were able to find the brand. And if you just went to Botswana you couldn't just replicate LoveLife there you have to see where young people are at. Are they brand aware? What are their concerns? How do you reach young people? Um..we also chose not to go the school route in terms of getting it [the key in development of change] there are other youth organizations doing that. We wanted still wanted something seen as academic based something when the schools are closed a place where they can interact. So, it is continuing the LoveLife brand.

LT: When you decide to take on someone as a franchise what kind of training or collateral material what is it that they exactly get from you?

FH: They do have an initial training. What happens is we go to the organisation they apply to us or approach us or we identify them through one of the other programs if the train stopped and we see there is an organisation that is doing really great work well, why don't you become a franchise? And we put them in contact. We go and evaluate and then the franchise people check out the training, the way they operate, the way they respond, if there is consistencies with LoveLife. Um,so, apart of us is not dictating we do know that ASBtinence is the way to go in terms of if more young people are ASBtaining the less there is going to be an epidemic. We never go to a young person and say ASBtain because that's not going to work. If another organization is doing that we would rather say,"listen we don't think the match is there." And it's not that we disagree with ASBtinence it is just the approach that we used so that young people don't switch off to our messaging. So they check all of that out and then they fill-out evaluation forms and come back and decide yes they are or no they are not. How can they reach criteria that they still need to do to be fully franchised. Um, we don't differentiate like the largest organizations you know b/c they have more recourses etc.they can become first or anything like that. It is quite often that the 5 person organization can do just as much in terms of supporting us. And they do have a week long training around loveLife.

LT: Does that happen here?

FH: We..we..um..pool them together at a training centre. We don't just do that once we do it all together and bring in a whole lot of franchises. Because you share experiences and you get to meet and you can form linkages as well right from the beginning. Um.and everybody from each LoveLife initiatives goes out. So I will go out and talk to them about branding and training people will come out and talk about the training experience there. Um...so you are meeting one on one the people responsible. And the first one is always LoveLife and the way we do things and part of it um...S'camto Groundbreakers, which is our reality program putting young people out in the wilderness etc. What are the kind of things are you learning everyday and bringing it back to sexual health. So that is part of what we call the groundbreakers experience is you are assimilating the same kind of things that you are dealing with in a lifetime in a short period of time and trying to bring it back. SO, yeah we would make them a climbing wall and then come down it. What are the emotions you went through? Was it fear? So, what was it like for sex? All of the similar feelings that you go through. And did you have an adrenaline rush? Was there a sense of accomplishment? Of achievement? Yeah. So. That's how we replicate the emotions and everyone in LoveLife has to have gone through that kind of experience as well to see why we do it. Why do we have a TV program that's getting young people to ride horses if they have never ridden a horse to go through it because that is also what sex is. And we supply them with all of our material so

they get access to all of this as well. And they do come back at a later stage for a thorough sexual health training as well the intricacies so they are able to answer those types of questions.

Um...part of also the initial training is motivation. Motivation is a big part of loveLife. I think I went through that triangle underlining everything is Talk About It. So, that is our payoff line encouraging parents to talk about it and young people to talk about it and you do that through motivation. You can't change somebody the motivation has to come from them. You can motivate someone to want to change their behavior. So we do run a motivational program at the Y-Centres so that young people can get involved so that they are feeling more confident especially young girls because we know it is around self-esteem issues that pulls them into having sex. If I have sex he will love me more if I do it.

LT: So you have a motivational program that makes them feel better about themselves so that don't feel as if they have to have sex in order to feel good about themselves.

FH: Yes and the franchise holders will go through that as well. And when they get back they get the publications and we have a signboard as well and we know it wasn't a part of the initial package. We are finding that a lot of them don't have a TV or video and what is our large component it is the media component so in order for young people who are visiting that franchise to engage with us fully they need to be able to have that component. So we do go in and brand a certain part of their offices with LoveLife. We can't afford to do the entire office structure to re-brand it as a Y-Centre clearly as you walk in everything is LoveLife. A franchise still needs to retain its own identity and all its other programs so we put in beanbags, we paint some areas purple, we put in a tv/video and publication stands. And also young people who has experienced another LoveLife program can go in and know that that is the LoveLife that I know of—it's not a watered down version of LoveLife.

FH: Do you want to see our corporate video?

LT: Yeah, I'd love to.

Viewing of LoveLife corporate video

LT: So that's your corporate video.

FH: Mmm.

LT: And that's what you show mostly to funders and—

FH: And people who want to know more about it.

LT: Okay. It's nice.

FH: Would you like a copy of it?

LT: If I could get one that would be great. Yeah. Sure.

LT: I am just curious how... what you personally think of an organization just like this social marketing and how positive are you as this being a means for social transformation?

FH: Very, very positive.

LT: Yeah?.

FH: Mmm...um...if you could just see the number of letters that we receive from people. The e-mails, the phone calls, and the fact that we do get over 60,000 phone calls to the call centre. Umm...and they are on relationships and we do get people who write back to us or phone us to say thank you, you have changed my life. These aren't um...from the corporate video obviously we are trying to put the positive aspect on it but there was no script there they were things from young people. And on a daily basis we are getting that

feedback. So very, very positive...um...according to the impacts they have made 62% of South Africans aware of LoveLife, 64% are now choosing to Abstain from sex as a result of engaging with LoveLife messaging. Ah, that is reported behaviour change so we're not saying it is actual.

LT: Right.

FH: We need to see statistics are now standing up...um...supporting that um...the latest survey...um...that was released this past month by government umm...ante-natal clinics, that is the people you get your number one AIDS figures, is saying that young peoples incidence is now decreasing. Um and it was quite a marked decrease- a 5 point something % decrease...um...which they are attributing to the affects of the youth organizations and the massive youth campaigns which is quite clearly LoveLife. They didn't come out and say that.

LT: Right.

FH: Um...although if you look at LoveLife is their main youth campaign. They support us financially. Even in the other press releases they are given additive [] support to the LoveLife campaign because it is supporting us.

LT: What is it 5 point ...what percent?

FH: Mmm.

LT: Okay, Okay.

FH: I think that would be better (*laugh*). Sooo very, very positive. Um. So, for example last week they were in on Thursday. Um..I took 3 gentlemen from overseas from a German TV campaign on filmmaking in Australia and National radio through to the Y-Centre. Both of them were only planning on being there only a short while but they had been assigned to do the LoveLife program. 12 hours later they left.

LT: Wow.

FH: They were just blown away. They had to record everything. And they were saying that they almost wished they had programs like this. When I was there, there was a youth organization, ah, an educational one, that had an American consultant out, and she was saying she wished she had these things out in America. The people who interact with the outreach programs are just blown away on our level of support and how positive people are. No, I love LoveLife.

LT: Good. Great. Good.

FH: Um...things also, just around the distribution if there was anybody covering that um... I didn't mention that anybody has access to our publications. We are funded by South Africa and we do get a lot of organizations from the rest of Africa and the world –definitely the rest of Africa wanting our stuff. We do send, we send up to 20 of everything through to them so, their number- in fact on a daily basis we are sending out our stuff elsewhere. They are able to see the Web site, as well, if they have access to um. They are required to share the messaging. Um...they are...um...a number of...there have been exchange programs but we don't have the [] to send people out to check to see what else is happening that is what our researchers did. And that is how we get our information not from a young person going into a country and saying this is what they do and bringing it back. But we do have a lot of so called youth exchange programs that these young people come here and spend up anything up to a week with us and just going from one programme to the next and seeing how they can bring the programme to their countries.

LT: Right. You're not at any of the universities and technikons because it is 12 to 17 is that right?

FH: Yeah.

LT: I still find that the students I have interacted with at U.C.T. have a mass awareness of LoveLife.

FH: Yes, there's a lot of cross-over with younger children and with the university and technicians and parents and things. There are a lot of people in their late teens and early twenties that also needing of the information because they didn't have this information. It's not that we don't care or exclude them or anything we have to be very focused in our approach. So this is the age group that is going to have the biggest impact and we are going to carry on focusing on them. And we know that there is a spillover and we get a huge demand from tertiary institutions to come in and run programs and all the rest of it but we physically can't manage to do it. Every now and again like for example Vista University the other day said can't we just come and set up an exhibition stand as part of activities? And yes we did because we had the day available to do that but it is not something that is part of our daily activities and planned for. Also they would love us to get us involved in student dairies, their radio stations, and making them franchises at all different levels. Helping them with their curriculum development...um...I am always amazed at all the different departments at tertiary institutions that are running LoveLife courses- that is part of their curriculum. From time to time we actually done it because it actually helps us with our presentation skills is to go out- Ral does it, the Communications Department-so we go and lecture to the students well, because they do study LoveLife. And that is the latest department at UCT, the Mathematics Dept., Applied Mathematics, they are studying all of the LoveLife research so they take all of our research documents and because it is a more interesting form. Yeah, and it is a cross marketing Communications, P.R., Maths, Science, Research and there are many people like yourself who have chosen to study the LoveLife program so we spend a lot of time-

(END OF TAPE.)

Nicola Petersen
Executive Producer of Lovelife
LoveLife Head Office, Johannesburg
8 July 2002

LT: I am doing a masters at UCT and my focus is on gender and I am looking at Lovelife as an organization and how it manages to be gender aware especially in its marketing executions ... so that sums it up pretty briefly. I'd just like to hear what you do.

NP: Well basically we have an um ... agreement with SABC. An agreement which allows us to produce twenty-six parts a year television program of half-hour shows and a one-hour World Aid Day special and, um ... a series of public service announcements as well and a youth campaign and a parent campaign. And currently we have a series called it is on Aids [] ,S'camto Groundbreakers coming out of the S'camto sort of sub-brand and Groundbreakers being ah ... ah ... a series of pursuits and it takes a group of young people and they are in two teams and they have to live out in various parts of the country for a period of a month and during that period they do a whole lot of different tasks and they compete against two teams and all their tasks are set against as a metaphor for real-life experiences and to talk about issues that affect young people.

Um ... and, uh ... so that is a part of our big series at the moment and the parent campaign which is a series of commercials on the theme of open-up, getting parents to talk to their children about sex, relationships anything to do with [children]. And then we are having a campaign that is more high profiled politicians or celebrity personalities that also encourage parents to talk to their teenagers about sex. Yeah ... um ... that is some of our current stuff this year we have done various programs. World Aids Day we did a series of three short sort of docu-dramas looking at young men and looking at how their behaviour impacts versus young women. And we are looking at young boys in South Africa three young boys who were in their early twenties and what was their sexuality as they grew up and looking at their experiences. I don't know if you need to see some of the work but I have a lot in this office I can show you um ... and in terms of the gender issues obviously the questions we ask on the series on SABC at the moment we are trying to do a balance in term of gender. Trying to be reflective also of the demographics in term of race and language, um, and, um, obviously the questions we pose that are geared to males and females how did the male answer how did the female answer. And working within the parameters of the communications strategy every year last year we looked at risk taking behavior and trying to look at what is in their mind you know [we are addressing] their hopes and dreams of what they want and uh ... they ... uh ... whether to get involved and having sex - when is the best time and when do you feel

personally that you are ready for sex and um ... and ... um ... yeah, so we have designed a whole lot of materials that we have gone with. Like this have you seen this?

LT: No.

NP: Oh, it went out yesterday. So this is the series and we have a game that we designed that has gone out to schools that they have to play it, they have to play it in order to watch each and every episode. So, we raise issues like who is more responsible for teenage pregnancy boys or girls both? Issues like that. Um ... issues like who is responsible for carrying condoms? Girls or boys or both. Issues like that one. Can all people contract HIV-true or false? Which is the riskier way to have sex wearing condoms or flesh-on-flesh? You know there are different ways ... these are the participants they range from 15 to 19 they come from all around the country and they...this are the two teams they are, this is their first day and we shot this in the Northern part of the country in a place called Woodspruit near Blyde River Canyon it is an actual mountain range the contours of where we were the houses are over here. They lived here and all of the activities happened in a 10 kilometre radius and they had to do ... they did various things like mountain climbing to white-water rafting, hiking, horseback riding and every three days they have an Eskom 20 which means they come together to talk on issues around the first ... the first discussion on Episode 3 was what informs individual versus group identity and from there we went into the theme of ... the theme of ... yeah, ah ... what values are important for a person to practice safe sex in a group or an individual – they spoke about how group values are individual values and how that impacts on peer pressure and how that relates to how people get involved in sexual behavior especially young boys its expected that you should be sexually active or otherwise you aren't a man – you know those issues for females they pressurize me if they love me for sex – those types of things those discussions around that as well um ... another one was around the power of seduction who has the power of seduction? Is it the male or female and the team had to form a ritual where they had to discuss it ...and uh, and it is currently on SABC at the moment on Tuesday night at 6. Yeah, so ...

LT: How do you develop most of the content?

NP: Well, we um ... we obviously ... um ... look at the outcomes we want to have we look at the top [twelves] and the week's research. We do a lot of formative and post-evaluation of the series all around the country. So we gather data from that and the questions we asked about what they found interesting and challenging what types of topics we should explore when it comes to relationships and teenagers. And we obviously look at different formats of television and try to see if it is working at this time and try to capture a sense of what [] dramatic audience or either we are being too didactic and it comes across as just being more lifestyle. It is interesting in that way. So in the messaging it is layered in the sense that it is not just around what they are saying it is how they live or what they aspire to do or being part of a team or the dynamics that happen. So the messaging is operating on a number of levels, it's not just operating verbally the way they deal with one another team issues.

LT: Right.

NP: And obviously we cater them in a positive environment even though it is difficult in the tasks they do daily are very harsh and the conditions are harsh. They are living in the heat and they have very bare necessities and they don't have any luxuries in that town and we still cater them a very beautiful positive lifestyle versus against drugs, gangs or you know, you could use that but we chose to use ... the sort of more sporty healthy living approach with this particular program. We have had lots of programs we have done a lot I mean before this we had a program which was also S'camto, S'camto means to talk it is *tsotsi* talk.

We also had young people going around the country interviewing other young people. We trained 15 young people we trained to use cameras and interview and they spoke to young people so this was really a monologue or a travelogue of young peoples views around the country. And then we had another series we did small documentaries around a theme like sex and body image, or sex and the media, sex and HIV and STDs. We did a whole lot of different programmes in those programmes we had a studio debate which we had at Y-Centres we had a travel studio we put at the Y-Centres around the country and we gave the locals or the locals who use the Y-Centres to be part of the panel and they would discuss whatever the issues were about like misconceptions of sex, why you do it and how you do it at a young age ... um ... we also have a program, uh ... that goes out, uh ... on SABC 2 that uh ... is profiled on Lovelife Games which is in partnership with the

United Schools Sports Association and that is a 13-part series half-an-hour and it's a Saturday afternoon program. It combines the whole ... it is shot at the provincial, regional and national games and we try to find characters who obviously reflect messaging through these sporting codes and we go to talk to them and they are quite character narrative driven type stories around the sports.

LT: What are the strengths for using this medium?

NP: What are the strengths? I think it is the ... uh ... the ... aim of the television in media really is to create an awareness of dialogue. I think from the lovelife model on behaviour change really happens much more on the grassroots level like at community centres where you can engage on a much deeper level on a day-to-day program over an extended period. This is really to create an awareness and dialogue generated through the media and obviously most people watch television so it is a high access. I mean they do watch these ... when we do our impact studies we are aware of that through our television [run] we do first and foremost. Obviously it is a great tool to get up and do...

LT: And what are your limitations, on the flipside?

NP: Well I mean obviously you can only have 10 young people in a series as opposed to everybody, which would be fantastic. I think people certainly ... we have a very active Web site and we have e-mail live, it is a whole multi-media project, a whole lot of cross-media projects. And people aspire to be a Groundbreaker they want to become part of the programme they want to know how to become a Groundbreaker. Whether people judge the behavior change I don't know because it is hard to judge. I am not dealing with that on that level obviously they are tracking it maybe in five years we could contribute something towards it, I can't say.

But what do I think the limitations are? It is pre-recorded, it is not live so you don't have people to phone in and engaging in the debate and stuff like that, like radio is more media change radio is great people calling in and arguing here you've got 10 kids we might give them themes what they are saying is not script. There are times there are misconceptions or []. So there are limitations and also because it is about talking you don't want the person to say what you want them to say or you might get them to debate. So that is why it is important when you do a programme you need a diverse group of characters otherwise it becomes boring or flat. I mean it is interesting because in the second series both the ... in the case of the red team, they just wanted to win and they were very hooked on the winning and gain. And it seems the other teams were just more emotional they were able to fight and articulate decisions on a different level they weren't just about winning. So I realize ... we interview them it is so extensive we have over 800 to 900 people on file. We go around the country and we interview people through team building to see who can go together. So it is an extensive process we ask like what do you do, what do you think? And also we look for slightly older people this time because they have real life experiences that they can reflect on which is also a daring move because they are on television and they do have to go home at the end of the day. So there are limitations because sometimes drama is more effective. It is used to create that role. It is hard you know some of these Groundbreakers series ... they ... I mean some ... they haven't had easy lives and after they have spent a month together and at the end of the month we do a debriefing and after a month we bring them back together and explain what could happen because they are on TV and stuff. It really is a transforming experience for all of them it is amazing. Most of them have really grown from having spent their time with seeing young people going through similar things and seeing that they are not the only one in the world. It really gives them a sense of ... ah, sense of well, you see it is really amazing to see them walk away with who they really are. It is certainly an enriching experience and have people really be challenged. So, ja, I mean we are on the air at half-past 6.

LT: Have you been with Lovelife since its onset?

NP: No, I joined lovelife around two years ago and when I joined they'd been running for a year I think. They started September '99 and I joined in 2000. And in that point in time they had just done one series and they had to commission it outside with a production company and I was actually working at SABC I was involved with training in the industry for about 10 years and then I came eh, ah ... eh... the woman that started up lovelife in the media division and she approached me so I came to work here and we started doing television in house. So, I, ja, the team just seemed to be growing and we have more and more people coming.

LT: How many people do you have working?

NP: Well, on this production we have about 50 to 60 people excluding the cast, just the crew. They vary, they vary from a crew of about 10 people to 70 people it just depends. I have an accountant that works full-time and I have a live producer that works full-time so there are three of us that are full-time but the rest of are all, they come as record or production staff. Obviously one has a core of people that you take to you know like I have one or two young students that are regulars that have been working here for a longtime for the past year. So there is like various um ... various people that come and go and different creative people and I work with a whole lot of young people in the industry.

LT: Right. Right. Do you have an inkling of your audience, do you know if there are more boys watching or more girls?

NP: We do have that but um ... but you actually want the impact study?

LT: Sure.

NP: I can give that to you though I can get it to you a break down. I can't exactly remember the exact figures but I think it was 55:45.

LT: Girl/Boys?

NP: Yeah ... sometimes it varies sometimes it is more boys who are interested it just depends. Obviously the boys in the research say, ah, we know the girls are gossiping and they never want to get the action and that stereotype stuff you get you get that type of response. Like the typical ... um ... the typical scenario of they want the action versus the talk and the girls want the talk and not so much action so it is that [balances]. Like when you ask them what episode did you enjoy or what episode did you enjoy the most you will get varied answers from the girls and the boys. But also even in the debates and the discussions they have, like, they have amongst themselves or on the set they [typically] do talk gender issues like what the boys quickly do what the girls can't do. Issues of physical strength, issues of expectation, issues of who should cook who should wash up, issues of who should clean the house. We had all of them but certainly those things tend to come up normally and then even discussions about girls who dress provocatively are asking to be raped girls saying I am a victim you know the normal, you know the typical sort of arguments that boys and girls go into without going into very deep you know they just make those assumptions. You know we had counselors and a psychologist that worked with them at the end of the day to debrief and talk about issues if there has been a conflict or even perceptual issues like rape ... like ... like ... like last series there was this typical thing you know you hear the boy saying 'well, she's wearing the short skirts and we explained to them about gender violence and issues around that and those types of things. There is a lot of work that happens off camera that isn't always revealed after.

LT: And is that a directive coming from you that that needs to happen?

NP: Well I think the aim is ... yeah, the aim ... is because, because really because we have a certain set of outcomes and we have a limited time we have to make thirteen programmes and we literally have a day and a half to film each program. So it's not like we have a month or two months to hang around and hope that they say ... so there is that aim of ... well it is just around support why they are there they are not at home they are in unfamiliar territory they are not with their families and will people who are looking out after them. So a lot of it is around that so when stuff comes out it naturally flows out.

LT: Okay, I see you have to go. Thank you for your time.

NP: You're welcome.

Cheryl Abraham
Editor, S'camto Print
LoveLife Head Office, Johannesburg
8 July 2002

CA: I don't exactly know where you are coming from or exactly what you want to know but I will give you a broad overview and then you can ask questions.

LT: Okay, that's fine.

CA: loveLife has got two mainstream sort of commercial publications running at the moment: S'camto Print and Thethanathi. S'camto Print which is my baby um ... it's a fortnightly publication in the *Sunday Times* which the biggest selling weekly newspaper and besides going to the readers of the *Sunday Times* we also print an extra 200,000 about give or take um ... and, we send that to the Y-Centres, the NAFCI clinics, the loveLife Games and all other loveLife projects. Basically we call S'camto Print a youth lifestyle magazine so we will talk about anything that affects young people and the issues that they may face, areas of interest, and that type of thing so it is very broad. And um ... we decided to make it a very entertainment-based medium because we found that young people don't want to be taught in their free time. So, um we try to package it in such a way so that it looks like an entertainment magazine and they do get all their entertainment, their book reviews, quizzes all that kinds of thing but also within that there is packaged a very comprehensive sexual health or lifestyle message.

[People] have been more or less saying um, except that the independent group of newspapers which is actually *Sunday Times* competition wanted their own publication so we actually had to create a new publication for the independent group. So we started out with a four-pager, which is very sexually health focused going into sexual issues: masturbation, after sex, contraception so, much more sexually-health focused this one. Um, we then, after a few months, decided it wasn't working because we weren't getting any feedback from our readers and found that it was because they thought that they were being educated so they looked at it too heavy and threw it away. So we re-launched it this year into an 8-pager where we put a lot more entertainment into it and tried to make it much more friendly to read. These two publications are very much aligned technically they are very much focused on [friendly] but we tried to make it you know two different publications on the mere assumption that people who read it that they might not necessary have read S'camto before and if they have they are going to get something different out of this. That is the big challenge there.

Yeah, pretty much I guess the way the statistics of the whole loveLife scheme of things is about you know well-rounded young people um ... well-informed I think very much from the information point of view where we are coming from and we are very much about promoting you know a good self-esteem, believing in yourself, making good choices, having hope for the future, it is your it is what you make of it so ... it is kind of what we ... the philosophy that we follow. In terms of Thethanathi, like I said it is very young so we haven't done much research um ... with that but with S'camto print we have done a personal survey which had a response of about a thousand, just over a thousand. From our target audience our response is 100% and um ... it seems that what we are setting up to achieve in terms of people being more self-confident being more aware of what is going on around them, feeling more empowered to make certain choices that is what we believe in and the response it started of as a 12-pager once a month in the *Sunday Times* and we've gone to a 16-pager every two-weeks and really it has grown from there. I think from the *Sunday Times* point of view their investment as much as a business opportunity and social responsibility it is also about growing out reach and growing big and young people don't usually read newspapers so for them that's what it was about so I think it is working for them. They did their own bit of research and found that on the week that S'camto print goes out their sales go up by 80,000 so which was great for them and better for us. So yeah Thethanathi will go and with this one we waited a year and we did research and now it is our second year and our birthday soon and we will be doing another research.

LT: Have you been with this one from the beginning?

CA: Yeah.

LT: Okay, and your background before that is...?

CA: I worked for Prime Media publishing, which they were mixed trade publications so I was working on industrial magazines up to newspapers. So a very different to this, but yeah when I was given this opportunity I jumped to it because it is loveLife because it is young people you know it is kind of where my strengths are. I think that has worked for us because young people see parents as their enemy because we are so open and

straight forward about everything but um ... young people see us as sort of on their side because whenever we are descriptive we give you all the choices and hope that you obviously make the better choices but we are very descriptive.

LT: How do you develop your articles?

CA: Um ...very much some of it does come from letters we receive for example in the Agony Uncle column there is a trend of questions and we might decide to do something around that. We sort of travel a lot go to the Y-Centres and have very informal focus groups and find out what young people are interested in what they want to know about we have focus groups here. And so that does help us a lot with sculpting to the jargon when it comes to sketching out the Sunday times it is very much the kind of split there.

LT: I will tell you know why I am here. I am at UCT doing a masters and my focus is actually on gender and I am looking at loveLife as an organisation and how it manages to be gender aware and talk to audiences differently especially in light of the fact that you have such an enormous growth in HIV/AIDS in young girls. So I am just wondering in light of that, as far as your readership is concerned do you think that more boys are reading it or more girls? Do you feel that developing your content if it is geared towards either or?

CA: We try to gear it towards 12 to 17 year-old teenager whether a girl or a boy, gay or straight we try not to let that factor into it but, I think, I am not sure why, but I do think we are read more by girls but I don't know why if it is because girls are more socially aware or what the difference is but looking at all the research and finding how much impact gender or stereotypes or the way we have been brought up how much that is still so or all the big stereotypes, young girls having a higher rate of HIV because they sleep with older men and that kind of thing in fact, we are heading into the kind of thing we talk about I think we try to balance it out Girls: be feel empowered – know that you can say no, know that you have a choice in what you are doing and Guys: Respect that and know that she is her own person. So we do try but we try not to gender advise them too much but keeping in mind that young women in this country are the less empowered of the two.

LT: How many people work on this?

CA: We are an editorial team of about five.

LT: Five on both?

CA: Yeah on both. If you look at, I work on S'camto this is mine. Thethanathi is Ameens, she is the editor of Thethanathi. But yeah, from a LoveLife we are about five and we have a couple more coming in from advertising staff. But most of our stories are freelanced.

LT: Do you function very separately here or is it integrated?

CA: It is very integrated. I think our media as a whole is very integrated. We often bounce ideas off each other or take ideas from each other and radio, that we will go into as well maybe with a bit more detail you know issues stemming from radio shows or TV shows it is very much perceived as all one package we all have the same advertisers. So we try to have some measure of consistency as to how we get that.

LT: Do you have any influence on the print campaigns or television campaigns or any of that?

CA: Um ... not really most of it is outsourced, so we can't get the research [over there].

LT: Right. Um ... because you are so integrated into the organisations what do you consider to be loveLife's primary strengths?

CA: I think it is openness I think that loveLife brought it out in a country where the word sex was taboo and if I can just look at my experience just working with the *Sunday Times*, which is a quite a conservative newspaper and the challenges we faced so there so now we have become so open and so fully into what we do. So, yeah

everything we do is based on research so where ever the criticisms come from we can back it up and I think that is also a strength. And I think the fact that we are so different that our approach is so different that might not be seen as a strength by older, politically ... necessarily but I think from the point of view of young people it is so fresh, so new it is hip it is happening. You know the label they can identify with that it is encouraging them to be themselves and to be better. A brighter future it isn't just a "Don't do this don't do that".

LT: What about the weaknesses?

CA: Um ... umm ... I would say there have been occasions that we had to sort of ... how can I put this, um, if for example we are criticised openly and publicly whether it be here or in the States by our funders we often have to be toned down or ... just shy away from something we wouldn't normally shy away from because we are so dependent on funders. I think that definitely is a weakness because we can't really stand up and say well, this is what we do so we are going to do. It has been a weakness of late, and for me most of loveLife's weaknesses come from others' preconceptions of what we are.

LT: Do you find because of those kinds of criticisms that you do have to change that you do have to find ways to kind of placate those crowds at all and like you said parents often see this ... is that a big problem?

CA: Um ... for me personally it is not a problem, cause, inevitably our target market is young people and for the mere fact that we are so open and honest about various things that we the only reason why – suddenly a teenager will come to me and ask me personal questions that their parents are just not ready to answer. And that I think is something that a [child] necessarily has um ... but yeah, I think from that it is more of a political thing from a political motive you have to [] slow down be less aggressive or either side step an issue or approach it much more slowly and carefully and wearily in order to please people who I don't think are really on our agenda but just for the fact that they [might have influence].

LT: I just want to ask you, what I am picking up from loveLife messages is that young people do have a choice and I am thinking of statistics around violence against women or some of the research I have seen that suggest that telling a young woman to propose condom use could actually put her in danger in some way. People who are talking about that kind of research, does loveLife think that they are just lost because of structural inequality and they can't really be reached or does LoveLife feel that they can actually reach that audience?

CA: I think I would say that we try to make the balance between yes on the one hand we are saying to the girl ask him to put a condom on and on the other hand we are saying to the guy ... you know, she is saying this to you it is not because she is being unfaithful it is because she cares about you and you should have respect for her and for yourself ... blah, blah, blah. So the thing is to try to educate both at the same time so that it is not just the girl in isolation and you should really stand up for yourself and when it comes to the real situation she stands up for herself and she gets a hiding.

LT: Right, right.

CA: It is to try to get to both at the same time saying respect her and stand up for yourself, yes you respect her and in a way it is respecting yourself. So I think yeah, we are trying to achieve that.

LT: Okay.

CA: Well, I think for me the biggest thing is that this is just a newspaper. And you know you can read it and throw it away and it is not going to help you. I think for a lot of people who read the magazines it does have an impact and it at least makes them think sit down and think about what they are doing and about the choices they are making. But I think what most people don't realize is that we are the same people S'camto prints, S'camto Groundbreakers on TV same as on the radio. We have seen and heard that it is the people on the ground, the loveLife people on the ground that are the ones who are impacting the actual behavior change. And I think they are the most unseen and the most unknown because a lot of people don't know that there are Y-Centres out there, they are doing the loveLife campaign, they are doing the road shows, those people interact

with people one-on-one and I think they are making a difference. The kids who go the Y-Centres the ones who are taught they are taking the most of this with them the whole loveLife thing. And to me I think we are just support for those people so I think for me that is what people need to realize because we are just the tip of the iceberg.

LT: Thanks for the interview.

Tshepang Mashawu
Information Coordinator
loveLife Head Office, Johannesburg
8 July 2002

TM: Well, loveLife is gender sensitive and I don't think that any other organization, loveLife, which you have seen I am sure the other day that women can be in um ... ah ... how can I put it ... um ... we are, there is a lot of women who are influential throughout powerful positions within the organization as well as men as well. Um ... I think generally it is quite multipurpose developing and the fact that you are able to [do that]. And yeah, um, relations within those gender I also think there is quite um, with ourselves in term of how we relate to each other and ah ... it's not ah ... I've never felt like, I am [making] relationships or personal point of view as well as a working [] ... if you have an opinion that opinion is taken into consideration.

And, um from outside, outside in the sense of ... in the sense of ... the people are in a sense of they are, we are working with for example we have a groundBREAKER initiative and also whenever we ah ... are employing or recruiting volunteers we do take that into consideration and ah ... there is also a huge awareness of that fact that young women need to be empowered as well in this world and also not forgetting the male gender as well because there also playing a important role especially in HIV, teenage pregnancy, STI's and at the moment we just deal with just the women and forget about the men and at the end of the day ah ... most ... in a South African society ... um, the day when that one gender meets with the other gender it could be sort of harmful. So, whenever you educate you need to educate on the one hand and the other hand as well. So ... we ... when you take that into consideration even ah ... when you go to various recruitments it is also noticeable because we didn't even internalize it and we didn't apply it outside. Because it doesn't work with us than how will it work in the outside world.

LT: Right. Right. So, what does your job entail?

TM: My job is within the Information Department, which falls under the Media Department. Information is a subdivision of the Media. I am an information coordinator. I make sure that publications or reading materials goes out to people like, I develop channels in which to distribute materials to the public, corporate, our partners as well as the young people who call us from the call centres or like walk-ins where like people walk in and they come to me about information and if they have questions. I don't deal only with ah..with that thing..I also deal with day-to-day inquiries which people can have and um .. I also um ... from the media point of view I also um ... do presentations for loveLife. I also liaise with various stakeholder within the organization as well as outside who needs information about loveLife or maybe more information about a particular program. I make sure that people get those and that we always have stuff in the office. And to make sure that the brand is the loveLife brand like posters, videos whatever that has to do with loveLife as a brand itself like we do have to maintain the brand identity that we want and also to make sure when people go out there to communicate the loveLife message it comes out as we enter the institute. So sometimes you find the loveLife brand or there is a loveLife presenter so I will always to go out there to whoever is heading the event at the end of the day to make sure that it doesn't contradict what loveLife stands for.

LT: Do you have any examples when it has contradicted?

TM: Um ... no not really. No, because we always make sure before we get together that we understand how loveLife operates. And um ... if there are some hiccoughs we clarify those and we can't be preaching one thing and saying another. Right now ... what do we call it ... it is a project where we get South African celebrities like musicians, actors, performers, DJs, ah ... we, because most of the times when we have our events especially in our outreach initiatives you find that we, we, we use them as people that attract young people so

what we do we will invite a performer to come and perform we, we, we take that singer and get them to sing and in between we get them in between rehearsals to communicate the LoveLife message in the hope that and the young people know they see them on TV, and when they see them talking to them about sexuality, self-esteem, about being motivated and taking care of themselves rather than [] and to love themselves enough to make sure that whatever choices that they are making in love they are positive choices, relevant and good for them. And when they hear them say that they take it seriously and internalize it and they believe that if he can do that I can also do it. So, I am also coordinating that project and training the municipal regions like training them as in we are informing them about loveLife and the messages like why is the billboards like that and what is behind the billboards so that they can communicate with the young people so that they can empower them on a personal level as well as an educational level. But anyway my focus with you right now is the outreach.

Um ... we have something called the loveLife Train and there are mass tours going on right now for our outreach programs. The schools project and also the loveLife Games is also an outreach programme. Ah, the loveLife train basically is a fixed coach train which goes around the country and we sort of determine a route that it must take and it is [managed] by young people, volunteers, our groundbreakers or tentative groundBREAKERS, they are 18 to 25 years olds who are out of matric and otherwise unemployed. We get them to ...um they commit to one-year service to loveLife and we pay them a stipend of R800 a month. It is not a job we make them understand it is not a job it is a chance for them to gain experience and in the meantime also educating their peers because ah ... we believe that young people need the chance to listen and to also being able to ask questions and get information from peers who are well-informed and do know about the issues that they are talking about. So what it is, is the loveTrain it has ten groundbreakers, both girls and boys, it is well-equipped the kitchen uh ... it has two kitchens, a fully-equipped radio studio, it also has a unit with beds and showers and everything else. It is like a living walking hotel. They live on the train for a three-week period and then they go for a one-week break and they do have a manager that oversees everything that is happening but the people who actually do the job and talk to young people is the Groundbreakers. So, ah, they go throughout the country and it has to be a far-away area and it has to have train tracks and it has to be advantageous so a semi-rural area. So what happens, it, they are stationed at a certain point for one-week and the loveLife manager and other logistical staff from loveLife go out and interact with the community just to mobilize the community and make them aware of the train and what it is doing and just to touch base with the stakeholders in the community and to talk with other community-based organisations that might be there and fellow committees if there are any and that they are going to see a train coming and all of that and make proper introductions. When the train comes they will call out for the people to come out to the train site where the train is and then get to go through peer education, um through basketball coach clinics, and also a sexual and sexuality education ... yeah, um ... the groundBREAKERS do that on their own and throughout the week various topics are discussed there is um ... what we call is um ... it is like a big room ... like a boardroom where like some people will be like outside maybe doing something outdoor activities like basketball or rock-climbing and you will form into groups of maybe three or four and others will be inside doing activities and get them into small groups so that they can ask questions small groups are better because people can be shy. So, they experience that and throughout the week various topics are discussed and on Friday and Saturday will be when the big things happen like the music and uh ... participation as well as um, the arts classes where like the young people will like express themselves through art because some people can't talk or they can talk but they are much more easier to express themselves in another form. Um, what else? So, after a week they move on to another venue where a person goes on [].

The loveTours is the same as the loveTrain the only difference it is on the road. It is an outreach [clinic] it goes to ah ... rural areas as well. Right now we have got two of them one based in rural Kwa-Zulu Natal and the other based in the Eastern Cape. The reason for that is because Kwa-Zulu Natal is the one hit more by HIV/AIDS and the Eastern Cape as well and another fact is previously they were the most disadvantaged areas um ... they are kind of hard to reach and as a matter of fact lots of programmes for people [] not afraid to move from place to place we have to travel days um ... um ... to reach the place. The loveTours are helped by young people the groundbreakers are three boys and three girls and also has a manager and ah, remember I told you about the train and the radio studio? Well, this one is as fully equipped as the train it is very, very technical stuff so, um, and it stops and the four-by-four goes out to the various communities and let people and young people aware of what is happening. They go to schools and have one-to-one relationships with them to better communicate loveLife's messages because so many people just see loveLife on billboards and some just think it is just a TB program. Those that have problems come to them but also we also take one counselor from the call center who goes on the tours with them so that if there are people who needs counseling there

and then. We find that having a counselor there it is better. For the communities where you find social workers we get referred to them. They get stuff like t-shirts and hats that are given out to them and also they have their questions answered by the groundbreakers, um, because it gives them a sense of ownership for the project. So when loveLife has moved on then there will be something that will always remind them of what to do just something that motivates them to seek more information.

LT: What do you think is loveLife's biggest strength as an organization reaching young people?

TM: Um ... the fact that we are youth friendly like from small things like the colours such as they are bright and friendly to young people. And also the language that we use is youth friendly because most youth identify with it those that don't already that they would like to so there for they make the effort to get to understand that and in the process that they are learning to do that they are getting one to learn the next stage and there for get hooked and if you get them to be involved in that sense that sort of the tone of the language doesn't tell them what to do it encourages them to seek information and it motivates them to sort of go out and look for more and in that sense it automatically sends that we are not stupid we are your peers we are not dictating to you we are not telling you what to do and to me I think that is one of our strengths at loveLife. For example, while I was growing up if my mom came to me and told me not to do it I would go ahead and do it but if you give me a certain way but my uncle was my friend and played soccer with me when we talked about issues and stuff I was more prone to listen to him because I was free to ask questions and I would take what he was going to tell me. And if I knew I wasn't going to do it I could ask questions why I wouldn't do it. That is how young people are they rebel when you tell them what to do. So that is one of our strengths and also that fact our approach is not to say "Don't have sex because it kills or Don't have sex because you will get HIV or AIDS and you are going to die." We are not using scaring tactics we are giving them facts about issues about HIV/AIDS, STI's, teenage pregnancy, and also um ... alternatives and also um ... and how they can um ... how they can um ... go out and seek information about these issues we are sort of arousing their curiosity surrounding those issues rather than scaring them away from it. If we face it people have always been told scary things about having sex but people are still going to continue to have sex and what has been happening it that people are afraid to go out and get information because you are afraid that people will think you are a whore or something so you do it secretly and at the end of the day you don't know anything. But if you start doing it knowing the facts and you know the consequences then you know if you do it you know these is what I might get ... this is what I might get if I do it.

LT: What do you think some of the weaknesses are of the organization?

TM: Um ... the weaknesses ... um ... they are the, the fact that the language issue sort of works against us in the sense that some people do not identify with the kind of language that we use and the education as well for some people may not be able to understand exactly what it means ... like ... um ... "chick" ... yeah, the lingo to some people you find that it is not, but if it arouses curiosity, but if you don't know what it means, but they are inquisitive so they will go out and find out what that means so we are not only encouraging to find out more about ah ... about ah ... sex but we are also motivating them educating them as well to ... because as a young person as a boy or as a girl when you are growing up when your Mom sends you to do A,B,C, you ask why? And she tells you just go and do it so at some point in your life you stop asking and you go and do whatever what we want to sort of revive in young people is to be inquisitive and start asking questions. I mean it is a weakness, which for young people it sort of will have them come out and think about information.

LT: How do generally people respond to the loveTours and the loveTrain in communities?

TM: So far we haven't had any negative feedback. Like I said we have two loveTour teams that tour around the country so we haven't had people END OF TAPE.

LoveLife Staff
Pozisa Ngema
LoveLife Head Offices, Johannesburg
8 July 2002

PN: All right, we have thirty minutes, ne?

LT: Yep.

PN: All right, the schools project was started, um, last year, late last year. But I only took over this year, early this year. And what's happening is we're signing up schools, forming a partnership and then putting a billboard at the school and giving them posters, our posters we have educational posters like those ones that we give to schools. And we also give them S'camto print and thethanathi, they also in here. You have seen our presentation?

LT: Yep.

PN: These things are popular with young people. And because they, some of them cannot afford to buy them, we have to bring it closer to them. You know some of them hardly have ways of getting them. So we bring it to their schools. And, so the idea of expanding the schools partnership are already in the making, so ideally we'd like the children to be able to take home something tangible, you know, something they can read later. Yeah, so, um, we planning on maybe looking, I'm still working on it, like, looking at programmes that involve us going to schools and just giving them a day programme with which we can talk about sex and, um, and all the other things that are affect them. So we're getting schools calling us now and wanting to come when they have functions or come to have talks with them. And it's been working okay so far. So, if there's anything you want to ask me, you can. But we're putting up billboards all around South Africa.

LT: How many schools are you in?

PN: Um, I have about, I will look it up for you.

LT: And mostly in rural areas? Urban areas?

PN: It's a mixture, but of course those who have access to a fax machine, theirs gets there quicker than the others who are using post. But all of them get the stuff.

LT: And your title here is school projects coordinator?

PN: Yeah.

LT: How long have you been with loveLife?

PN: I've been with loveLife for, it's been a month now. Three months as a volunteer. And I got appointed on the first of February.

LT: Okay, so what's your background? What were you doing previously?

PN: I was studying in Khayelitsha. A course about mining. My job is to when it comes from underground and it's ground to the finer product like gold, platinum and diamonds.

LT: Wow, so this is quite a change for you?

PN: (Laughs) It is! It's like, actually this job found me, I didn't find it. Cause I was looking for a job and I decided no, it's no use for me staying around doing nothing. Let me just go and volunteer. And I was looking for a job and in three months I hadn't found a job. And I told Fiona that if there's any position you can offer me, I am prepared to do it. So I find, I mean, I am a people's person so it's quite easy to adjust. Yeah.

LT: That's nice. And so far?

PN: Yeah, so far it's going well, although it's not so, it's challenging in its own way. I was always, would think challenges were about putting in numbers and they had to come out right. But now it's people I'm dealing with, which is quite different, but it's quite enjoyable.

LT: So you're very positive about using this kind of organisation as a way to transform behaviour?

PN: Yeah, I mean, if it doesn't define in a way who I am I don't think I would be here. I'm the type of person who strongly believes in choices, you know? And when I got here it was something that I never had when I was growing up, so I thought, you know, wow, if something like this, then I'm 100% behind it. So, I'm quite for loveLife.

LT: Right, right. Well, I don't know if you know anything about what I'm doing? But I'm a Master's student at UCT and I'm writing my dissertation now, um, and I'm looking at loveLife and thinking of, my focus is on gender, and how, basically, loveLife is able to be gender aware and take responsibility, you know, with the fact that you have a growing number of young girls getting the disease much faster than boys. And, also, in light of things like the levels of violence in this country, and just, even sometimes the possibility that if a young girl proposes use of a condom she might be actually putting herself in danger in some way. So, just looking at those kinds of issues and how loveLife is able to address them. And, so I'm just wondering, if you just have any kind of comment on what you think about the organisation and it's relation to gender, even within who loveLife employs—is it employing women in positions of leadership and whatnot, things like that.

PN: Well, I think it's kind of empowering to a young girl. Cause you know, when you go out there, a relationship is not only a guy's responsibility or a girl's responsibility, and that's what we try to convey to the young people and tell them that there's shared responsibilities. We had also, the billboards, I don't know if Fiona showed it to you? The one that said, "Are you happy with yourself?" and shared responsibility. And you know, it got through to the young people, you know that a relationship is between two people and if you need or if you have to say something because you feel it's right for you then say it at that moment and know that you always have a choice. Don't ever settle for less. You know, know who you are and believe in what you believe in. That's the only way you can ever know who you are. And that's what I say when I go out there. And you know, you know young girls, especially from rural areas, they think "Okay, I can never say anything, he's more powerful than I am." But you know, try. You know try showing them. You know if you can't say it, you know do something that will show him that this is what you mean. Maybe go to the clinic yourself and get the condoms, you know, stuff like that.

And as far as the employment is concerned within the organisation, I think it's quite fair, cause we have more women than men in the office (laughing). But, you know it's quite, the people are working well together and the atmosphere is really nice. The people are trying to really fit in with each other. Our programmes are interactive in every way so it's an ongoing thing that's been very positive. Yeah, I haven't noticed any, you know, anything going around, no unhappiness. But of course, every place has little things. But, I'm quite happy with this job and where it's taking me, and it's like there's growth for everybody cause everybody is allowed to access all the other programmes and learn more about the other programmes, so it's really up to you how you drive your growth.

It's quite flexible as an organisation. And you there are changes going around every day. It's very dynamic, it's very enjoyable at the moment.

LT: So, what would you call some of the strengths of loveLife? Either as a workplace or what it's doing elsewhere out in the communities?

PN: I mean, I would say maybe the ability to get people talking, through our billboards and through our Y-Centres. Cause it's like people come to the Centres for different reasons. And one person sees something and somehow they link it to loveLife and they think okay I must phone, or they must visit the centre cause they have basketball and they've always wanted to play basketball. But at the same time they get exposed to the positive lifestyle. Because when they go to the centre then they introduce themselves and go through the orientation and skills and they get to understand what loveLife is all about. It just doesn't give them the one thing, just sex or just sports, but everything.

LT: And can you think of any challenges or weaknesses?

PN: All the people don't really identify or understand what it's all about. And it's kind of influencing young people. When you're living in a household where the mother doesn't understand what loveLife is all about

then you don't go there, cause it's about sex and you're not allowed to go there cause it's about sex and that's their limited understanding of loveLife. That's where I think we face a challenge.

But now I think we're realizing that most parents were not educated about this, so that's why we've translated our parent publications into Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa and Afrikaans to give them more understanding of what loveLife is all about. I think, yeah, slowly but surely we're getting there.

LT: Do you see that more as a language issues or a culture issue?

PN: It's both actually. Because you go to, each and everyone is distributed in a different area and that area operates within certain standards or cultures, so the people that you're working with are facing a challenge as to when they have to give out the publications, maybe next week it's thethathathi and it's talking about masturbation, it's really not allowed in the community and the chief says, "No way, we're not giving this to the young people." Then you have to figure a way around it. So you know, it's like not every area is like Gauteng where you think like, okay people are open-minded and they accept certain things, and that's where it ends.

LT: So it ends? There's nothing to overcome that?

PN: Mmm, when the chief says no, it's not happening, well it just won't happen. And it's all up to the young people to go and get the information for themselves. So it's also about empowering young people to go and seek information. Because it's not always that they'll get information that their parents approve of. Some of the things that make them do things without even thinking about it, without, they don't know much about it, so the only way they can find out about it is when they do it and so it puts them at risk.

LT: Um, how do you think most of the kids are hearing about loveLife and getting involved? What's their initial starting point?

PN: TV. And billboards. Which is why some of them, the billboard people is how some of them think of us. I think TV and billboards. And then comes the clothing, you know when, when they see someone wearing a loveLife t-shirt and they also want to get one. Not knowing what loveLife is all about, but just because a person is wearing a loveLife t-shirt and it's just something they think is cool, then you know they make an effort to get it and then they become exposed to loveLife. But mainly it's through media.

LT: Okay, do you think, you know you said the language issue could be a problem with the parents, do you think it's been a problem with younger people at all?

PN: No, because you know, with the research units, they've done research that they find, okay, young people really like the billboards, even because it's in English, because they think okay, they learn a new word everyday or maybe one they didn't know what it means, you know they go look it up. Or you know, they, it kind of gets them with the times. You know they look at it and say, "Okay, s-s-h-o, how do you pronounce" they think "SSH!" You know and it becomes lingo. And you know, we know young people really do not want to be like older people. And when they see "Ssho" you know it's a younger thing, you know an older person would never go "Eish" or whatever. So, I think, it's been well-received. Although there might be people who don't understand the language, but, I don't think it's quite, it's much too much of a barrier, because it's like also making them want to know more English words and learn more. And it's appealing.

LT: You were talking a lot about just the idea of giving young people choice, and that they always have a choice. What about, you know I'm just thinking about situations with some young people, you know, who may be in poverty or may be in the kind of situation where they're in an abusive household or whatnot and they feel so little ability to have choice, or that it might compromise their safety, or anything like that. Can loveLife reach them? Do you think, or is that just the audience that loveLife just can't focus on, I mean they have to just focus to the people whom they can reach?

PN: I think every young person has a challenge of some sort in their life, and, it's all the choices that they make, that will really influence the outcome of the situation. So you know, we encourage them to call thethathathi's toll-free number if they're needing to speak to someone. Or our Centres, there are counsellors there who can help, and by helping, we just hope that they'll make the right choice. We always give them the

options that there are. You know and so you make the choice. You can't force them to make a particular choice, even though it will influence, or even it if will, what's the right word? Compromise their safety or their well-being, you always have to tell them that this is what there is and the choice is theirs really. Obviously some of them need more help than others do, so it's always best maybe to talk to the people in the community, that's why we have Y-Centres and franchises out there, so they can help, because they know the community much better than we do or maybe they are closer to them. I think that's the best we can do.

LT: Do you think that the marketing is speaking also to young people who are HIV positive?

PN: Hmm, that's an interesting question. Not really.

LT: Okay. Do you think that will change, I mean even just looking at numbers and the increasing rates of infection that you're going to have a larger adolescent population?

PN: We had TAG (Technical Advisory Group), the people who are funding us, when they came here they said that maybe we must talk to young people who are HIV positive as well, or maybe use them in our marketing, um, I don't know if that's in the pipeline, but maybe. At the moment, it's just addressing issues with young people, and I don't know about young people who have AIDS if it's tackling it. So as far as the organisation is concerned, it depends, but we have raised the issue in the office and we've talked about it.

LT: So, the school projects programme is fairly new? Is this, do you fear in any way that once young people start seeing it in the schools that its going to become, like, just one more academic thing or one more AIDS message, is there any fear that it's going to turn them off?

PN: No, not at all, because I know what I wanted when I was at school. And something that wouldn't make me feel like, it's just going to be one of those things I have to attend. You know it had to be something that they enjoy, something they like. Which is why I've been talking to people who have experience working with young people at schools especially, and there is, people also provide, you know, um, drama and stuff. So, I think I'm going to incorporate all of that. They should have entertainment as well as while they learning. But learn from it. But there's many different ways of doing that. I think the company that you're working with now, they are good at motivating young people to listen. Just, when you get into a classroom do something different, and they feel at ease. You know I've seen it and I've done it once or twice and you know, they identify with you immediately. It becomes enjoyable and they become free to talk to you and share their experiences. When they know they don't have boundaries, that's when they enjoy themselves.

LT: So you get equal participation from girls and boys?

PN: Mmmm, well there was one school with just girls talking and the boys, going uhhh, uhhh. But the girls were more into issues like "What do you do if you have an HIV positive person at home?" You know, the kind of more girl-caring stuff. And the guys were all interested in "So, do your sperms ever get tired, or do you run out of sperm when you're young and you do it a lot?" Things like that, you know they are very concerned about it.

LT: So what do you do in those kind of situations?

PN: You get them the information they're looking for and you tell them, okay, shared responsibility in a relationship, a relationship is not all about sex and worry and stuff. You tell them there's lots of things to talk about in a relationship. And you also get an opportunity to make them realize that loveLife is not only about sex. It focuses on other things that influence your life.

LT: You said that the TAG group had come here, um, what are, I mean those are very big organisations that you have funding, I'm just wondering, you know, what are some of the positive sides of having such big funders on your side?

PN: The freedom to do things, you know you never, um, they consider that young people need a lot of things and you know you can come up with an idea and you can really see it going through the whatever, motions that needs to, that you need to get to a certain point. And, you know, they realise that, for instance, I never thought

the ship would be on the road right now and it is and it was an idea that because they are there, it was possible. So, it's like, makes a lot of things possible, where it shouldn't have been possible had you not had.

LT: Are there also some tensions with those organisations at all?

PN: Not that I'm aware of. Maybe there are, David would know, but not that I know of.

LT: Okay, so it's overall pretty positive to have them on your side?

PN: Mmmm, it is, it is. Very.

LT: Does it make it so you get to spend most of your time focusing on your job and not worrying about where money is coming from?

PN: Yeah, you focus more on things that you think need to happen. And that will influence the work environment or that will influence young people in a positive way. And you come up with an idea, and you know they say, well, overall, it just gives you the freedom to think and use your imagination and come up with something useful, you know?

LT: Did you go through a certain kind of training with this job? Or to be a volunteer?

PN: I kind of learned, um ...

LT: Along the way?

PN: Yeah, when I was a volunteer I learned a lot cause, you know, I was helping different people and, but it didn't stop when I was appointed in my position, it didn't stop there. I went and I, you know, I got involved in the loveLife Games, I see what's happening in the loveTrain and the loveTours, the training, the messaging, it tends to get, you know it gets confusing, you should always, like, people interpret the messaging differently, so we normally have training just to say, "Okay people, interpret it in your own way, but you know, these are the key points, you know, it's up to you how you deliver it, but you know, these are the main opening things so let's just not lose track." So that we are on the same track whenever or wherever we are. Be consistent.

LT: About those points? So what are the key messages that you usually talk about when you talk to somebody about loveLife?

PN: It depends. When you go, of course you introduce the topic, it depends on your audience, really, ja, but the main messages when we go to talk to young people, there's goals that we have all about delaying and reducing and protecting yourself. Protect yourself from HIV, protect yourself from people who want to do you harm. Delay the process of having sex or delay, you know, when you want to have sex. And reduce the number of times you have sex. Reduce the number of partners that you're having sex with, so you know, go around those points, but get the young people to tell you what they think about it. So, of course, when you talking to parents it's something different, cause they always nailing you on how, "How can you just go with any chick, I mean you're encouraging to go with any chick?" So, it's kind of that we try to show and come back to the same points and it's up to you, how you do it, and that's just what it is.

LT: Okay, what would you call is, um, the overall mission of loveLife?

PN: To reduce the rate of HIV/AIDS infection, you know, by 50% in the next, by then end of 2002. And teenage pregnancy. And lead young people to a more positive life and to know what they want.

LT: Does loveLife have any competitors?

PN: No, not really. Cause, it's the first of it's kind and the only one at the moment, because all the other campaigns are just AIDS awareness type thing. And they just focusing on telling young people to abstain from sex, be faithful or condomise or die, you know. So, it's something new, something different, which is maybe

why for some people it's not so well received and for young people it's so well received. It's kind of, it's a new thing, exciting. So, maybe we will reach our goal.

LT: That's all the questions that I have. Thanks.

LoveLife Staff
Thandiwe Siyongwana
LoveGames Programme Officer
LoveLife Head Office, Johannesburg
8 July 2002

TS: I'm actually not quite sure what you need from me, so I didn't actually bring anything, but as we talk, I'll probably ascertain what information you need, or what you need to take with you.

LT: I'll tell you just a little bit so you have some idea.

TS: Okay, okay.

LT: Um, I'm doing my Master's at UCT right now, and I'm actually choosing to look at loveLife as a social marketing organisation and my focus is on gender, and I'm just kind of trying to look at loveLife as an organisation facing this kind of epidemic in the country, and how is it able to be gender aware? How is it able to take into account things like, you know, the fact that you really have, in adolescents, the group that's growing the fastest is young girls, and do you talk to them differently because of that? Or even things like, just how, in the sense of the levels of violence and rape statistics in the country, you know, how does that factor into telling a girl, well, use a condom, you know, how are they empowered, how are they disempowered, and in what way? And if loveLife is able to approach some of those issues and how you're approaching some of those issues. Those are the things I'm looking at.

TS: Okay, I'm not sure how much you, um, how much you've got from, I don't know who you've spoken to. But, I'm part of an outreach programme within loveLife, called the loveLife games. And what we basically do is run school sports events. and, um, we are in partnership with a company that's been mandated by the, um, Department of Sports and Recreation to run school sports in South Africa. USASA – the United Sports Association of South Africa. And they've been running sports for, more than five years, and they were in existence before we even thought about loveLife. And we went into partnership with them because they were the only way we could access the schools. And, um, we needed to have, um, like programmes around school sports, but we couldn't just do it because we were not running the leagues and we're not experts at sport, and they are experts at the sports component and they have the relationship with the schools, and they had, um, a volunteer structure that consists of teachers and coaches and so on, running the leagues at schools. So we saw that as an opportunity, so we went into partnership with USASA to bring the loveLife Games to the young people. Our target group is still between the ages of 12 – 17, and that doesn't change right across our programmes, and um, it's really, founded from the point that, you know, you train young people in sports and you avail all these opportunities to them and you do all these things and they excel and they find their dreams and they get excited. But you know, loveLife says, what's the point of doing all that if, if these young people are still being sabotaged by HIV/AIDS, by teenage pregnancy, by sexually transmitted diseases, so loveLife says why not integrate the life skills with the sport, which is what young people love doing. And put them together and create a positive lifestyle around them. That's really the rationale behind the loveLife games. And it's, it's a festival of activities, you know you have lifestyle components, which is debating, you know motivational programmes, um, excursions, um, arts, drama, culture, dancing, you have all these lifestyle components happening at the same time as the sport. And the reason why we call them non-competitive, um, activities, is because they not really, they not about winning all the time, it's also about being part of a certain lifestyle. And we integrate the loveLife message, which I think you've heard about, we integrate that into our lifestyle component and that's where we're communicating the message. For instance, our motivational programme, throughout, across all our loveLife programmes, the biggest part or the biggest component within the loveLife programmes, because it's within that programme where young people are empowered, their self-esteem is worked on and they identify who they are, and it creates some sort of self-awareness within them, and through the motivational programme, they are also able to see beyond their circumstances and see beyond

what's happening now and they're able to see the future and they're able to see their goal and their vision and they're able to work towards that. And I think they suddenly have a reason to live and move on, because I think that young people in disadvantaged areas are so entangled in the spiral of hopelessness that they cannot think beyond their circumstances and I think that our motivational programme helps them to stretch and go that far and go beyond, and that's where they realise their purpose, they realise who they can become, they're not just part of their circumstances.

And a lot of the schools that we touch come from disadvantaged areas, um, you know where extra-curricular activities are a privilege, where you don't get them, some of them travel on the tar road for the first time in their life. So, um, you know, just, we also have what we call a disadvantaged and an advantaged, um, priorities or rather categories, where, um, young people from disadvantaged schools are given the opportunity to, like, start at the beginning of the league, let's say district or zone. The disadvantaged school would play, but then they would be in a different category so that they are able to get to national. So, at every level we'd have two levels, we'd have a winner from that category and the winner from the advantaged category. Because it would be very unfair to have a school from Bryanston where they have all their training equipment and all their knowledge and everything that they need to get to the nationals. So, it's only at the nationals that they play equally. So that's the disadvantaged and the advantaged angle.

And I think really it's about creating a positive lifestyle. And giving young people the opportunity to express themselves. And also really communicating the loveLife message. And we have, we've just introduced rugby, cricket, boxing and swimming, which are predominantly sports sport that you would find at predominantly white schools, and it's really, it's the introduction of these sports are really to, um, to get the integration process going, because at the moment we don't have a lot of white schools participating at the loveLife games, and, um, you know it's been previously said that it's because we don't have the kind of sports that they specialise in at their schools. So, with introducing these sports we are hoping to start integrating them into the whole programme.

And, um, so, I mean I don't know what else you want to know from what angle, but just from what you've said, with the loveLife games, just with gender relations, we found that a lot of young girls are beginning to participate. And that's really been a struggle for us at the beginning, because girls would feel that it's not really for them, they also feel that, no they should really stay at home and it's not really important for them, you know, they should stay home and cook and do whatever, but we're seeing more and more of them participating. And we've got girls' soccer, most have girls' soccer so that they also get those equal opportunities at the games.

LT: So, you have, currently, more boys participating in the Games?

TS: Oh, yes. We do have more girls participating – more BOYS participating than girls.

LT: What's motivating them to get involved now? Just because it looks fun?

TS: I think what's motivating them is because, um, an opportunity for them has been created. It's not as if, we don't do soccer for girls, you know if we didn't do soccer for girls there wouldn't be much to participate. But we've opened the door and created the structures and the opportunities for them to come in. And in some places they come in and in some places they don't, you know. But, um, it's becoming part of, the girls' participation is one of our priorities as well, because, um, if girls are participating and understanding that they're equal or being given equal opportunities to participate in what is predominantly for boys then, we are in a way, encouraging them to get involved. So, you know, I think it will take time, we just need to make it part of our programme and it should be part of our image to promote participation of girls. Because that also impacts on a lot of other things that we do. If, for instance, we don't encourage girls to participate at the loveLife Games it means that we not reaching girls with our loveLife messages that happen at the games. It means they're not getting the information on condom usage, the information on sexual health issues, or even the information that they need to be empowered to make informed choices. Or the other angles that loveLife uses at the Games, it means that they're being denied of that, so participation of girls is very important.

LT: How do you, how does it work when you're at the Games? How are they getting the messages? They're playing the game and then what happens?

TS: You know, it's so crazy cause it all happens at the same time. Um, the Games really start with an opening ceremony. Um, we use Groundbreakers, I'm not sure if you've been told about the Groundbreakers. But they are our 18 – 25 year-olds who are unemployed and um, have finished matric, and and, um, they just want a year to do something and so loveLife takes them on and trains them through a motivational programme, a skills development programme and takes them through all these thing, and then they are then used in all our initiatives to communicate, they are really community mobilisers, and then they would then interact on behalf of loveLife to young people because you know, young people communicate to young people always works better because then, you know, they are able to relate to each other and you can get more out of it.

So we use these Groundbreakers that come from all the different loveLife initiatives at the loveLife Games, um to communicate the message. So part of the opening ceremony would be a keynote speaker from the area, and then you would have a Groundbreaker, one of these young people, communicating the loveLife message, or anything really, they would decide what they want to talk about. It could be, um, you know talk about the three values that loveLife promotes which is positive sexuality, informed choice and shared responsibility. And also bringing sexual behaviour into it and also communicating and giving as many examples as possible. There's actually these publications, like the loveFacts, that really communicates to young people exactly how this communication is written. You should really go through this, it's so amazing. You know I read it the one time and I thought, if I was a 12-year old and if I could read English at the time, and I came across something like this, it would be so exciting, because it really talks to you about things that you think nobody would ever talk to you about and things you think are just a secret and the whole world, and people just naturally grow up and never talk about it and you just find out about it on your own. So, that's how they would relate to the young people at the Games.

And then, you'd get the Groundbreakers, them coming up and giving a motivational talk, and then, um, you'd also get another young person coming up and they'd do icebreakers and play games and they would, you know, they'd have music in the background, you know talk would be integrated with music and young people would dance and get involved. And you'd probably have another keynote speech and that would really be the end of the opening ceremony. And then, after that, the sport would then begin. And we'd then have a lifestyle programme scheduled while the sport is going on. So there would be young people who'd want to participate in non-competitive, um, activities, like acting and so on, so they would then be part of that lifestyle component. So, you'd have a traditional dance going on and you'd have a mock debate going on, you'd have all these activities going on while the sport is going on, but then we'd have Groundbreakers who would then go to the different sports activities are happening, they would go there and during their break or after they've just gotten their results or at whatever stage, they would engage with those young people. A practical example would be that they would go to where the cricket is happening for instance, and there would be an audience of other young people there and they would start talking to them about loveLife messages and they would give giveaways, and ask questions and if they get it right they get a giveaway. And give information and test them, and they'd do a whole lot of things and roleplay and you know, have activities, or like a drama, where a young person doesn't want to use a condom and the other wants to use a condom and then they start debating about it and then they would just roleplay that in a very spontaneous manner. And then other Groundbreakers would go to other events. So that would be an ongoing thing the whole day. And then at the end you'd get a closing ceremony where all the results were mentioned and then there'd be a message then. But the MC of the day is trained on the loveLife messaging. So, at every, on a regular basis, he'd quote from the loveFacts or little statements that would make young people think or whatever, but you know those are the kind of things he'd be trained on. The people that run the games are the teachers and the sport the people that are the sport coaches at the schools. And what loveLife does is we take them at the beginning of every year, on a national level, and we train them on the loveLife messages, on how to run the Games and on all the skills that they need to run the Games – financial skills and marketing skills. Um, you know all these types of skills that they need to actually run the Game. How to handle VIPs and how to, basically on events management skills. And we would train them at national level and after that we'd break it down to provincial level, so we'd go to all the provinces and we would train them specifically on how they're going to run the games in their area because every area is different. And, um, just before the Games begin we'd go out there for a pre-visit, we'd go for regional pre-visits, provincial pre-visits, just to go through their checklist and ensure that everything they were trained on, um, is going to take place. If they say to us, um they've booked a hotel, you know these young people are going to be accommodated, we'd want to see the invoice, the quotation, you know, just to ensure because we can't be all over the country ensuring that all the logistics are in place. And then, you know, that's

all we'd really do to ensure that the Games are really a success. And then on the day, we're there for monitoring and evaluation and we compile reports and we then go up to the next level.

There are three levels, there are zonal districts, regional, provincial and national, and at the moment loveLife is only getting involved at regional level. And then provincial, no sorry, only getting involved, um at regional, provincial and national, but district and zonal we not getting involved, because of so many reasons.

But I mean the point of the loveLife Games is to reach as many young people as possible. And mass participation is really our goal. You know the more young people participate at these Games, the more young people we can reach, you know. And, um, ja.

LT: How long have you been with loveLife?

TS: I've been with loveLife for two years, but I've been in this position for about six months.

LT: And before that what were you working on?

TS: Before that, I was working for a company that was basically media planning.

LT: So you have a media background?

TS: Not necessarily, um, I have a huge background. Um before media planning, I was there for about six months, before that I've always been in banking, so it was really a breakthrough for me to get out of the banking industry and go into something else. But I love what I'm doing now. It's really really exciting. I think that loveLife has seen, I think, who have you spoken to?

LT: Um, I've spoken to Fiona and Pozisa.

TS: Okay, so you obviously, gave you the loveLife messages, see I don't want to get into that, I don't want to bore you. But um, the fact that loveLife has seen that, sex, the change in sexual behaviour is, um, is really the angle that they should be taking towards changing the direction of HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. I think, for me, you know when you see something and you personally believe in it and you personally believe this is the way, cause I mean, let's face it there is no cure for, um HIV/AIDS and um, and um, and you know there's this huge debate about medication and it becomes this political thing in our country and yet, there's nothing that we can do, like LoveLife is doing at the moment, only the thing, you know sexual behaviour doesn't change overnight. But, for me, it's really a personal thing, um, that I really really enjoy doing, because often society is not ready for what we trying to say. And all we really saying is that there are young people that are having sex and there are young people that are not having sex. We should be able to, um, talk to the young people that are having sex and also the young people that are not having sex. And I really believe strongly that our message is able to cater to those two groups of young people. So I find I enjoy it because I'm very passionate about it.

LT: What would you then, is that something you'd call the strengths of loveLife?

TS: I think the main strength of loveLife is the fact that, um, it encourages people to talk about it, and it's such a strength cause it's something that society is not ready to do and yet, it's been proven in other countries, like Uganda, that it is the way to go about it, that you have politicians and you have celebrities and you have all these prominent people to look up to and most of all you have parents and teachers. And I mean research has shown that young people want to have an ongoing relationship with their parents around issues of sexuality and around issues of HIV/AIDS and so on, you know all these issues that parents don't want to talk to their kids about. You know, research shows that young people actually want to hear about this stuff from their parents. And I think it's such a strength that, when something that is so hidden and is so taboo is brought into the open. Cause I think that's when you deal with issues better. There in the open. And when you have as many people as possible involved, I don't know cause it's there in the open. I don't know, for me, because really I think anything in secret and anything hidden has so much power to destroy people and I think the fact that loveLife is pushing for people and everybody to start talking about it is a huge strength cause I think

everybody, society is obviously not ready for it, but it is having the impact that we want it to have. For me, it's a huge strength.

LT: And what would you call its biggest challenge/

TS: I think the biggest challenge is, as I said, I think society is not ready, and um, also for me, the biggest challenge at the moment is religious groups, and the fact that society thinks that we are promoting casual sex. Society thinks that we are encouraging young people to have sex at an early age, why are we exposing them to these issues at such an early age? And, um, the fact that, um, you know the fact that society still thinks that HIV/AIDS is a disease only for black people, a disease only, we're the only people that need to be educated on this disease, young people from disadvantaged, or from, you know, and I think that the whole stigma and the whole thing that's going on at the moment within society, I think it's, will remain a challenge for loveLife. And I also think that the fact that, you see, we try to move away from using a condom as our only strategy because using a condom is only one of the alternatives that we think young people need to be offered. And society thinks that we are promoting young people to use condoms or to have abortions, to terminate. But the truth is that we do present all these options. If you go to our literature, um, there's detailed information on abortion, detailed information on the pill, detailed information on contraceptives and detailed information on condoms and everything. And that's really presenting the issues so that young people are able to make their own choices. So young people that are having sex they see a solution for themselves and young people that are not having sex, they see a solution for themselves. And society still thinks that young people should abstain, but the truth is that young people are having sex. You know, it is happening. I think that's the other challenge. I think that people think that young people are still innocent and are not having sex, yet they're still exposed to all these things in the media that, um, that work on their hormones and that push them to make certain decisions. It's fun to react to whatever they're reacting to, but it's better to react with information, and to react knowing that you know the consequences and you've internalised the risk and you've personalised your, um the results of your actions. Then you can react to whatever you want to react to. But if you react out, from no point of information then it's more dangerous because you don't know what's coming. You know. So, those are the top challenges that are affecting us at the moment. But I think in the long run, people will start realising that it's really about creating a positive lifestyle and so young people, you know if you are in a positive environment you can make positive decisions. And young people love that the brand-driven programme. They love identifying, it, the point is that when young people think of their association with loveLife they should think of equal opportunities and informed choices, um, young people are vibrant, leadership qualities, all these things are associated to the loveLife brand. And, um, yeah.

LT: Okay, I've probably used up your time now. Thanks so much.

LoveLife groundBREAKER Interviews

Mpho Mabalane
groundBREAKER
LoveLife Head Office, Johannesburg
8 July 2002

LT: Tell me about the groundBREAKERS.

MM: Um ... groundBREAKERS are young people between the ages of 18 to 25 and they are like community organizers, they are being trained to pilot loveLife programme and run them. And we've got about 350 groundBREAKERS, soon 600 groundBREAKERS and they run differently in each one. Myself I am an Information groundBREAKER and there's an IT groundBREAKER and then there are like VCT, volunteer counseling testing groundBREAKER and then we've got Motivational groundBREAKER and Sexual and Preventive Health groundBREAKER and then we've got the Radio and who works with the studio groundBREAKER and then we've got Cyber computer groundBREAKER and we've got quite a lot. On our outreach programmes you find that there are like lots of groundBREAKERS but they work the very same thing like as the other initiator like at the Y-Centre. At the Y-Centre we find about five programmes like Motivational Program, Educational Program, Computer Program, the Sport Application Program and the Training Counseling Program and then within those initiatives we have a groundBREAKER representing all that. Yeah, and then what they do normally within a year they are trained in personal skills and also how to work with young people.

LT: So, how long is the training?

MM: The training takes about a week, a week and a half, of which I think we go like three or four trainings.

LT: So, how did you get involved?

MM: I was introduced to loveLife way back in 1999 and I was trained for Lifeskill and then after I was nominated to go for advanced training of Lifeskill and try to be a peer educator and as in facilitating workshops, and educating my peers and then I went to the next step of representing peer educators nationally and after that I went for studying and because I had insufficient money to go to like my studying and then after that I was going to school and talking and motivating young people and also I was like researching topics that affect young people like HIV/AIDS, relationships, teenage pregnancy and then late last year I went for an interview to be a groundBREAKER, an Information groundBREAKER.

LT: Okay, so now it has been three years that you've been involved in this and you are somebody who is an Information groundBREAKER does that mean you spend your time talking to other groundBREAKERS or talking to other people about groundBREAKERS?

MM: My work here is like, answer requests, telephoning requests, also set up publications to different programmes nationally and also to present loveLife and what does loveLife to some of the schools and also when, like LoveLife initiatives and all that so I am responsible of doing that.

LT: Okay, do you also train new groundBREAKERS?

MM: No, but, if it is around here then I go and talk about it because they need someone to talk about it because I know loveLife and what happens around here so I do go and talk about it.

LT: Can you tell me what are some of the biggest strengths of loveLife?

MM: I suppose it is the programs like the Y-Centres, and clinics television, media, yeah let me put it like media, yeah, very very strong and I think it is making an impact on young people. And most of them are like phoning in everyday wanting to know more and seeing and reading such messages it kind of like promotes discussions

amongst young people. So by so doing we do have a Theta Junction number some things that I love searching for them they are able to call and get some more information about loveLife.

LT: Is the media the first place where most people or most young people hear about loveLife?

MM: No, for instance we have different, like we've got loveGames they get to know about loveLife more there and like I said media and Y-Centres because they do come like there is Y-Centre knowledge we've got I don't know how big it is but young people they do come and also in neighboring area. It is not just for Orange Farm but it is the only Y-Centre in Gauteng. So they do come especially those who live far they do come on the weekends sometimes.

LT: And people who actually are a groundBREAKER, how do they get involved? How do they find out about it? Do they have to go through a screening process to become a GroundBREAKER or?

MM: I think it is all in the individual, how do you present yourself? How do you communicate? How do you interact with young people? I think that matters the most. And because young people, they like somebody they can relate to and that they can understand them and if you are able to like that is why we get the trainings like how to talk about it, even though for instance you naturally find that you do interact with them with young people. I think just harnessing your skills the trainings are all about that. I think that as an individual it is how you present yourself that is the most important thing. The potential and your detail with emotion.

LT: So, have you had a lot of young people come to talk to you about the emotions that they experience?

MM: Before I came here last year especially last year in August last year I was going to different schools I think it was five high schools, and um ... the primary schools, yeah. I use to have my classes there for instance within the periods they would give me 45 minutes or half-hour or a double period that takes 45 minutes facilitating and you find that when you are talking they are not like open. But I used to have a class of which they would come for counseling and all of that and I would talk to them – yeah.

LT: I don't know if you know what I am doing, but I am doing a Masters at UCT and I am looking at loveLife but I am also trying to look how loveLife is gender aware, you know, in talking to young people especially in light of the fact that it is really young girls where AIDS is spreading the fastest. So I am just curious when you go out and you are talking to young people do boys and girls react differently do you feel like you have to change your messages at all when you talk to them? Just, do girls come and talk to you as much do boys come and talk to you as much?

MM: I don't know if you have seen our counseling loveLife billboards in fact you find most of the time there will be a boy and a girl so it would be gender equal. So when going to classes and everyone is participating I mean the very sense that I could give like a boy kind of like a girl I will find the very same thing with like the girls sometimes they don't want to open up because of the crowd. And because they kind of like are entranced in me in me and I don't keep such [] like grades and that and definitely I told myself if she has managed to come to me and tell me all this there is something even though at time, I would say you sometimes you need somebody to tell you something like I feel like I trust you and yeah that is kind of like how I judge myself as in am I worthy because of people but I know that I am I think I care of the response of people when they come to you especially of the opposite sex. And, yeah, I don't think we need to change anything, I think it is working like for instance, media people like say this and that but us as groundBREAKERS it is us who see things because we are running things and encounter difficulties and I think we are entitled as well as okay if we feel something needs to be done or something needs to be changed and also for instance if you are facilitating or conducting workshops we do ask young people what do you feel loveLife needs to do or change.

LT: What are some of the common myths that you hear from young people about AIDS or what are some of the things you hear about their behavior like boys should have more partners?

MM: Most of them will say, like, if you're from the township but I don't know because I am not from the township if you have sex and then drink a lot of Coke you won't get pregnant or having sex standing up you won't. And also if you like sleep with a teenager you kind of like get cured if you are HIV positive and yeah.

LT: Are volunteer groundBREAKERS mostly men or women or is it equal?

MM: It is equal. Even though you find at the Centre you will find five boys and three girls but you may find in another Y-Centre five girls and three boys we are trying to cover.

LT: Right. Now groundBREAKERS come and volunteer for one year, do they get any money for doing that at all?

MM: Yeah, they get a stipend of which is like R800.

LT: A month?

MM: Yeah, a month.

LT: Do they have a place to stay or do they just come from home?

MM: They come from home.

LT: So for a groundBREAKER to be a volunteer there has to be a Y-Centre in their area?

MM: Mmm ... and that is why the NAFCI clinic is a clinic that loveLife has been promoting for the Department of Health. There's a lot of talking on the phone and explaining.

LT: So, you personally spend most of your time here at this organisation because you are talking on the phone?

MM: Yes, and also on weekends for instance I also get invited to, like, cause, like people around my area before like I was sitting at home like not doing anything and then since I have got involved it's like I made an impact. And also my community my peers and those who are older than me they kind of take me as [] because they come for advice and all that ... so like on weekends I like spend it there with them.

LT: Why do you think it is that most adolescence aren't using condoms?

MM: Those who are not using condoms I think are trying to prove things themselves though we are making sure that working with them like to trying to change that behavior you know. But than to do, like, for instance like giving an example they have to see it as yes, I can do it so we are trying to put that as if I am not trying to say that No you can't do it or maybe like say you are a smoker and I am a smoker as well and I say you should quit smoking so I have to prove a point that I am leader for those who are following me.

LT: Do you think that because all the billboards are in English, is that ever a problem for any young people, like say, did somebody in the township do they not understand it?

MM: We had that thing before in the media that loveLife in the newspapers they were saying better change their language they were finding it difficult yeah and um the Afrikaaner people, and it is so amazing because Grade 1 pupils of which they are going to reading books or if you are doing standard 5 standard 6 it is no longer the same because I think that they are understanding that they do come in the doors. For instance, I have heard from a telephone request call this women wanted me to talk to her five-year old about that well, it is not as difficult if the parent announces it is okay but if you go without their permission than they go and complain you are teaching our children about sex and all that but I think it is important like with all the stakeholders like from government, churches, parents and all the ... like I said the stakeholders if they can partake and everyone can, I have seen it myself because I have been there and I have seen these people and how much they do understand even if they put it into their own languages even in some areas if they don't understand it I help them that is why there is a Thetha Junction toll-free number if you are uncertain we are always sending this message if you are uncertain about certain things please call we might be able to help you.

LT: Do you ever find that young boys will use culture as an excuse for not being sexual responsible like they might say "Oh, I am an African man it is fine for me to have many partners", does that ever happen and what do you say to that?

MM: Yeah we do encounter situations where other people will have quite a number of partners and then we tell them you know it is not in the past the issue of HIV I know it was, like everyone sleeps as it is today and I think the reason why I don't know why but maybe it wasn't well publicized or whatever but looking at what is happening now I don't know politically before I know in some areas like you were talking about culture, today it is no longer the same HIV is here and it is killing people. And you never know even with one partner you need to go through testing several HIV testing and it doesn't give you that you shouldn't use a condom as well it has come in fact the future is not the same as the past and you need to take care of yourself and by so doing you are helping yourself and your loved ones cause if you are getting involved with too many partners you don't know who can infect you and you have been destroying the people that you love. Making sure that these young people understand that their response is very [nice] for instance I was talking about relationships in one class and most of them they were like talking about sex and all that as if they kind of like practiced. I was kind of surprised when they came to me and talked to me about "You know I am still a virgin but I am afraid to come to the front and to say that I am a virgin." That is when I saw that we need to promote the things we see as being a virgin. I think we need to do that and I was doing that and everyone was like oh, I am proud to be a virgin it was no longer isolated and yes, it is nice to know even though you are a virgin to know about sex.

LT: When you are talking to young people do you address the issue of violence against women and girls?

MM: We always tell them that you know it is not good physical abuse or emotional abuse and all that I put myself as the one who was maybe violent how would you feel or maybe I would make practical examples and then ask them what do you see is wrong? For instance I would role-play it as in a girl is violating a boy or maybe take four people, two girls and two boys and say okay, fine okay, you are a boy you have to violate this girl and this girl you have to violate this boy. I would ask a question on that and then put more emphasis on you see be it a male to a female or a female to a male it is either way it is not good so what is important is to make sure whatever you are giving people you can accept it you like it when it comes to you.

LT: What are loveLife's weaknesses or any hard challenges?

MM: Um, challenge ... I think what is a challenge getting parents to understand, you know, getting involved that is why we were using public leader people and trying to show them that no, it is not about teaching your child to do sex but making them aware of sex and if you are like doing sex these are the consequences of it. For instances as groundBREAKERS here at loveLife going up there and telling them if you are doing sex this is what is going to happen just giving them the advantages and disadvantages and then if the parents as well tell them the very same thing and at the church and everywhere they go. I think that thing would be instilled to them they will grow up with the mentality that I have to wait for the right time to have sex. The difficulty and the challenge for loveLife is getting the parents to participate. Some of them are responding very well.

LT: Do you think loveLife as an organization has any competitors?

MM: No. I don't see any competitors. The thing is most AIDS campaigns are saying the same thing and when it is different and looking at what loveLife is doing it is different. The trainings you enjoy we got energizers you should come and see how we kind of like conduct workshops we are having a blast and everyone is partaking and it is very nice. I think that is how it is like you have to entertain them at the same time you are entertaining them.

LT: Do you think that for adolescents who are HIV positive, do you think loveLife is talking to them too?

MM: Yes I do, though I haven't come across, and we are making sure there is no discrimination, and we are making sure for instance all the people and different sexualities they are taking with them, I would say but I haven't come across somebody saying, "You know I do know someone PWA", or I haven't come across someone saying that loveLife doesn't get us and all that.

LT: Are any of the groundBREAKERS people who are positive?

MM: I have no idea.

LT: And loveLife doesn't ask, right?

MM: Yeah, it is up to an individual to want to come to them or what.

Helen Sinyanya
groundBREAKER
Y-Centre, Langa
20 September 2002

LT: Okay Lisa, can you tell me how you first heard about the GroundBREAKERS?

HS: It was last year, December ,yes, it was the end of last year December. The first time it was launched so I heard about it. I didn't come to the Centre or anything I just saw the posters. Still I can see anything that I wanted to do. But anyway I saw this poster on studio management and I was so interested in studio so I had to bring my CV here at the Y-Centre.

LT: Oh, you mean the radio.

HS: Yeah, the radio the studio manager. So, I came here to bring my CV and then they called me to come to the interview and I went to the interview and there was only boys and I had the experience for the radio because I used to visit other radio stations to see how they do things. So I had a little bit of an idea of what is happening on the radio so ... they called me and said that you got the job, that was it. Anyway I heard about it long because I use to see on TV loveLife, the billboards.

LT: So before coming here and the groundbreakers you were doing some radio stuff and that kind of thing? So, since you've become a groundBREAKER can you tell me some of the things you learned from loveLife about relationships?

HS: I have learned a lot about how to live a positive lifestyle. How a young person has choices because loveLife is not saying "Do it", they are saying "Do it but you have to protect yourself". Because when you are telling a child don't do it obviously a child will want to do it but if you are telling her you can do it but this is going to come up after doing it, basically what I have learned at loveLife. Is giving you choices and you have a life you can choose what you can do with your life. It's "Make better choices in life" that's basically it.

LT: And what has loveLife taught you about HIV/AIDS?

HS: HIV/AIDS ... we don't talk about HIV/AIDS a lot but we are [promoters] they say protect yourself of getting HIV positive and that you have to use condoms and you have to like if you don't want to get pregnant you have to use protections. Yeah, and use a condom.

LT: You said you don't talk too much about HIV but in your training have you talked about how HIV affects men and women differently?

HS: Yes we did on the positive sexuality training we had I think two months back. They sort of explained to us what happened when you do get it and how you can protect yourself.

LT: Well, I'm not just talking medically how it affects men and women differently I even mean how men might be treated differently and how women might be treated differently.

HS: Okay, they have one. Okay before I have been with loveLife I always treat with HIV as, cause I have read some books and have seen it on TV, so, I have a neighbor who is HIV positive he's like my friend like I have no problem with that since when I've been with loveLife or what . I don't have any problem because it is just him.

LT: What about all the lessons you've learned from LoveLife how do you pass those messages on to people here at the center?

HS: Okay, talk to the radio to them, to debate, to motivating, to motivating young people um ... talking to young people and explaining to them what really happens and taking the people from the positive sexuality classes and then putting them on the radio and have them explain what is really happening without me explaining it I get the young people to talk about it on the radio.

LT: So they are basically expressing their stories?

HS: Yeah, what they feel and how can we change the classes and how can we make them more exciting to young people to get the message out.

LT: Right. Tell me what you think LoveLifes strengths are?

HS: Strengths are ... to reduce the number of people who are HIV positive at least by 50% to change it for young people just by 5% or maybe more at least we changing peoples lives.

LT: And what about some of the weaknesses?

HS: The weaknesses are the billboard I have to say.

LT: Really?

HS: Some people have a problem with the billboards the way they are written like "show me sex, show me the money" like some parents don't get the message. Like if you are passing in the car and even me myself when I pass the billboards it says something else than what we bring up to people. If you come to loveLife Centres you come to find out – some parents take it so personal like they don't want their kids to come here at the Centre because they think this is what we teach children but it is not basically it is not we are giving them choices. What you see is what you think this is what is happening in loveLife and they don't want their kids to go. So that is a little bit of the weaknesses on billboards I think they should fix some of the billboards outside to get people to understand what is really happening here.

LT: You think people are interpreting those billboards in a way that they think young people should be having sex?

HS: Yes.

LT: okay, Do you think it would be different if those billboards were not in English if they were in Xhosa?

HS: I think it is the same it is what you say like "Show me the money" some person may think something else I might think something else you might think something else you are not all the same it doesn't matter how which way they put it in Xhosa or what but I spoke to some of the loveLife and I told them about what I feel about the billboards because everyone is have a problem with the billboards. I think they should change that and put it in some way it doesn't matter if it is in English or Xhosa it is still the message that's there.

LT: Okay, um, who is loveLife trying to reach with their messages?

HS: Young people, young people of the future we want them there to be Presidents to be Ministers to be singers to be a bright future making positive decisions in their lives.

LT: Okay, with these billboards do you think that people talk that life in real life?

HS: Yeah, the parents like the kids do come to the Centre but the parents do not come to the Centre. But by having the kids and not having the parents we would rather having them both sometimes we call up meetings and the parents don't come to the meetings. You see they have that thing about what is it all about but they

don't really come to find out what is really happening and to see the child changing and making choices and positive choices from loveLife but she doesn't want or he doesn't want to come to loveLife. It is parents that are the problem.

LT: Okay, what about how loveLife speaks to people? Do they kind of have to change their message or tailor their message when you are talking to different audiences say boys do you talk to boys differently than you talk to girls do you talk differently to someone who is Xhosa do you talk differently to someone who is maybe coloured or....?

HS: They are all the same to us. What we bring out we bring out to Xhosa girls to Xhosa boys English whatever it is the message. If we go to Xhosa people we talk Xhosa to explain what is really happening if we go to schools like Good Hope then we bring the message in English. Yeah.

LT: Okay. And what are some of the barriers at the Centre that you face in bringing people to come here? What are some of the obstacles to getting young people to come here?

HS: It is the parents. Sometimes they come into the Centre calling for the child saying "What are you doing here?" All those things you see and the child doesn't feel like he has to be here or she has to be here. It is really the parents we need to get the parents together we call out meetings [almost] but they don't come and they have a problem with loveLife but they don't want to come to us to talk about it what is really the problem so we can explain to them what is here. But we are trying to get to each and every member of the Centre to go to his house or her house to find out what is really happening if the child is really having a problem maybe there is a problem with the parents or what.

LT: And if you find out do you have anything you can do after that?

HS: Yeah we have a counseling like a nurse like I just can't go there and talk to them I'd rather talk to the manager who is up there to go and talk to them because I don't think it's right the position to say something.

LT: Okay, okay. Tell me how have most kids here have the gotten involved with the Centre, how did they hear about loveLife?

HS: We had a launch at the beginning of the year, which is everybody was here in Langa, posters, schools, go to schools, [core] schools and the the um ... the billboard the posters all around Langa and you can see the directions when you come in Langa you can see the directions. Yeah, that is basically it.

LT: When you advertised loveLife what did you say to get people to come here?

HS: Okay, yeah.

LT: Did you say this is a positive sexuality Centre or did you say come here to play basketball?

HS: Actually, the core business is positive sexuality whatever we give them the computers, the studio, skills but the core business is positive sexuality so that's what we were and also the studio everybody was like ... okay, okay since we get them here and then we go to tell them the messages and all that and then we get them to attend the two weeks workshop on positive sexuality.

LT: Do you see more boys than girls more girls than boys?

HS: I would say boys than girls but there is more girls but boys mostly.

LT: Boys mostly. Do have any ideas of why that might be?

HS: It might be because we have a radio, which is boys.

LT: A radio yeah? But you're a girl.

HS: Computers. Computers these days you find that boys are so interested in computers. Yeah, which is boys almost and netball is girls. We have more boys here .I think so. Yeah.

LT: Okay, do girls in the surrounding community not come here because of any particular reason? Do they have to do more chores at home or are their parents more protective of them?

HS: No, now that we have this clinic, this vitality clinic, I think the girls are coming in like because we have a service that is friendly and they have been telling us that this is a good thing you did for us opening this friendly clinic because when we go to the other clinics they shout at us or do whatever so this is bringing us some girls in.

LT: So do more girls visit the clinic?

HS: Come at 3 or 4 o'clock you will see what it is like inside here.

LT: Tell me what are the core message that you give out to people here the core loveLife messages what do you say to people about positive sexuality?

HS: Okay. Okay, um what we actually say to ... the messages like, talk about it, like what do you talk about we are not saying to them talk about sex or whatever we are saying talk about positive or whatever affects you in your life and motivate and be motivated and when you are motivated you make informed choices you see and then you live a positive lifestyle and than you have a better future.

LT: Tell me do you think most South African adolescents are using condoms?

HS: Yeah, I think so especially here at loveLife. I think we have reduced it whatever we don't see it or not but I think so. I think 99% of South Africans do you use condoms they don't use them they know about it.

LT: They know about it.

HS: They know about it but they don't use them.

LT: How come?

HS: I don't know. I don't know some people, they think fine, I can go out and get hit by a car so why bother using a condom? Some people say like that. I respect that.

LT: So what do you say to it? What do you say to people who have that fear?

HS: I say I don't want to judge people it is not my place to judge people I can give them information it is up to them to use it or not.

LT: There is a high level of violence against women in South Africa and in some cases maybe for a young woman to ask someone to use a condom that may put her in some kind of physical danger what kind of things do you say to young girls here about that kind of conflict that might take place?

HS: I don't get to those places a lot but I can see young people have been beaten up by men which is high here in Langa like a man who is drunk beating up a women you see them every weekend. I did ask some girl who was beaten up by her boyfriend and she said to me she can't afford to lose the boyfriend or whatever like she loves him so much she can't even broke up with him or if she broke up with him he is going to beat her up or whatever. The situations like that I told her to go to the police station that I can't be part of that beating up maybe he can beat me up too so the better is to go to the police station and explain the problem that you have. But she is afraid to go to the police station and we spoke to the police station because we don't have like the counseling room where like you can sit with a policeman or whoever social worker or whoever who you can speak to because there is always men in the police station so you are afraid to address your problem. So they are thinking of on the other side of the police station they are thinking of building a room so that when you get raped you can because sometimes when you go to report a rape here in Langa there is a lot of men and you say

your statement in front of the whole people inside. So young people are afraid of police stations so I was thinking of a way of a friendly, friendly point to help people and how can you help them to get through because here at LoveLife we don't have policemen or whoever who can deal with the beating up problem or being raped. We can only counsel them all to the [police] or whatever we need the policemen to make up a room so people can feel comfortable to come to the police station and to report such things as this. Because people around Langa I think they are so afraid to go to the police station because when you come up and they say say your statement in front of the people not within privacy you see it is things like that.

LT: Do you think that the loveLife messages are relevant to everybody here in Langa?

HS: Yeah, yes.

LT: Tell me do you think loveLife has competition?

HS: I wouldn't say competition because each and every organisation comes with good intention or whatever or whatever organization is dealing with HIV or but I think there is a little bit of competition maybe their point they want loveLife to be up there in dealing with young people. So I think they team-up with everybody whose youth organizations who we are going to support and if it is a function for other organisations we go and support.

LT: That is basically all of my questions unless you have something to add about anything you learned or anything?

HS: I'd like to say that loveLife has changed my whole entire life by going to these trainings and development and knowing who you are. Now I can say I am worth it.

LT: How did they do that? What was it that brought about this change?

HS: Okay. You kind of see how people act like we had this [responsible] development training that has to develop you inside and get to know who you are the person who you are and the person you thought you were but you're not. It was very interesting and you can actually go out and implement to the other kids who we really are. That was basically it that was the change.

LT: So who did you think you were and now you know who you really are.

HS: Yeah, it is funny cause you think you are somebody else but when somebody says something to you, you think "No, I am not the person that I thought I was".

LT: Okay, great thank you.

Kabelo Ndlovu
groundBREAKER
Y-Centre, Langa
20 September 2002

LT: I just wanted to start off and, Linda can you tell me how you first heard about the Groundbreakers?

KN: Last year I was a peer educator volunteering for PPASA [Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa] and this year I was told that there was this thing of LoveLife so I sent in my CV I went for an interview and here I am today. I was successful in that interview. I wasn't just chosen for the experience that I have.

LT: With PPASA.

KN: Yeah, with PPASA.

LT: How did you get involved with that?

KN: With PPASA? It was like right here in the city. I joined another youth group in Gugulethu where I am staying and then from there I entered the peer programme. I didn't spend much time there, I was supposed to spend three years as a peer educator with them but I only spent one year. This is my second year.

LT: Since you've been a groundBREAKER what have you learned from loveLife about, let's say, relationships?

KN: I have learned a lot. What can I say is that I have also changed inside. I am no longer the person I used to be. I understand people better than I used to. I know what girls want I mean I understand what they want and I understand what we, as guys, want. So it is easy for me to understand other people and tell them and convince them if there is a need to convince them.

LT: Convince them of what?

KN: Maybe a young girl or a young boy will come to me and ask me about condom use about how is it important to use a condom. I know how I can talk to that person because here we are trained to talk with ah, different people how to approach them. So even if you can ask me about anything around sexuality it won't be a problem for me. I am used to it.

LT: How come?

KN: Because it isn't easy to talk about sex. Even though I was a peer educator, yeah, there were times when I didn't want to talk about things because there is this thing that you can not talk about sex. So, around older people I use to be shy but now, uh ... even if I can be next to the President I won't mind.

LT: What brought this change about in you?

KN: Um ... I can say it is the positive mind that I have and everyday I am around with the groundBREAKERS so the things that we talk we talk about positive lifestyle, positive sexuality so I can say that I am used to it now. Because even if you are a peer educator if you aren't used to talk about the things it is not going to be easy but if you practice, practice, practice then you are going to do it.

LT: Okay. What has LoveLife taught you about HIV/AIDS?

KN: Okay. HIV/AIDS to my understanding even if you are HIV positive or HIV negative there is no difference between us we are all human. I cannot contract HIV from touching you, hugging you or kissing you unless you sleep without using a condom or blood but not just sitting with a person who is positive. So, um, I can say I have learned some things that – other things I used to know last year as a peer educator so nothing much has changed.

LT: Even before you were a peer educator where there any myths that you heard about HIV?

KN: Oh, there were many myths even if you sleep with a virgin if you are HIV positive and you sleep with a virgin you will be cured. But now I know that was a myth. And other people are saying you can go to so and so or to the sangoma to these ... I now know what it right and what is wrong how can you cure yourself, I mean though we know there is no cure but how you can take [] and medication and still be positive be the person that you used to be.

LT: Right. And what have you learned from LoveLife on how HIV affects men and women differently?

KN: Uh, I have learned that ... um ... sorry. I can't answer that question because to my understanding even if you are a female or a male a guy you are going to be affected the same way. So I don't want to say that it is a loveLife thing it is how I understand it.

LT: Do you think men and women should be spoken to differently when talking about HIV? I mean even just young people who come to the Centre do you think you have to talk differently to boys than you do to girls just to educate them about it?

KN: No as a groundBREAKER I don't see the great thing to separate them because when they go out there they do meet with each other so the best thing is to talk with them both. It is going to be easy even when they are outside because imagine a young girl approaching a boyfriend who knows nothing about loveLife maybe he is going to say maybe you are crazy or you don't trust me now because you are talking about this thing of loveLife. I have been there and if you tell them the same thing at the same time they will both ask the questions that they want to ask and when they go out of that door they have the same understanding of what you are talking about.

LT: So, with all of this that you have learned with loveLife and your experiences as a peer educator how do you implement these lessons when you are actually talking to the young people?

KN: What I have learned here is to be adaptable. If you are talking with young kids you have to be young, if you are with old you have to be at the status of equal. If you are with people of my age you have to meet them where they are because if you are talking to young kids and you are trying to be a father and mother to them they won't listen. So I have learned that okay I have to be adaptable I even play games with them so I try to break that barrier.

LT: What would you say are loveLife's strengths?

KN: I can see that is a youth run place. It is where the young kids feel free to express their inner feelings. And um, if I am right, but if I can say I am 99% right this is the only Y-Centre in the Western Province. Yeah, I am 100% sure about that but ah, the only thing we do that we differ from the other youth centres is that we are youth friendly and we have the vitality, the vitality to provide that this is a very youth friendly place. We don't ask you where were you last night or what are you going to do today, tonight or tomorrow. We just give you the treatment you need and the information that you need and even help because we are talking about positive lifestyle so it is wise to give them that positive lifestyle not just talk, talk we are also doing practical. So, I can say it is our [self].

LT: And on the other side, are there any weaknesses that you can think of?

KN: Ah, the only weakness that we have is the age restriction because we are saying we want kids from 12 to 17 and there are also kids 18 and above. We exercise flexibility because we know that they also need that information. So I don't know whether it is a weak ...well, yeah it is a weak point but we are trying to do something about it because we are exercising flexibility by giving them the information and the services that we have to all.

LT: Um ... who I guess just going with that, that what you were talking about, just that about how there are older people who are also interested in your services who is the target for this centre?

KN: Okay, it is from 12 to 17 years old but if you can look around there are people who are older than 17 we don't chase them. Because if we chase them we are saying go out there and do those things that we don't want the young kids to do. By keeping them inside here we are avoiding some of the things that they were going to do during the day. And now when they are here even the older ones they say oh, there is the condom dispenser because these are the things we provide.

LT: Okay, Um, tell me what loveLife's core messages to young people are?

KN: Okay, first of all loveLife's cores messages are to introduce HIV/AIDS, cutting to be or cutting in half. HIV and AIDS, teenage pregnancy, and STI's. So, what you are saying by giving them the loveLife messages which are saying we don't accuse them of sexual partners because we know most of young kids don't or they think they are cool if they have more than one partner. And if we say the delay the process of having sexual intercourse because sex was there before us it is still here and it is still going to be here even if I am dead or even if we can all die but sex is still going to be even in the next generation. And we also understand that they are sexually active and it is not going to be easy to delay, imagine if a kid was used to this thing sexually active. Okay, we say to them, okay, if you are, please protect because by protecting yourself, you are not only protecting yourself you are protecting your partner and by protecting your partner you are protecting the, the

community, the Western Cape and by protecting the Western Cape you are protecting the whole of South Africa. You are protecting South Africa, you are protecting the continent. Because if the person was HIV positive the first person who was HIV positive, if that person had used a condom then today there would be no such thing as AIDS. So, we are telling them to protect at all times.

LT: And when you give these messages out you said you don't talk to boys and girls differently but do you talk to anyone differently if they are from a different culture or from a different race or from a different class or anything like that? Do the messages change at all?

KN: Yeah, as I have said you have to be adaptable if you are a groundBREAKER, you have to be adaptable. If you are with this race or with this kind of a class you have to fit in and be like them. Just as an example if you can go to a deaf school you have to do your presentation you don't have to say uh, I don't hear you have to account to them and show them that, to be able so they see there is no difference between you even though they don't hear what I am saying yeah, we are all the same.

LT: And what about when you look at loveLife's advertising like the print advertising campaigns that they have loveLife only advertises to people in English do you think that is a good thing, a bad thing, do you think that should change?

KN: It is a good thing and at the same time it's not because there are new loveLife messages that I don't like. Imagine when you are driving and you see this billboard you can't even look at that thing because of the colours. Ah, but the first billboards were good for me and for the others because they were promoting. We heard more than a thousand answers because if you were to ask a young person what do you understand about this picture he or she was going to tell you something that is different from you. It is better than these ones just telling you I had sex last night, sex is sex, show me the money. We can analyze that thing in the same way it is in that thing what the first ones were good.

LT: Okay, do you think language is a barrier at all? Do you think some people don't understand them?

KN: Yeah, it is a barrier not because some people don't understand English. You get people who don't understand what they are trying to say to the people even when you see okay – Sex is Sex or Show me the money and what can you come up with out of that thing – sex is sex, show me the money.

LT: Okay, you mean that can be confusing?

KN: Yeah, sometimes it's confusing.

LT: What are some of the – and not just in advertising – but what are some of the barriers that you have in reaching young people around the centre?

KN: At this moment, um, there is no barrier, because the Y-Centre manger is also trying to recruit young kids in the churches, and me as a groundBREAKER, I do the school visits. I talk with them in the community so there are no difficulties for us.

LT: So, how do most kids come to the centre? How do most kids get involved in loveLife?

KN: From their friends, they hear about it from their friends.

LT: And because you go out and recruit at the schools and ...

KN: And the sporting courts that we have because most young kids like basketball so they come here for the basketball and others are here for the computers and when they come we just tell them thanks for coming but we just can't give you the computer skills without being [] you know you just can't leave the house without permission. They have to go to the workshops for positive lifestyle and after you have graduated you can go to any company that you want to go to. We no longer do that because the kids are flocking we just send the person to the company that he or she wants to be in and then when there is a space in the workshop room

okay we say this group is finished the group that is playing basketball can come to the workshop. Even though they are already there they are still going to come to the workshop.

LT: Do you get more boys than girls here because people are more attracted to the sports?

KN: I don't know. There are many girls and many boys and I cannot tell.

LT: Right. Right. So, tell me why you think most young people aren't using condoms?

KN: Are or Aren't?

LT: Are Not.

KN: I don't want to say I am not using a condom. I want to say they are using condoms because these days it is out of fashion if you are not using a condom. I can tell you those condom dispensers we fill them almost everyday. That alone shows that they are using the condoms.

LT: Okay, well, what about young people who are not coming to the centre?

KN: Who are not coming to the centre?

LT: Right.

KN: Okay. I can say they are using or not using the condoms but because of the STI's that we treat at the centre I can say there are those who are still not using the condoms but the rate of STI's is not high.

LT: But do you know a reason of why that is? I mean ...

KN: I don't know.

LT: You don't know, okay. And what about the fact that there is so much violence against women in South Africa and you know some of the research that I have read said that for some young women asking them to negotiate condom use might actually put them in some kind of danger. Do address that in anyway in talking to young people?

KN: Yeah, you know what I usually do when I am busy doing the talks I always tell the girls that there is only one time to tell your boyfriend what you want and what you don't want on that first day when you first saw him is when you have to tell him – are you interested in me? Yeah, sure, thanks I am also interested but this and this and this is going like this and this and this. And if you told that guy what you want and what you don't want it isn't going to be easy for him to change what you said to him. So I tell them to talk about it and be open because when you get yourself in a relationship there is that point that you build with that person and there is trust between you and there should be no reason why it is going to be difficult to talk about what you want.

LT: What do you tell young men about not using violence against young women?

KN: Yes. We tell them almost everyday. We tell them – they know that even from their families that it is not the right thing to do though they are trying to deny it but ah, I cannot tell or say that it is still going on but to my understanding I don't think that it is still – yeah, it is but to a few people but the majority it is no longer doing but I don't know other people but to us there are no longer too many. Because now we know if you do something wrong to the girl if you don't use a condom that girl can go to the police station and report you and if that girl can fall pregnant. That is one thing that makes girls want to use a condom because I tell girls if you don't want to use a condom there is that year that you have to be out of school when you are pregnant and where's the boy? At school out doing everything and even the boy sometimes has to leave school and find a job for the child that he has to support. And if you have a dream or a vision you cannot do stuff like that.

LT: Right. Do you think that the loveLife messages here are relevant to everyone in the surrounding community?

KN: Yeah I can say that they are relevant because they are applying the loveLife messages to their lives.

LT: And this is kind of a different question but do you think that loveLife and this loveLife Y-Centre do you think they have any competitors?

KN: Ah, no. We are alone. We are alone. loveLife is out of this world. There is no place or Y-Centre that can compete with us at the moment. I don't know maybe 10 or 20 years to come whether there is going to be another but not this time.

LT: Well, that is it unless you have anything else to add about loveLife or your experience with loveLife or anything like that?

KN: Okay one thing that I can say or have already said is that we exercise flexibility as you can see that we are exercising flexibility. The experience that I have gained from loveLife is that I have met different people from different provinces and I have learned new things from them. And the thing I can say that I have learned from loveLife is to practice my mind to mental rehearsal to put positive things here and give positive things to the people and it is still what I am trying to do. I am even reading the international books now I wasn't used to reading books I use to read magazines but now I am reading international books and rehearse my mind and have a vision and also applying that to young kids and even with my friends. When I am with my friends and when they hear something said about me when I am with my friends I sit with them I end up talking about positive lifestyle and kind of motivating them. I don't know why or if it is because of the job I am doing because almost everyday and every hour I am to positive things. So, it is helping me and my friends and at first they were saying – ah, what is loveLife teaching you now, when I meet some of them they will say you know what I was looking for you. I am feeling down can you help me with this? And then another friend of mine came to me last week and he said he wants me to speak with his sister because his sister is not doing right things now and he doesn't know what is going on there. I am still going to speak with her I haven't yet spoken with her. I can say LoveLife has helped me and is still helping me and I am helping myself because you can be motivated by a thousand motivators but if you are demotivating yourself it is not going to work.

LT: Okay, that's great. Thanks for your time.

Mapula Tshabalala
GroundBREAKER
LoveLife Y-Centre, Langa
20 September 2002

LT: Okay, Patiswa, can you just tell me how you first heard about the Groundbreakers and if you don't mind speaking up this isn't the best quality tape recorder in the world so...

MT: What was that?

LT: How did you first hear about the Groundbreakers?

MT: Oh, how did I first hear about the Groundbreakers. Oh, okay. I always seen this program from SABC 1 Scamto program but I never got time to watch it what it was all about. And from one of Lovelifes Scamto newspapers-Scamto print so, I heard about the first Groundbreakers there but I didn't know what a Groundbreaker is and I never think that I would be a Groundbreaker so, I didn't know what a Groundbreaker is so I just thought that there was Groundbreakers but I didn't know what a Groundbreaker is. So, I heard from the TV and one of the Scamto newspaper prints.

LT: So, you found out and you filled out an application to....?

MT: No, first I was ahhh, I was a volunteer and a peer educator at Khayalisha where I live. The {community} has a center there for young people so I was a peer educator there for 3 years so,

LT: Like Kabelo.

MT: Like Kabelo ,yes. So, I always did workshops, Aids awareness, common youth, common school Aids week. So, I always did that afterschool. So, I applied because I saw this poster so we were advised by our manager that we should apply for [PBSA] the one who we [call up] and tells us which posters are coming up. So, we did apply for [] and then we were successful.

LT: And so since becoming a Groundbreaker what are some of the things you've learned from Lovelife? About relationships?

MT: Um...I think since I've become a Groundbreaker it has been a great experience for me and I think I have changed a lot. I was not a person who always- very quiet and I was very shy. I didn't want to talk to people but now I am able to do that because now I know I am a groundbreaker. I am suppose to say what I feel and I must walk the talk because most of the time I go to school I must workshop and motivate young people. I know that I am a role model and I must practice what I preach. And with this training that Lovelife gives us because if there is a training all Groundbreakers are there so we learn a lot and we gain a lot of experiences from other Groundbreakers from other provinces. So, it has changed me, Lovelife has changed me. I am able to make my own decisions. I am able to do what I know what is right. And most of the time I practice what is [] so trainings and Lovelife has changed me a lot.

LT: And what has Lovelife taught you about HIV/Aids?

MT: Mmm..what has Lovelife told me about HIV and Aids? I can say that Lovelife has given me a lot of information concerning HIV and Aids, rape, child abuse. What helped is that HIV and Aids does not cure but at the end of the day it is your choice. But what do you want to live your life like you we have to accept it. You have to treat people who've got Aids and HIV like the way you would like to be treated when you have [heard that someone] is HIV positive. So now I am able to look at people who are HIV positive as people like me so I don't have anything against people who are HIV positive I respect them a lot and even for others as well if they are open about there status I respect them a lot.

LT: Tell me what have you learned from Lovelife maybe about how HIV affects men and women differently and I don't just mean medically but around how men and women kind of relate to the disease or anything like that?

MT: I've learned that especially from, from where, where we come from like in our locations people in other families still treat people who are HIV positive as people who are the victims who will never be able to come out. Some people who are in it -it is very difficult for them to accept that they are HIV positive and there are some people who do not want to talk about it that they are HIV positive. And we can't discriminate them and treat them unfairly so people who are HIV wind-up doing bad things like sleeping around. They they they don't have [enough] information if they are told especially to the Priest that they have- where I come from if you are told that you are HIV positive and there is no counseling involved I don't know I was was once there to do an HIV test and I wasn't given any counseling -I wasn't counseled at all they were done with the HIV test and than gave me the results and then I went home. So, really it is difficult for adults because there is not enough information and support and lack of support. So that is why it is difficult for other people to expose if they are HIV positive or not.

LT: With this kind of thing and all the knowledge that you gained from Lovelife how do you take this and talk to the kids at the center?

MT: Okay, because ah..I run this workshop particularly on the side of facilitating workshops for the age group of 10 to 14 years. The information that I have I try to [can't even guess what she said] with my self to be able to share my experience with people and give as much as more information to the young people and how to apply it into their lives not only to share information but they don't know how to apply it in order to give the information to others and help other people. Because not all of the young people can be at the center everyday

so each and every young kid that comes here we must try to give him information or her so that they can tell the others outside. So I give as much information as I can.

LT: Okay. What do you think are some of Lovelife's strengths as an organization?

MT: Okay. I think one of the Lovelife's strengths as an organization I think is the way Lovelife is trying to get into young people like for example the youth center the Lovelife youth center and they build those and that Lovelife center and that [it's easier] that Lovelife is using through television, through it's newspapers, through the Y centers Lovelife is trying to reach people in all of corners. Lovelife [] Lovelife [] even in rural areas Lovelife is there. I think that is one of Lovelife's strengths of helping young people because Lovelife is everywhere. Each and everyone knows about Lovelife so I think that it is one of Lovelife's strengths.

LT: What about..what do you think are some of the weaknesses of the organization?

MT: (long pause) I don't know. I don't know because I only hear what just Lovelife is [saying] so you must see I was in the [PPA] so. I don't really have any.

LT: Okay. Who is Lovelife trying to reach mostly? Who is there target market?

MT: Their target market is of Lovelife is teenagers from 12 to 17 years that is one of the target age group of Lovelife is trying to reach young people 12 to 17 years because they think that they are the most vulnerable the young kids who are mostly [overly] exposed to HIV, STDs and teenage pregnancy.

LT: And tell me what are Lovelife's core messages to that target market?

MT: Lovelife messages. There are many Lovelife messages we have the [delay until it's perfect], and we have this peer run Aids, talk about it, share the responsibility so Lovelife these messages are trying to make young people to think and giving them choices but not to decide for young people but giving them choices to make them think about the things that are happening to them. So, at the same time we are giving them this information but they are the ones that are going to make the choice at the end of the day. Because these messages are not instructing them but make them think delay the message...delay the [also] of sexual activity. So we try to tell everybody so that they can see to motivate why they must delay, why they must protect, why they must reduce the number of partners they have so we try to motivate them so in order for them to make [wise] choices they have got to be motivated or they can not do anything about their lives. They have got to be motivated to make a choice. You have got to have information first in order to make a choice.

LT: And tell me when Lovelife gives those messages out do they possibly speak to anyone differently? Do they tailor their messages at all maybe to boys or girls or maybe to someone who is Xhosa or maybe to someone who is Afrikaans or maybe to a different class? Do they change their message at all?

MT: In..in different languages.

LT: In different languages...in anyway do they change the message?

MT: I think [eleven] messages I think all of them are in English and most Lovelife messages are very, very..you have to think first if you are reading it Lovelife messages. They are only in English, I think so, the one thing about Lovelife messages is you have to think about what the message really means. I think it is one of these...all of the..[] ...Lovelife messages are not clear on what they are saying.

LT: Are you talking about the billboards?

MT: The billboards, yeah, about the billboards. So, the others are not very clear like the people who may think that Lovelife is promoting sex but Lovelife is not. So, I think the reason I think of, that I think they are very bad they want to create and have a young kid to come to their center- what does that billboard mean? So, I think maybe that is the other reason that they are uncertain.

LT: Okay, okay. Tell me, do you think that they should change and advertise in other languages or do you just think it should be in English?

MT: I think it should be English.

LT: How come what is good about advertising English?

MT: I think English is the most common language that is in most of the primaries and maybe in different and other languages it can not be clear as it can be clear in English maybe it comes in [most of word way] because in some of the language the English, the Xhosa words if you are speaking Xhosa the Xhosa words the Xhosa words..maybe if you are calling your [credit card] in Xhosa maybe they [can't check with you] maybe that would be a little bit better b/c even the workshop we are running the manual is in English and it is for the benefit of our young kids who are still..they also learn from that. They learn to speak English .

LT: So, you run their workshops in English?

MT: No, we run them in Xhosa. They are run mostly in groups even though I didn't tell them to discuss in Xhosa or write in Xhosa they do write themselves in English they feel like writing in English. So I don't think the young people out there got problems or me either I don't have a problem.

LT: Mmm. Tell me how um most kids at the center got involved in the center? How did they hear about it?

MT: Okay. The time the center was open it was the last day or 30th of November the time we were going out me, my [daughter], the y-center manager and [name] the executive, so we went from school to school to talk about the center. The center we offer these services so we tried to recruit students to come and see the center. So each and everyday we did do that preach about the center please come to the center so the people were starting to flow here to the center.

LT: Why do you think most South African adolescents aren't using condoms?

MT: I don't think that they have information or maybe they have information I think adults do know they should use condoms but they don't want to do it because maybe their problem is they want to do it on flesh and flesh maybe they think it is cool and they think that HIV is not there it is just something that government want to block them from doing sex. And the problem is they always want to experience things they don't want to be told what to do. So if you tell them No do this and they don't want to do it it is her choice or his choice at the end of the day. So if you've got the attitude I think the reason why they have this attitude is maybe they aren't really at the stage to see they don't want to go out and take the responsibility let me just put it like that . They don't want to take the responsibility.

LT: In South Africa there is a high level violence against women so sometimes that may put a young girl in danger if she tries to ask her boyfriend to put a condom or things like that. How do you address violence against women when you talk to young people?

MT: I always say to young people especially girls that they must stand up for what they believe is right. It is time for us to wake up his opinions because they know that they don't or there are people who are always expressing what they feel or they know we always don't want to loose them. We must always think of yourself in order for you must be true to yourself, know what you want, knowing what your reason when you are making a choice. So, even if I run this workshop I spend most of the time females are not speaking [with] or what you are or not speaking a lot –talking but females are always they don't want to talk knowing they are afraid of the boys I don't know why. So it starts from them not wanting to talk in front of people because if you don't want to talk you don't want to share your opinion your not able to say no to your boyfriend. So it is very very important sometimes knowing who you are first. Liking yourself, self-respect, talking to yourself start from there within you and then you will make others know who you are and knowing what you want so all your communication is one: knowing yourself, loving yourself, respecting yourself and others will start respecting you and standing up for what it is right for you and it will help you at the end of the day. Because most teenagers are doing things without knowing why they are doing things.

LT: And how do you talk to young boys about that?

MT: To boys I always say that that everyone wants to get a girlfriend but when one at the time you got a girlfriend they must start to communicate. Okay, maybe the girlfriend-okay, girlfriend the rules that we are going to have in this relationship are going to bring us both us...we are not going to have sex in this relationship but if we have sex which condoms are we going to use. So the communication is very, very important before going to sex or kissing or all the other stuff because if you [] and you don't [] about sex than you will do other things and wind up getting the girl pregnant and get into big trouble or it is something you will regret. So they must try to understand that it is best to try to communicate to the girls if the girl doesn't want to do something once you put your condom on try to understand her give her a chance. Don't do what you are told by your friends because most guys they take the wrong information that they heard from other..from their friends and they try to do it in there own relationship. So their relationship ends up be violent and they become both of them [].

LT: Tell me do you think the Lovelife messages are relevant to everyone here in Langa?

MT: Yes, yes I think so because each and every month we do have a groundbreaker or sport day- football, volley ball or netball so, we do do lovelife messages in every game and every match that takes place. They are available these [messages] and other things.

LT: And do you think Lovelife has any competition?

MT: No I don't think so. I can't recall each organization-each one-um, no I don't think so.

LT: I think that's really the end of my questions if there is anything you want to add about things that you think about Lovelife or anything like that?

MT: Lovelife has helped me a lot personally. It is a great center and it is a challenge to stand in front of people talking and sharing your experiences and try to be the person that you want to be. So it is a great challenge for me but it has change me a lot even though I didn't go to school this year but I know that I have not wasted this year and I am learning a lot from them.

LT: Okay, okay. Thanks.

LoveLife Y-Centre Focus Group

loveLife Y-Centre, Langa
Focus Group
20 September 2002

Laura Templeton – moderator
2 female respondents
3 male respondents

LT: So, like I said, my name is Laura and I am a Master's student at the University of Cape Town and my project that I'm doing right now is I'm writing about how HIV and AIDS affects men and women differently and I also want to look at some organisations that deal with HIV and AIDS and how they respond to that. Um, and so what I wanted to do was talk to some of you about how loveLife has affected you and coming to the centre, um is that pretty clear? Any questions about it? No. good. Can you just go around the room and tell me what your ages are?

FR 1: I'm 18.

MR 1: I'm 17.

MR 2: 15.

MR 3: 15.

FR 2: 14.

LT: Okay, great. [Interruption with others opening door] Are you guys joining? Okay, can you just tell me about how you first heard about the loveLife centre? And feel free, anybody can talk at any point, let's just give everyone a turn.

FR 2: Well for me, I heard about it from friends telling me about what's happening and so I was just, decided to come and check it out.

LT: Okay, anyone else?

MR 2: Uh, right, so like I heard about it from my friends, but like I didn't know what loveLife was. I came here the first day and I found out the stuff going on and what I could be doing. So like when I came here the first day they told me you had to join a group, like so when I came here I learned you could do stuff like playing basketball.

LT: You guys can also tell me why you come to the centre, what kind of things you like to do here.

FR 2: Um, for me I do motivation, I do debating and I help motivate discussion. And I used to play basketball (laughs shyly). What was the other question?

LT: Just, what do you like to do here, why do you like to come?

FR 2: Well it keeps me away from the streets. You know it keeps me occupied, takes a lot of my time. And, you know it's helped me to grow as a person.

LT: Okay.

MR 3: You know, I'm staying around here so that's why I came. They told me to come and, like, I'm a peer educator, and I like to come here cause sometimes I don't have something to do, and I was staying around the corner at my house, so, like, when the centre was established, like I come here for fun and play games and stuff.

LT: Tell me, what kind of things have you guys learned here at the centre?

MR 1: Well, like, before I came here, I don't like talking about HIV/AIDS. Then when we went to the SRH [Sexual and Reproductive Health] group, there, we got to know about HIV/AIDS and STI's, so like I learned so much on it.

LT: So, for example, what? What did you learn?

MR 1: Uh, well there's that thing that you can get AIDS from a mosquito bite. But from here I learned that you can't get AIDS from them.

LT: Anyone else?

MR 2: Yeah, I heard something that is like about motivation, Like they motivate me, because my friend always talks about myths. Always lies and talks something that never happened. So that when I came here I learn about AIDS in a workshop, I learn about HIV/AIDS and other stuff and I know how to do it, to put the thingy on the thing. (Laughter from group).

LT: Tell me guys, have you learned anything about relationships? Here at the centre?

FR 2: Yes, a lot.

LT: What kind of things?

FR 2: When I was at SRH, we learned, like what makes a relationship and what breaks one. And that specifically. And that sex in a relationship. You don't always have to have sex. The other person might not want to have sex and you might want to have sex and you have to learn how to control yourself. And if you both are gonna have it, contraceptives.

MR 2: And also, like, that there is a safe time to have it.

LT: Safe time?

MR 2: Like when you both are ready.

LT: Okay. Tell me, maybe, you started talking about the idea, maybe, like you thought that a mosquito bite was something where you might get HIV. Were there any other myths that you thought about before you came here that helped, that coming here helped change that?

MR 1: Yeah, a lot of myths, like even in the township, people tell you People With AIDS, like they take a syringe and they draw that blood and they put it in the oil (?) and if you take that oil it's going to give you AIDS. But now I know that all kinds of groups can get AIDS, but when I first came here I thought that was not true that it was just some.

LT: Anyone else?

MR 2: Yeah, boys in September, boys in September. (Laughter from others) They will menstruate.

LT: Boys in September? You mean the month of September? They menstruate?

MR 2: Yeah. (continued laughter)

LT: Okay, that's a new one, I haven't heard that before. Anything else?

MR 3: Like if you sleep with a boy, like a girl, if you sleep with a boy and then you gonna get drop (?).

LT: Drop?

MR 3: Yeah. The girl was wearing earrings, it also makes drops.

LT: So, I'm going to shift a little bit, and I want to get your opinion [Interruption with door opening] What I want to do now is get your opinion. You guys have probably seen most of loveLife's billboards, right? So, I want to show you some of the billboards and see what you think about them, okay? There's only one of them that I don't have the big poster for but you've probably seen it before. Let me read it out loud. And it says, Sandy, who's 15 years old, says, "I wanted to wait, but Abram was inside me before I could say no." And then you go to Abram who's 17 and he says, "Sssho... did I rape her? Now that we talk I understand that love is not just sex." Okay, so you've all seen that. Tell me, what do you think of this advertisement?

MR 1: Okay, from my point of view, it's just guys right, here in the township, if a guy is 17, 18, you're still a virgin, like, your friends don't appreciate, what can I say? Appreciate you as a boy. But if you are not a virgin, you are like a man, cool and all that. Mature.

LT: Okay, so what does that mean? Does that mean it's okay to rape a woman?

Entire group: No, no.

LT: Okay, so tell me about what it means?

MR 1: Like, like the whole friends, like boys, they treat you like you are just nothing. Like the girls don't have many, like with drinking and smoking, you won't count in the group.

LT: You won't count in the group?

MR 1: Yeah.

LT: Okay, so why does this advertisement make you think of those things?

MR 2: Like the second one, no, it makes you realize that a relationship isn't only about sex. You have trust and commitment to each other.

LT: Tell me, what does this say to you about Sandy? What do you think about Sandy when you read this?

FR 2: Um, I think Sandy didn't want to have sex when you read that. It says that Abram was inside her before she could say no, so if she had a chance to say no, she would have said no.

LT: Did you want to say something about that?

MR 2: Yeah, like, I disagree with her, because, like, the moment Abram started taking her clothes off she could have said no. Abram, before he took his clothes off, she would have said no.

LT: Okay, so you think once a woman has taken her clothes off she can't say no?

FR 1: (Laughs and nods head) Once she says no than that's rape.

LT: Okay, at any time.

FR 1: Yeah.

MR 2: But here it says, before I could say no. He was inside me before I could say no. He watched him taking his clothes off, why doesn't she say no right then? (Much noise from all members of group)

FR 2: Um, there is such thing as thinking.

LT: Okay, there is disagreement in the room. What do you think this says about Abram?

FR 2: That, okay, Abram didn't really know that, okay, since Sandy said that she couldn't say no and Abram didn't know that, okay, maybe, before okay if she had said no then he probably wouldn't have done it so now he's thinking to himself that if a girl says no and I actually go ahead it's rape, so now he's worried that, oh my gosh I did actually rape her? Maybe she did say no afterwards.

LT: Okay. Anyone else? What do you think about Abram?

MR 1: I think he must first ask a girl Are you sure you want to do this? Do you know the consequences of doing this?

FR 1: Communication.

LT: So communication is important in a sexual relationship?

MR 2: He was learning after it happened that that might be rape.

LT: So how did he get the knowledge afterwards?

MR 2: Maybe he went to a loveLife centre.

LT: So maybe he went to a loveLife centre? Okay. So who do you think he talked about it to?

FR 2: Probably to a counselor.

MR 2: Maybe by seeing the girl he's worried and then he knows he's in big trouble.

LT: Does anybody think that either Sandy or Abram did something wrong here?

All: Yes.

FR 2: Both of them.

MR 2: They both did something wrong because, like, they never agreed that they wanted to have sex. So like, they both did something wrong.

LT: Anybody else have another opinion? Or a different reason why they did something wrong? No? Okay, what do you think loveLife is trying to communicate by putting this billboard up? What do you think loveLife wants you to walk away thinking about?

MR 1: Okay, like firstly in a relationship you must set out to communicate and talk about everything.

LT: Anything else?

FR 2: Think before you leap.

LT: Think before you leap. Okay, and you think this is a helpful advertisement?

All: Yes.

LT: And do you think there's anything about it that might be confusing? There's a little bit of conflict going on in the room about the message. So do you think there's anything confusing in it?

MR 2: Yeah, like, many people say like, I wanted to wait but Abram was inside me before I could say no. Like I say, he was watching him, she was watching him when he took the clothes off, why doesn't she say no?

MR 1: Almost I can say, Sandy like she might be scared to say no.

LT: Okay, why might she be scared?

MR 1: Like Abram might be a big, ugly boy. (Much laughter)

LT: Okay, do you think she's scared he might do something to her if she says no?

MR 1: Yeah.

LT: Okay, tell me who do you think, in putting up this advertisement, who is loveLife trying to talk to?

FR 2: The youth, teenagers.

LT: You think it's mostly for teenagers?

FR 2: Yeah. Those who are sexually active.

LT: Who do you think it's not talking to?

FR 2: From 22 to 78.

MR 1: Like, what I think, ne, it's talking to everyone.

LT: Tell me, does it have a different message for boys and girls?

FR 1: I think it's the same message.

MR 2: Sandra, Sandra yeah, okay, like, for the girls ne, they can say no before the boy puts his thing inside her and for the boys, they must ask first, like, do you really want to do this?

LT: Okay, so communication.

FR 1: It's the same.

LT: Okay, but maybe a different communication for each one? And what does it say to you about HIV? Does it say anything to you about HIV?

MR 1: Okay, like we don't know if they wore a condom, maybe Sandy didn't know the consequences, maybe she got HIV from that. Or like maybe he pulled out.

FR 2: Even if he does, the sperm can still go into you.

MR 1: I don't know.

FR 2: Yeah.

LT: Okay, I'll go onto the next one. Thabo who is 17 is saying, "I can score with any chick I want, am I the man?" And you have Lindi, who's 16, saying, "Thabo was my man, til I found out he's just a playa." What do you think?

MR 1: Okay, I think Thabo is doing a very wrong thing. Cause if you, cause if Thabo don't go and talk to all the girls (MR 2 interrupts with laughter and whispers to MR 1)

LT: All right, what's going on over here, why are you laughing?

MR 2: He has about five girlfriends, so I don't know why he's saying this. (Much laughter).

LT: Okay, so he doesn't practice what he preaches is what you're saying.

MR 1: Thabo, ne, yeah I think he comes from a township, so like in the township if you have one girlfriend, that's cool and all, like I said before, but maybe Thabo's hanging out with all the girls and not using contraceptives. But Thabo is wrong. Guilty. Thabo, eish, she should have dropped Thabo before she found out he was a playa. I don't know what.

FR 1: And this thing that I can get any girl I want, does he mean "I can SLEEP with any girl?"

LT: I don't know, you tell me.

FR 1: Yes, I think that is what he means.

MR 1: Or like, here, Thabo was saying that he can get with any girl, she could be my chick.

FR 2: Thabo is probably a good looking guy, so he's probably using his attractiveness to his advantage.

LT: Okay, do you guys all, do you think Thabo's doing something wrong here?

All: Yes.

LT: What do you think when he says, "Am I the man?" Is he asking you or is he telling you?

MR 1: Telling you.

FR 1: Yeah, telling you.

LT: Okay, he's telling you. And what do you think about Lindi here?

FR 2: Poor Lindi.

LT: Poor Lindi? How come?

MR 2: No, don't blame Lindi, blame, because Thabo came to her, she didn't know like anything about Thabo. Like she said, Thabo uses his attractiveness to get her.

LT: So Lindi is the victim here?

MR 2: Yes.

FR 1: Her heart got broken.

LT: Let me ask you a question, do you like Thabo better than Lindi or Lindi better than Thabo?

All: Thabo! (Laughter)

MR 2: Yeah, Thabo!

LT: How come you all like Thabo better?

MR 1: Thabo's a playa. (MR 1 and MR 2 high five)

LT: Okay, Thabo's a playa, and that's good? Now you're giving each other high fives, okay. So, why is that cool, to have a lot of girlfriends? Cause you started out by saying it's not, but at the same time, maybe, maybe it is. What do you think?

MR 2: Yeah, like most of my friends like, like this is my friends (slaps MR 1 on the back), he goes with like six to seven girls. Also my friend over here (indicates MR 3) he has like four or five girls. Also me, I have like five girlfriends. So many of us, it's like, yeah I'm going to number one, I'm going to number two, I'm going to number six, yeah, it's like that. Yeah, but I know that it's very wrong. But mostly I told myself –

FR 2: It's, they know it's peer pressure. It's status.

MR 2: But I tell myself that if I'm not sleeping with all of them it's fine.

MR 1: Yeah, like, us, like every weekend we must go out. If there's a party, you must go to that party. And one thing we make sure, never bring your girlfriends. Cause if you find another girl you like.

MR 3: So Thabo can score. He's Thabo!

LT: Okay, so you guys are all Thabo?

MR 2: Yeah, Thabo's doing the right thing. (Laughter) What, what, what I'm saying is if, if like you don't sleep with all the girls, it's cool.

LT: So, it's fine to have five girlfriends as long as you don't sleep with all of them?

MR 3: It's not fine.

MR 1: It's not fine on the other side –

FR 2: No.

LT: Okay, okay, wait, one at a time. You, you and then you.

MR 1: It's not fine, it's not fine on the other side, cause maybe you see a girl and she's like 20 years old and then you, you don't say, I'm gonna marry you or you're gonna love them all. I mean, like all guys, there are girls you consider your wife.

MR 3: But, sometimes the other girls might find out, so it's not fine.

LT: So, it's not okay cause you might get yourself in trouble?

MR 3: Yes, yes.

MR 1: If you get with one girl and there is another girl and she's sitting with you and you pass the other girl, you like, you, uh, I don't know how to say it, you, how was I going to say it, if you are with your one girlfriend, maybe another girlfriend comes, cause like we call it a clutch.. See, like, and then you have to explain to all of them, and the first thing to do is to run away. (Laughter) Then you go to them one by one explaining what's going on.

LT: Okay, so are you lying to the girls then when you explain?

MR 1: Yes.

FR 2: It's a clutch.

LT: So, it's a clutch if you have lots of girlfriends?

FR 3: No, you see, it's if you are with your one girlfriend and then the others come along and then they all meet.

LT: That's a clutch? Okay, so that's a big problem. (Laughter)

MR 2: Also, the boys you see, they just, here in the townships that's what they do.

LT: Okay, so do most girls expect their boyfriends to have more than one partner?

FR 2: Yes.

LT: Okay, and do girls have more than one partner.

FR 1 and FR 2: No!

MR 2: Yes! What makes boys, it's what makes boys have many partners, cause you see

FR 1: No!

LT: Okay, wait, one at a time.

MR 3: The thing is, like, boys, they have many girls in a single community, like here in Langa. I can have five girlfriends. In Gugulethu I don't have any girlfriends. Girls have one in Langa, two in Khayelitsha, so you see.

LT: Okay, I'm going to go here, here and then here.

MR 2: Some boys love Thabo. That's whatever they talk about and maybe they go to all the girls in the same community.

LT: Okay, then here.

MR 1: It's like with girls, you don't put your heart out to them cause you will find that they have another girl. See, like, I think both and girls are playing with each other.

LT: Okay, I'm going to go here.

FR 1: I think it's a man thing.

LT: It's a man thing? Why is that?

FR 1: They like that a lot.

LT: They like what a lot? Having lots of girlfriends?

FR 1: It is, really. Girls, mostly, they will do it, but it's not a girl thing.

LT: Okay, so why would girls do it?

FR 1: Just because they, they are playing.

LT: Okay, and then you were going to say?

FR 2: I was going to say that girls, we as girls we always put other people's feelings before ours. If a guy comes along, if we're with this one guy and another one comes along, ooh hugs, and then you really get into the other guy, you're supposed to go and dump the other guy and then you can be with the other guy. But it's not likely that you'll find a girl trading them along in one line.

MR 1: Okay, another thing, like, me at my home, we are not rich, we are not poor, like we're middle class, ne? So like, maybe I go to her and, like, set up a relationship. She sees, she sees him (points to MR 2) maybe she

sees his home, they're rich, like into expensive things. And his clothes is expensive. So like he goes and approaches to talk to her. Maybe he's more rich than me. So like she's going to be with him.

LT: Okay, so she's chasing after the money, and you are chasing after what?

MR 3: Yeah, yeah, they are goldiggers. (Laughter).

LT: No, wait, let's get it straight. So, women are with men for economic reasons?

MR 2: Yes, yes, it's financial.

FR 1: Not necessarily.

LT: Okay, some disagreement. Then why are men with women. Okay, someone brought up something before, okay maybe there are two different kinds of women – one you marry and then the other that's just your girlfriend? Or why do you have so many different girlfriends?

MR 1: Yeah, there's a girlfriend for each occasion. Some girls, like, like, maybe you go to Cape Town and take her to a nice restaurant, and some girls, maybe she doesn't know how to use a fork and knife. Yeah, so there are different girls for different occasions.

LT: What were you gonna say?

MR 3: Okay, well girls, one thing I hate about them is that they get bored fast. They get bored fast about men. So if you want to take her out, you must have money, and you, to buy things for her, like, just to make them always happy. Cause they will love you or not.

LT: Okay, let's here over here.

MR 2: Okay, like me, I'm very rich, say, I'm very rich. And my friend is very poor. So, like, girls, many girls, they like, they say like, they won't go to him, or like, they'll get angry if you say they're a playa. But they really, just cause you have money and you have cool clothes.

LT: Since we're talking about all this about money, let's go to this one. Which says, "Sex is Sex: Show Me The Money" "Suzette was da bomb...shame man, her sugar daddy also gave her HIV." So you have Suzette 17 and Jacob 17.

MR 1: Suzette is a prostitute.

LT: What do you think? Suzette is a prostitute?

MR 2: I feel like, Suzette, when she takes his stuff, she knew that her sugar daddy was older than her. All she was chasing after was the money. Like every weekend he's taking her out, buying her things. Now when the sugar daddy wants to have sex, so like, you see, she has no choice to say no.

LT: Okay, what do you think? Did Suzette have a choice?

FR 2: Well, Suzette did have a choice. And she chose to go for the sugar daddy.

LT: Okay.

FR 2: Or maybe she thought she didn't have a choice, you know? Her sugar daddy provided for her needs and whatever she needed, so now, at the end, there has to be a payback. So, he's probably like, okay, it's payback time so come on. And she probably felt like, okay if I don't do this, this is all going away or this is all going to waste or I'm never going to be like this. I'm never going to be treated like this. Maybe she didn't have a choice, but at the end of the day, she did. It was her choice to go ahead and be with him.

LT: Does anybody know somebody like Suzette?

MR 2: I saw one.

LT: You saw one what?

MR 2: I saw a girl at school and she was with her sugar daddy.

LT: How did you know? How did you know it wasn't her uncle?

MR 2: Because of how he was touching her and how she went with him the other way. I didn't see what happened, but she went with him the wrong way.

LT: They went the wrong way? Okay, so let's go to the next one. James is 18 and he says "I only do it skin on skin" and Zola who's 17 says "I told James to wrap it or zip it."

MR 2: Zip it?

MR 1: Yeah (gestures with hand to show putting on a condom) wrap it.

LT: There's confusion about it? Oh, not understanding what wrap it or zip it means.

FR 2: Either you wrap the penis with a condom or you put it back where it was. (Laughter)

MR 1: Wait, which one is the girl?

LT: You tell me.

MR 1: Oh, is it Zola? First I thought it was James. I thought that James was the girl. I was gonna say like, okay, I see now if James is the boy. But I was gonna say he's taking advantage.

LT: So is James taking advantage of Zola?

MR 1: Yes.

LT: Why?

MR 1: Cause he doesn't want to use a condom.

LT: But Zola says "I told him to wrap it or zip it."

MR 1: Okay, like, this girl was mostly, she's experienced, cause for most girls it's just a hassle.

LT: She's experienced? But most other girls it's just a hassle?

FR 2: For most girls, okay, I think they have to put it in eight hours in advance. Like in your bag. Cause you're not gonna know, okay, at eight o'clock I'm going to have sex. So, now, it's much more easier, I mean, if it's the spur of the moment, like if it's passion, there on the couch, you know it's quicker for the boy just to take off, and hey, you know, it's just too much of a hassle.

LT: Okay, what do other people think?

MR 3: Zola, I think that Zola, Zola was experienced and she talked to her friends and maybe she knew if you sleep with people who have HIV you will get it.

LT: So you're saying she has a lot of experience?

MR 3: Yeah.

LT: Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

MR 3: It's a good thing. It's the best thing.

LT: It's the best thing? Why?

MR 3: Because, like, she, she was aggressive enough to say no. Wrap it or zip it. And she was smart.

LT: What were you going to say?

FR 1: Zola made a good decision.

LT: How come James isn't making a good decision?

FR 2: Cause he's not realizing the consequences of doing it skin on skin.

MR 2: Well, firstly, like, James is 18. At that age, maybe he's not a virgin, he's been with a lot of girls and he knows he likes it skin on skin.

LT: Do you think, do you think a lot of boys only like to do it skin on skin?

MR 2: Yes, they say here on the street, that with the wrapper on the candy doesn't taste as sweet.

LT: So, is that a problem?

MR 2: It is a problem. It's a problem with us boys mostly. It was just like, I came here to the loveLife and I know that it's wrong to do it skin on skin and James was 18, he should understand the consequences of it and his future.

LT: Do you think James might know that? Do you think James knows?

MR 3: Maybe James knows, but, but he doesn't care. He might only think afterward. Maybe he has a packed condom at home. But he knows how to use the condom, he knows how to put the condom on, but he only thinks about it afterwards. He's supposed to know that too.

LT: So you share responsibility?

MR 3: Yes.

LT: So both the boys and girls should use condoms?

MR 2: Maybe James, maybe James is trying to be cool.

MR 1: Peer pressure.

LT: And, do you think this says different things to boys and girls? This advertisement?

MR 1: Yeah, to the girls, like, all right, send out the message to girls that you must be aggressive to say no. Like the other one, like she never, she was scared to say no and Zola is more aggressive like that.

LT: Does it say anything to boys?

MR 1: I think that boys also took a message from Zola, either wrap it or zip it.

MR 3: I like people like Zola. They can stand their grounds. They know no is no.

LT: And you think that's cool?

MR 3: Yeah.

LT: Is that the last one? Oh, one more. Okay, this is Renee and she's 18 years old and she says "Eish, I'm doing too many funerals nowadays." And Thuli who's fifteen says, "They say the late had so many partners...what's sex gotta do with it anyway?"

MR 1: Yo, yo. Okay, the girl, I don't know what she is, maybe she attends too many funerals, maybe she's like an undertaker's daughter.

FR 2: HIV, they were giving people HIV.

MR 1: Yeah, I mean Thuli, yeah to sleep without a condom with so many people, maybe it's a way to say like I won't die alone. Because I will give it to others. Like I said she might be the daughter of an undertaker or her friends might have died of HIV/AIDS. Thuli, they say the late had so many partners, what's sex gotta do with it? Thuli, thinks, she knows nothing about HIV and AIDS. Like, like it says that I don't know the late, maybe it's a boy, maybe if Andile had many partners, but whatever partner, they never used a condom. So that's how the HIV spread. And maybe Thuli she's friends with them and that's why she goes to, to the funerals.

LT: Okay, so answer Thuli's question of what's sex gotta do with it anyway?

MR 2: He died from HIV/AIDS, because he never used a condom with one of the girls he slept with.

LT: And what do you think loveLife is trying to tell you?

MR 2: Maybe, it's like, you need to be with one partner and if you're with more than one partner you will, you must make sure you use a condom.

LT: Do you think it's realistic to say to only have one partner?

FR 1: Yes.

MR 2: No.

LT: You say yes and you're female and you say no and you're male. What do you think?

MR 3: Yeah, it is.

LT: It is realistic? Okay. So, again, do you think this says anything different to boys or girls?

MR 1: Yeah, it says to both of them, yeah, like I said that girls also play boys. Maybe Thuli, maybe this one, the late was a player and she had sex with every Tom, Dick and Harry.

LT: So now that you've looked at all of these, do you think that any of these messages are going to help educate people about HIV?

MR 2: A lot of people, yes, but some won't understand. But loveLife has a number and maybe you're gonna call and they'll tell you what it means.

LT: Do you think it's good that all the advertisements are in English?

MR 1: No.

LT: What should they be advertising in?

MR 3: Okay, like, the people mind too much, like there was a loveLife message in Afrikaans and it said

LT: Okay I don't understand any Afrikaans cause I'm American so you'll have to translate.

MR 3: It's like Afrikaans children also have sex, but the worst line, so many didn't like that, so they, the parents got rid of it.

FR 2: Okay, I think it wouldn't be appropriate to everyone for it to be written in English. But, loveLife is basically reaching out to the majority of the people, and since English is the international language.

MR 1: I was going to say, like, they could write it in Xhosa, because here in Langa, for example, there are only black people to read. So here there's, like in Khayelitsha and Gugulethu it's only black people so they can do it in Xhosa.

MR 2: Okay, like here in the township, like I think maybe have like the billboards like three in Xhosa and then three in English.

LT: So, a little bit of a mix.

MR 2: Yeah, cause some people don't understand what they're trying to say and just get lost trying to translate to their own language.

FR 1: Yeah, cause there can be misinterpretation.

LT: Tell me, give me your opinion, which of these do you think educates the best about HIV?

MR 3: Wrap it or zip it.

MR 2: Yeah, with Zola.

LT: And which ones might be too confusing to send a good message?

FR 2: The funerals.

LT: Anything else anybody wants to add?

FR 2: Thanks for coming here.

LT: No, thank you, I appreciate your time.

University of Cape Town

Sandy 15

**"I wanted to wait,
but Abram was
inside me before I
could say no"**

**"Ssssho...did I rape
her? Now that we
talk, I understand
love is not just sex"**

Abram 17

thethajunction 0800 121 900

talk about it **love
Life™**

Thabo 17

**“I can score with
any chick I
want...am I the
man?”**

**“Thabo was my
man, ‘til I found
out he’s just a
playa”**

Lindi 16

thethajunction 0800 121 900



**love
Life™**
talk about it

Suzette 17

**“Sex is sex:
show me the
money”**

**“Suzette was da
bomb...shame
man...her sugar daddy
also gave her HIV”**

Jacob 17

thethajunction 0800 121 900

talk about it **love
Life**TM

Issue 18

**"Eish...I'm doing
too many funerals
nowadays"**

**"They say the late
had so many
partners...what's sex
gotta do with it
anyway?"**

Thuli 15

thethajunction 0800 121 900

talk about it **love
Life™**