

# HIV/AIDS Prevention Among Youth Project



www.hoanhiptim.vn

## Radio phone-in programme gives Vietnamese youth a loud and clear voice

*60 Minutes You & Me* is a live radio phone-in programme providing a platform for young Vietnamese to express their ideas and discuss issues affecting them. It is part of the Asian

Development Bank and Government of Vietnam funded *HIV/AIDS Prevention Among Youth* project. This live, weekly phone-in radio forum is a format totally new to Vietnam. *60 Minutes You & Me* is produced and broadcast weekly by 15 provincial stations from the north to the south of Vietnam.



Two presenters from Hai Duong province.

## Live phone-in radio—a new format for Vietnam's provincial radio stations

*60 Minutes You & Me* is a live, interactive, discussion-based phone-in programme giving Vietnamese youth (15–24 years old) the opportunity to take part in 'user-generated' discussions on a variety of topics. This format—new and innovative for Vietnam—has proven to be extremely attractive to young people and is considered to be an effective way to stimulate behaviour change.

*60 Minutes You & Me* brings presenters and listeners together, resulting in engaging, open and in-depth discussion. Callers openly discuss sexual health, HIV, relationships and other life-issues affecting young people in Vietnam's rapidly changing society. This contributes to the overall project objective of reducing HIV infection risk among Vietnamese youth within the 15 project provinces.

*60 Minutes You & Me* is one media output of the *HIV/AIDS Prevention Among Youth* project. Other outputs

include a multi-episode TV drama, TV and radio spots, a project website ([www.hoanhiptim.vn](http://www.hoanhiptim.vn)) and print materials.

### Challenges and Successes

Initially provincial radio stations were concerned with the live, phone-in format, feeling it might not be appropriate for young audiences, or technically achievable. However, through in-depth dialogue, editorial and technical training, and rigorous technical support from the BBC World Service Trust, stations saw the value and feasibility of the format.

The phone-in format has been so successful that the Government of Vietnam and participating stations plan to apply the radio phone-in format to other projects.

## Methodology

### A new concept for radio in Vietnam

To give an idea of how *60 Minutes You & Me* stands out one needs to understand that until *60 Minutes You & Me* went on air, 'live' radio programmes in Vietnam were usually scripted with pre-recorded inserts—clearly not 'live' in the professional broadcasting sense of the word. Even when phone-in programmes were allowed, they were pre-recorded, allowing authorities to 'be on the safe



*Not limited to the studio, presenters from Quang Tri province explore the streets in order to record vox pops.*

side', and followed a strict and controlled 'question and answer' format.

There was a great deal of concern at the outset about the new format; allowing young people to speak their minds openly without being pre-recorded or vetted was considered by many to be risky. However, through training and developing close partnerships with each provincial radio station the project built trust with management and production teams and helped them overcome their concerns. Training for editors and presenters offered by the BBC WST gave radio station staff the confidence to deal with challenging situations. Both station management and programme listeners now welcome the participatory approach of the programmes.

### Youth Involvement

The target audience of *60 Minutes You & Me* are the millions of 15–24 year old Vietnamese. True to its motto, the programme is a 'forum for and by youth'. The title *60 Minutes You & Me* was put forward by a 19-year-old presenter from Dong Thap station and was agreed by presenters and producers from participating stations.

*60 Minutes You & Me* empowers young presenters. As youths themselves—the average age is 22 with the youngest being 16—presenters are better aware of the issues and concerns faced by the target audience. With this sensitivity, young presenters can better manage the responsibility of making content and editorial decisions. In-depth involvement by young people helps ensure a lively experience for listeners.

#### **Ms The An, 20 Quang Tri Radio Presenter**

*60 Minutes You & Me* is a great forum for young people. I feel excited to talk with peers about youth issues. We share opinions and discuss different views openly. The programme has helped me change my attitude towards HIV positive people.

Youth presenters are not restricted to the studio; several of the presenters go out into the community to meet with young people, recording their views and feelings on a variety of issues for use in vox pops.

### Programme content

While *60 Minutes You & Me* is part of an 'HIV project', it was realised that to be successful content would need to address not just HIV, but the multitude of issues impacting the lives of Vietnamese youth. It was agreed that a wide range of youth-relevant topics would be discussed. Topics were identified by consulting with young people.

*60 Minutes You & Me* does not shy away from dealing with sensitive topics—drug use, men having sex with men, pre-marital cohabitation, masturbation and abortion have all been openly discussed. Some of the many topics discussed are listed in the following table.

HIV & AIDS	Sex/Sexual Health	Relationships
What do you know about HIV, AIDS and HIV transmission?	What do you think about youth having abortions?	Loving more than one person at the same time.
Society and PLHIV.	What is 'safer sex'?	Homosexual love.
Myths surrounding HIV and AIDS.	Virginity and today's youth.	Should girls express their love to guys?
The rights of PLWHA.	Sex education at school.	Friendships with the opposite sex.
Should PLWHA have children?	Is sex before marriage ok?	Choosing your life partner.
The future of children living with HIV.	Consequences of adolescent cohabitation.	Does 'to love' mean to give everything?
VCT and marriage.	Physical changes at puberty.	Expressing love in public places.

### Programme structure and ownership

*60 Minutes You & Me* is structured in 15 minute segments. The programmes, built around live discussion, also use vox pops, music and features to maintain a youthful flavour.

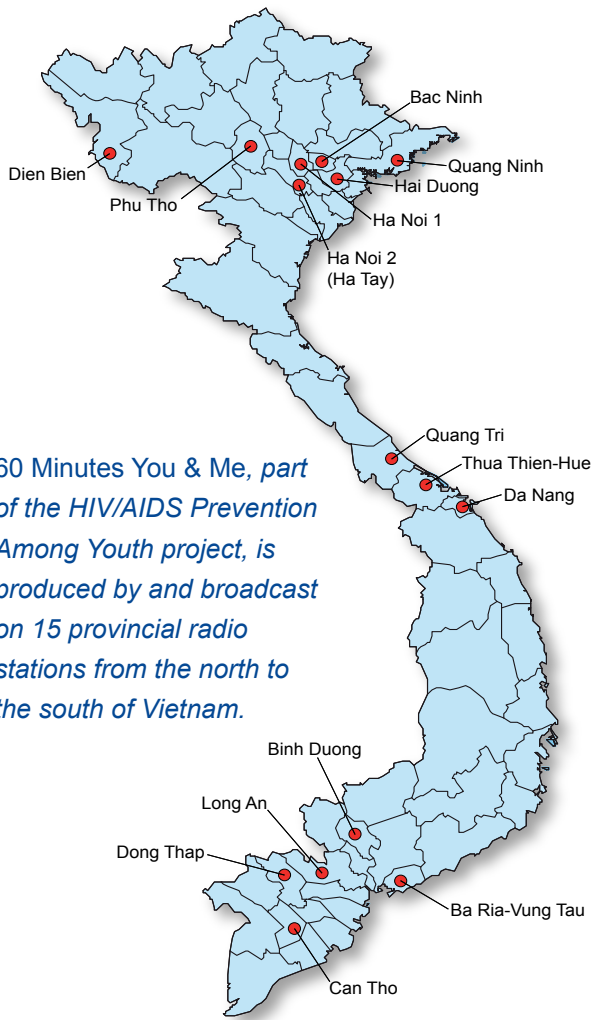
Depending on the topic being discussed, more than one caller is sometimes invited to be on air at the same time. This especially applies to topics that lend themselves to lively debate between callers—cohabitation, virginity, sex before marriage and condom use in particular.

Programmes are edited for re-broadcast with time references and phone numbers removed. During formatting of the programme music and jingles were commissioned, and the stations chose how to brand the programme.

From the beginning, it was recognised that ownership of the outputs by the stations was important in getting the stations on-board, hence the idea to produce the programmes at the provincial radio station level rather than the central level was strongly championed.

### Programme promotion

*60 Minutes You & Me* programmes are promoted via TV and radio spots as well as by word of mouth; peer educators



*60 Minutes You & Me, part of the HIV/AIDS Prevention Among Youth project, is produced by and broadcast on 15 provincial radio stations from the north to the south of Vietnam.*

and outreach workers regularly encourage young people to tune in to the weekly broadcasts.

To broaden access, content from the programmes appears on the project website ([www.hoanhiptim.vn](http://www.hoanhiptim.vn)). A mailing list and an internet blog (<http://60phutbanvatoi.wordpress.com>) have been created, enabling the 15 radio stations spread from north to south to effortlessly communicate, share examples of their work and learn from one another.

### Training and technical support

Three phases of training were designed and delivered prior to the programmes going on air.

**Phase One—Cluster Training:** Training was organised in Hanoi, Hue, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho. Participants included up to six staff—producers and presenters—from each station. The four-day training covered:

- **Format:** Explaining the usefulness, characteristics and challenges of the live phone-in format.
- **Structure:** Instructing how to write the programmes opening, mid-way and closing segment.
- **Production:** Focusing on programme planning and technical issues surrounding pre-production, production, and post-production. Understanding the roles of presenters and editors and promotional activities such as production of 'trails'.
- **HIV, AIDS and Sexual and Reproductive Health:** Providing presenters with a clear understanding of HIV,

AIDS and sexual and reproductive health.

- **Editorial Issues:** Training staff on how to deal with difficult topics (what can and can't be said; how to deal with sensitive or 'taboo' issues on air). How to be open, balanced, and non-judgemental.
- **Presenter Skills:** Training on the role of presenters. Questioning skills (open ended questioning). How to effectively lead a live programme and how to deal with difficult callers.
- **Practical Exercise:** Planning for a live programme and carrying out a 'test run'.

**Phase Two—Hands-on training:** Training was conducted by BBC WST staff at each station for a minimum of three days (more depending on individual stations' needs). This included:

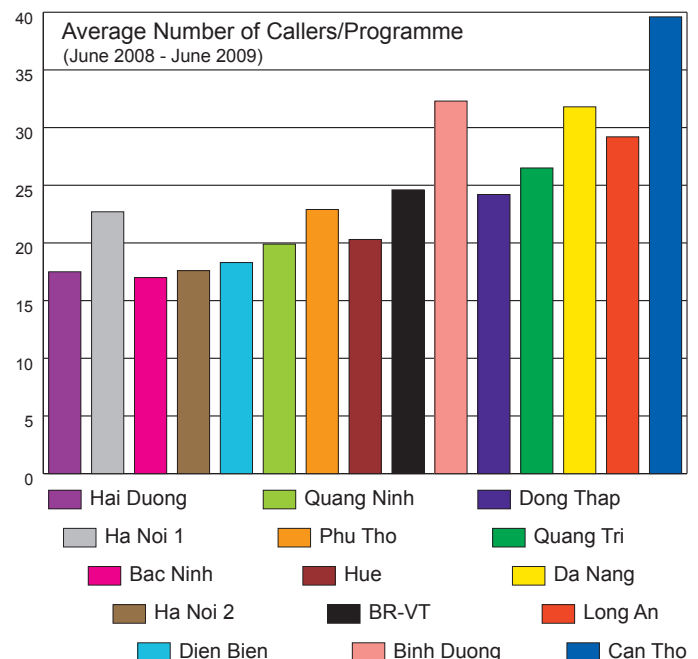
- Technical training for the Studio Manager.
- Training for call-in and call-out staff.
- Training for the entire team in preparation for carrying out a 'test run'.

Test runs were conducted at each station. BBC WST provided detailed feedback before giving the green light for programmes to go on air.

**Phase Three—Monthly visits:** During the first six months following the launch of *60 Minutes You & Me*, the BBC WST radio team visited each station on a monthly basis to observe phone-in programmes, give feedback on editorial issues, provide technical support and offer suggestions and recommendations to improve programming.

The first programmes went on air on 14–15 June 2008. These included Hue, Hai Duong, Ba Ria–Vung Tau and Hanoi 1. Other stations went on air between late June and early November 2008. The final station, Can Tho, went on air in April 2009.

Two refresher and experience sharing workshops were held, one in December 2008 and another during July 2009. The workshops gave the stations a chance to not only share



experiences, but to acknowledge the skills and dedication of presenters and celebrate the one year anniversary of *60 Minutes You & Me* going on air (July 2009).

Between June 2008 and June 2009 a total of 695 live programmes have been broadcast receiving 16,085 phone calls (55% male–45% female). A logging system was developed giving producers an overall view of caller demographics, helping them to make creative decisions regarding programme content. Programmes effectively respond to a predominately youth audience—87.3 % of callers are 25 and younger. In Phu Tho 60% of callers are 20 and younger.

Over the life of the project a total of 125, one-hour radio phone-in programmes will be produced by each station, resulting in a total of 1,875 hours of youth focused discussion reaching millions of young Vietnamese

## Matchless youth programming

What makes *60 Minutes You & Me* unique is that the format is exclusively 'youth focused' and participatory. *60 Minutes You & Me* has enabled programme presenters to interact with their audiences, opening up channels for young people to express their opinions and promote unfettered discussion.

*60 Minutes You & Me* has clearly demonstrated that live phone-in radio programming is highly popular and effective in stimulating discussion, exchanging ideas and supporting behaviour change among youth. Participating stations have benefited by having the opportunity to sharpen their technical skills and gain valuable experience.

## BBC WORLD SERVICE TRUST

The BBC World Service Trust served as technical advisors in the development of *60 Minutes You & Me* for the *HIV/AIDS Prevention Among Youth* project.

The BBC WST is BBC's international charity, using media and communications to reduce poverty and thereby enable people to build better lives. The BBC WST uses media to:

- Raise awareness of development issues among mass audiences and opinion-formers.
- Influence attitudes, awareness and behaviour amongst poorer communities through a wide range of educational programming on poverty-related topics.
- Build capacity in the media sector in developing and transitional countries.

BBC World Service Trust ([www.bbcworldservicetrust.org](http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org))  
Bush House, Strand, London WC2B 4PH, United Kingdom

# Radio Show Production Check-list

- ✓ **In order to achieve behaviour change**, radio phone-in programmes must be engaging, informative, educational, yet entertaining and interesting. This can be accomplished by focusing on the *most important characteristics* of live radio phone-in programming:
  1. **Ensure you have engaging and absorbing presenters.** The choice of presenters is critical. A skilled presenter can make a programme come to life. Presenters should be within the target age group, have a friendly and congenial voice and the ability to connect with callers.
  2. **Strive to make the programme interactive.** Live phone-in, by nature, is a highly interactive format. Still, presenters must strive to ensure interactive dialogue — between presenters and callers, between presenters and guest speakers, between guest speakers and callers, and between presenters and the audience.
  3. **Make sure that the programme is discussion-based.** Live phone-in allows participants to freely discuss opinions, exchange ideas, and share experiences. Apart from some programmes where guest speakers are specialists, the programme should not be in a 'question and answer' or counselling format.
- ✓ **Ensure truth and accuracy.** Ensure information or facts given out in the programme are accurate and sourced. Anonymous, unconfirmed sources should not be accepted for reasons of safety, legal reasons or to avoid undue embarrassment. Any inaccuracies that are broadcast must be corrected as soon as they are uncovered.
- ✓ **Promote impartiality and diversity of opinions.** The programme should reflect a wide range of subject matter and views, including conflicting or contradictory opinions. Presenters should avoid showing bias or an imbalance of views on controversial topics.
- ✓ **Be balanced and non-judgemental.** Different views should be reflected equally. When any aspect of a topic is under-represented presenters should invite and encourage listeners to speak out. Different views related to gender should also be balanced. Presenters should not reveal their personal views or judge others' opinions.
- ✓ **Use appropriate language.** Avoid using ambiguous and 'alien' language (slang or foreign words that may not be understood by the audience) without explanation. Ensure language used is not formal but conversational and lively. In the case of some sensitive topics related to sexual health, presenters should overcome shyness and use appropriate terminology. Presenters should avoid using language which might support stigma towards individuals or groups (such as people living with HIV and AIDS).

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