



# Entertainment, Storytelling & Social Change in Global Poverty

An Impact Evaluation of *Stand Up Planet*  
February 2015

By  
Caty Borum Chattoo  
Center for Media & Social Impact  
American University

with  
Dan Reines & Tim Talley  
SmithGeiger, LLC

---

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	4
The Challenge of Global Poverty	
Is Storytelling Part of the Solution?	
How Can We Tell Engaging Stories about Global Poverty?	
<b>Project Overview</b>	7
<b>Methodology</b>	10
<b>Findings: <i>Stand Up Planet</i></b>	13
<b>How They Compare: <i>Stand Up Planet vs. The End Game</i></b>	26
<b>Discussion of Summary Findings</b>	33
<b>Conclusion &amp; Future Considerations</b>	37
<b>Appendices</b>	38
Social Actions List	
The End Game Findings	
Online Chat Select Quotes	
<b>End Notes</b>	47

---

## About the Project

This research was funded by the Media Partnerships Program of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, under the auspices of Learning for Action, LLC. For the Gates Foundation, Daniel Green and Manami Kano provided oversight, and Thomas Black and Miguel Castro provided additional methodological insight; Hannah Eaves, Gates Foundation consultant, provided feedback on project design and management. Both documentary programs used in this study, *Stand Up Planet* and *The End Game*, were funded by the Gates Foundation. The research and report were designed, directed and written by Caty Borum Chattoo of the Center for Media & Social Impact at American University; Borum Chattoo is also an executive producer of *Stand Up Planet*. Research programming, fielding and advanced data analysis was directed by Chattoo and completed by international market research firm SmithGeiger, LLC, with additional project management and contributions provided by Dan Reines, and data analysis by Tim Talley. Angelica Das, associate director of the Center for Media & Social Impact, provided grant oversight and support. Stephanie Brown, graduate fellow at the Center for Media & Social Impact, created the graphic design for the report, and Jessica Henry, graduate student in American University's Strategic Communication master's program, provided archival research support.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT DIRECTOR

Caty Borum Chattoo is Principal Investigator and Creative Director at the Center for Media & Social Impact, and she serves in an appointment as Executive in Residence at American University's School of Communication in Washington, D.C. Within her current role at the intersection of social-change media research, documentary/media production and impact strategy, she has been engaged as a senior public affairs and campaign strategist, producer and evaluation director with media companies, nonprofit organizations and foundations. Borum Chattoo has produced two documentary feature films (*Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price* and *The After Party*), a TV documentary and transmedia series (*Stand Up Planet*), multiple half-hour documentary TV specials, a seven-part documentary TV series, PSA campaigns and digital videos – all using a “design for impact” strategy. Additionally, she was a senior vice president specializing in behavior-change communication (social marketing) at the Washington, D.C. office of FleishmanHillard International Communications. In Los Angeles, she collaborated with TV/film producer, Norman Lear, as a producer and social-change campaign project director, where she directed public opinion research, film and digital projects. She also served as special projects director at the USC Norman Lear Center, a research and public policy center that examines the cultural and social impact of entertainment; a program officer in the Kaiser Family Foundation's Entertainment Media & Public Health program; and a media fellow in civic journalism at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Borum Chattoo holds a master's degree in communication from the University of Pennsylvania (the Annenberg School for Communication), and a bachelor's degree in communication studies from Virginia Tech (*summa cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa, in honors).

[www.cmsimpact.org](http://www.cmsimpact.org)

[www.american.edu/profiles/faculty/chattoo.cfm](http://www.american.edu/profiles/faculty/chattoo.cfm)

---

# Introduction

## THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBAL POVERTY

Deep, systemic poverty continues to pose a daunting challenge to an increasingly interconnected world. According to the World Health Organization, 1.2 billion people live in extreme poverty – an income level of about one dollar a day.<sup>1</sup> Preventable illnesses like malaria and HIV/AIDS, along with malnutrition, a lack of access to clean water, and poor sanitation, collectively contribute to the deaths of thousands of children every day. This dismal status quo poses challenges for the resources, peace and security for all nations, not only those impacted directly by disproportionate levels of illness, malnutrition and lack of opportunity.<sup>2</sup>

*“Extreme poverty is a challenge with complicated long-term solutions, but one with progress and hope on the horizon.”*

In a world that recently passed the 7-billion population threshold,<sup>3</sup> extreme poverty is a challenge with complicated long-term solutions, but one with progress and hope on the horizon. In the nearly 15 years since the United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals, a global pact to systematically devote resources and efforts to end the deepest poverty and disease around the world, the number of people living in extreme poverty has declined, rates of new HIV/AIDS infections have fallen by 44 percent, and rates of malaria death have fallen by 42 percent.<sup>4</sup> The collaborative efforts of a global development ecosystem – wealthy donor countries like the United States, local governments, international humanitarian organizations, in-country NGOs and social service agencies, social entrepreneurs – have resulted in victories and innovations for the future.

And yet, the work is not done. The quest for large-scale social change in global poverty and health continues.

## IS STORYTELLING PART OF THE SOLUTION?

As a cultural force that contributes to social change, the role of media and entertainment is well documented. Research over the past several decades has demonstrated media impact on a variety of societal fronts – on perspectives about race and gender, normative changes in social issues, individual attitude and behavior change in health topics, and more. Internationally, media producers and researchers have demonstrated the positive impact of radio dramas, TV soap operas, films and other entertainment media on health attitudes and behaviors.<sup>5</sup>

Entertainment storytelling may offer a unique opportunity to shift attitudes and change behaviors around social issues. As a subset of media effects research, entertainment-education (EE) is the practice and study of entertainment storytelling to impact individual attitudes and beliefs about social issues and health behaviors – often as a pathway to broader social change.<sup>6</sup> This niche area of media effects and communication studies finds a theoretical foundation from several core ideas, including “parasocial relationships,” used to describe the interpersonal relationships audiences experience with media characters,<sup>7</sup> and social cognitive theory, the notion that individuals are

---

more likely to pattern their own real-world behaviors they have seen demonstrated, rather than simply discussed or referenced.<sup>89</sup> According to decades of study,<sup>10</sup> entertainment storytelling may be a uniquely persuasive vehicle for shaping individual attitudes and behaviors.<sup>11</sup> <sup>12</sup>Over the past several years, researchers have carefully examined entertainment about social issues to learn whether and how the role of “narrative transportation”— a viewer’s absorption into the story, which includes feelings of empathy, making connections with their own daily lives and other concepts<sup>13</sup> – is connected to a viewer’s changing knowledge, attitudes and even actions taken on an issue. Broadly speaking, the deep emotional connection and absorption into a story may be a powerful route to shaping beliefs, attitudes and behaviors.<sup>14</sup> More recently, questions about viewers’ specific emotional responses to entertainment storytelling – happiness or joy, sadness, disgust, fear and anger – have been examined to understand their role in persuasion, with as yet indeterminate conclusions,<sup>15</sup> justifying further research. As a foundation, entertainment-education offers opportunities for asking and answering questions about the connections between storytelling and an audience’s ability to learn, feel and take action on social issues.

### IF SO, HOW CAN WE TELL ENGAGING STORIES ABOUT GLOBAL POVERTY?

Storytelling about global poverty is a challenge. Not only are stories about hunger, disease and illness often difficult to watch, but the solutions to global poverty are varied, often institutional, long-term and hard to articulate to audiences who are not experts on the topic. As a possible result and due to a storyteller’s need to grab attention and communicate complex information quickly, many stories related to global poverty, from long-form journalism to short-form advocacy videos and PSAs, have often tended to follow a few similar frames or themes: Passive, voiceless victims of poverty, or overwhelming facts and statistics offered with Western voiceover pleas for help against a backdrop of melancholy music. Sometimes dubbed “poverty porn,” one global development NGO articulated the issue as, “violating privacy and human rights, poverty porn is damaging to those it is trying to aid because it evokes the idea that the poor are helpless and incapable of helping themselves, thereby cultivating a culture of paternalism.”<sup>16</sup> NGOs and storytellers have started to shift away from these frames, potentially given the possibility that viewers have become increasingly desensitized.<sup>17</sup>

*“Visual frames may inadvertently paint a portrait of those living in poverty in faraway places as ‘the other.’”*

Further, these visual frames may inadvertently paint a portrait of those living in poverty in faraway places as “the other” – people so different from us that we cannot identify with them – or as challenges too huge for individuals to tackle, justifying a kind of disengagement from the stories.<sup>18</sup> In at least one example, researchers have learned that telling the deep story of one person living in poverty is much more likely to lead to viewers’ willingness to engage in some kind of social action than simply telling a story about the overwhelming statistics about global poverty; the statistics are both dehumanizing and difficult to process, while the portrait is emotionally engaging and activating.<sup>19</sup>

If the goal of storytelling about global poverty is to encourage audiences to care deeply – and to believe the problems are solvable – then disengagement or desensitization poses a problem. And if an even higher-level goal of such storytelling is to encourage viewers to take some kind of social action to contribute to positive change – i.e., to donate to organizations, support Congress’

---

allocation of foreign aid, volunteer for campaigns or participate in events – then telling and understanding the impact of stories that break out of a familiar and possibly desensitizing mold will be an important contribution. And finally, if storytelling about global poverty is primarily “preaching to the choir” – that is, people who already know and care about the issues – then the opportunities for social change are limited.

---

# Project Overview

## OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this research is to understand how audiences are engaged, motivated and changed – in terms of their knowledge, attitudes and behaviors about global health and poverty – as a result of watching an hour-long comedic travelogue documentary TV program about the topic, *Stand Up Planet*. Additionally, via a quasi-experimental design, we aim to discover how perceptions of global poverty and health may be different for viewers who watch entertaining, light-hearted storytelling that balances facts with comedy (*Stand Up Planet*), compared with a sober journalistic format (*The End Game*). Both hour-long documentaries focus on global poverty and health in poor corners of the world, both aired on TV in the United States in 2014, and both include facts and “real people” in the areas they profile. The primary difference between the two is the specific focus on particular global development challenges – sanitation and HIV for *Stand Up Planet*, and malaria for *The End Game* – as well as their editorial tone and format.

Our aim is to learn how audiences engage with issues related to global poverty and health specifically, but also to provide broader insights for the individuals and organizations that endeavor to create social change through storytelling.

## THEMES

- Age group differences in story engagement, learning and behaviors
- Viewer engagement in entertainment vs. facts
- The role of audience emotion in social issue interest & behavior
- Preaching to supporters vs. reaching new “Persuadables”

## QUESTIONS

- Does comedy work as a genre and format to educate and inspire people about global poverty?
- How does a comedy and entertainment storytelling style compare with a somber journalistic style in terms of viewers’ knowledge, attitudes and behaviors related to global poverty after watching?
- Can audiences learn about a tough social issue through comedy?
- How do young viewers engage differently from older viewers in storytelling about global poverty?
- What kind of storytelling may be impactful for those who don’t know – or don’t care – about global poverty?
- Why might entertainment work? What is the connection between viewers’ “transportation” into a story and their interest or willingness to take action on global poverty?

---

## ABOUT *STAND UP PLANET*

*Stand Up Planet* is “a documentary TV show, transmedia series and digital campaign that showcases life in some of the toughest places on Earth – in parts of India and South Africa – through the lens and experiences of stand-up comics. Is comedy the great connector?”<sup>20</sup> The mission of the project is “to entertain, to enlighten, and to see people living around the world through a new lens.”<sup>21</sup>

The hour-long (57:00 total running time) *Stand Up Planet* premiered theatrically at the San Francisco International Film Festival in April 2014, and it premiered on TV on three networks within the same week in May 2014: Independent satellite network KCETLink, cable network Pivot, and a top broadcast network in India, NDTV. *Stand Up Planet* uses a comedy format and travelogue documentary style designed to reach a younger audience and the non-converted, or members of the viewing public who might not already know about the issues. Using an idea deeply embedded in entertainment-education, the documentary storytelling of *Stand Up Planet* is designed to show, teach and inspire viewers without taking a pedantic or overtly educational stance.

The official program synopsis:

At the center of *Stand Up Planet* is a U.S.-based host—Hasan Minhaj, a stand-up comic on a quest to find some of the best humor coming from corners of the developing world. Starting from his own personal story – Indian American kid to Hollywood comic – Hasan embarks on an epic journey of discovery to find some of the funniest stand-up comics in the most unlikely places: the bustling city of Mumbai, India, and the neighborhoods of Johannesburg, South Africa. Along the way, Hasan follows the jokes and personal experiences of the funniest international comics deep into the hard truths and the promise for change in some of the toughest global poverty issues of our time. Along with a posse of comedian friends, Hasan invites comedians from India and South Africa to take part in the biggest night of their lives – performing in a Hollywood international comedy showcase and television special.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to the broad journey to meet and experience people living in poor corners of the world, the program focuses on two particular global development topics in specific places: Sanitation-related illness and behavior in India, and HIV infection, prevention and awareness in South Africa. According to the project’s mission, the topics were both strategic and intentional for the global development storytelling and the entertainment angles.<sup>23</sup>



---

## ABOUT *THE END GAME*

*The End Game* is a long-form journalistic documentary TV program that chronicles the experts and people working in a global health pursuit to discover: “How can health workers rid the world of malaria, a disease that kills a child every minute?”<sup>24</sup>

The hour-long (48:00 total running time) *The End Game* premiered on the Al Jazeera cable network in the United States in May 2014. The program is part of Al Jazeera’s series strand titled “Lifelines: The Quest for Global Health,” which airs each week and “profiles the extraordinary work of global health workers in their quest to rid the world of the deadly neglected diseases and conditions that keep millions of people in poverty.”<sup>25</sup> *The End Game* takes a traditional long-form journalistic approach, featuring a mix of interviewed experts, medical professionals working on the ground in Tanzania in Africa. The format provides an in-depth examination of the research and experts working to eradicate malaria, a preventable illness that is particularly dangerous to pregnant women and children living in certain parts of the world. Along with the facts, science and research, viewers meet and see children and others living in malaria-vulnerable parts of the world.

The official program synopsis:

The number of malaria deaths worldwide peaked in 2004, with an estimated 1.8 million deaths worldwide according to the WHO. But the efforts of health workers, NGOs and governments around the world have turned that number around. The WHO reported 800 000 deaths worldwide in 2010 and approximately 627 000 malaria deaths in 2012. However, Africa continues to bear the brunt of the disease, with 80 percent of deaths occurring on the continent. In Tanzania, research scientist Fredros Okumu is determined to bring an end to the disease that has a long and devastating effect on his community. Fredros works at the Ifakara Health Institute, Africa’s centre of research into malaria, which is engaged in innovative study and experiment, yielding significant interventions. Prevention, control and perhaps a vaccine against the parasite that causes the disease are all part of the mission and trials are underway which, should they prove positive, could be a huge health breakthrough. It is a race between science and a rapidly evolving mosquito, with human effort at its heart.<sup>26</sup>

---

# Methodology

## OVERVIEW

In order to assess the overall audience impact of *Stand Up Planet*, both as entertainment and as an influence on viewers' knowledge, attitudes, and intended behaviors about the associated global development topics, we used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

First, respondents were recruited to take an online survey in which they were asked a series of questions designed to measure their baseline awareness and perceptions of various issues related to global health and poverty, as well as their history of taking action in relation to those issues. These respondents were then randomly assigned and asked to watch one of the two hour-long TV documentaries – *Stand Up Planet* or *The End Game* – and to register their perception of the assigned documentary on a moment-by-moment basis as they watched, using a dial test method. Following the screening, those viewers were asked a series of follow-up survey questions designed to explore their responses to the program they watched and to uncover any shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and intended behaviors as a result of watching. Finally, a subset of respondents was asked to join in one-on-one moderated chats in order to better understand their responses to the show; these chats provided a transcript of qualitative commentary that brought particular observed quantitative findings to life.

This survey design allowed us to measure the audience response to and impact of each program individually, and to compare responses between the two programs, using *The End Game* as a “control” program that communicates about a similar global poverty topic with a somber, earnest tone and format relative to the comedy and entertainment tone of *Stand Up Planet*.

## ONLINE SAMPLING & SURVEY PROTOCOL

This study was conducted entirely online, using samples drawn from industry-leading market research sample vendors Survey Sampling International (SSI), Research Now, uSamp, and Innovate Market Research. This distribution of sample vendors was used intentionally as a way of mitigating any potential audience biases that may be present in any one online sample provider.

A total of 1,258 respondents were recruited for this research. All respondents were U.S.-based adults between the ages of 18 and 49, with age, gender, and ethnic quotas implemented to ensure a U.S. Census-distributed sample. Respondents were also screened to ensure at least non-rejection of similar kinds of programming. Specifically, respondents were included if they indicated at least a “3” on a 1-5 interest scale for any of the following: “Documentaries or scripted films about social issues,” “investigative reports or journalism,” “stories about people from around the world,” or “TV shows that focus on social issues.” This research was conducted between September 9 and September 18, 2014, with an average length of interview, including the video viewing, of 77 minutes.

---

## RESPONDENT ASSIGNMENT & SURVEY SCALES

The survey itself included approximately 60 questions in total, with respondents randomly assigned to one documentary or the other (*Stand Up Planet* or *The End Game*). T-testing on mean responses of viewers in both categories demonstrates the efficacy of this randomization: We found no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of respondents in the two groups until after exposure to the stimulus. Wherever practical throughout the survey, we used an 11-point scale (0-10) for questions measuring program response and issues-related attitudes and behaviors.

## DIAL TESTING

Actual viewing of the stimulus (one of the two documentaries) was accompanied by a “dial test” survey method, in which viewers were asked to evaluate the film as they watched on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is the lowest score possible and 100 is the highest score possible. The viewers completed this task using a virtual slider they move using a computer mouse or trackpad. Viewers were instructed to “move the slider to the right toward 100” if they saw something that they found “compelling,” and move it left toward 0 if they saw something they “do not find compelling.” This method is an established video assessment tool in entertainment storytelling research, designed to assess the audience’s perspectives of strengths and weaknesses throughout a given program as they experience it. Key performance measures in a dial test include aggregated mean score, dial “peaks” and “lows,” and overall dial volatility.

## POST-VIEWING ONLINE CHAT

Following the online dial test and survey, a subset of 20 respondents was invited to participate in one-on-one online chat sessions as a way of probing deeper into their responses to the shows. Those respondents were engaged by trained online moderators working from a short “script” of questions with an emphasis on the levels of “action” viewers/respondents were willing to take as a result of having watching the film.

## DATA ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

We used a wide range of univariate and multivariate approaches to our analysis of the survey data:

- Comparisons between mean responses among viewers of the two documentaries and among viewers of the same film (when questions were asked both pre- and post-stimulus) were conducted using T-Tests, with a 95% confidence interval ( $p < 0.05$ ) as the basis for significance.
- Comparisons between the pre-/post- perceptual shifts among those who watched one documentary vs. those who watched the other were conducted using ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) modeling, using the Levene’s test for the homogeneity of variance assumption to control for different baseline means.

- 
- ANOVAs (analysis of variance) with additional post-hoc tests were used to determine significant differences within and among various subgroups, including viewers of different ages and baseline social awareness. A 95% confidence interval ( $p < 0.05$ ) was employed as the basis for significance.
  - Correlation between one viewer response (such as narrative or emotional engagement with a program) and another (such as likelihood of acting in certain ways) was measured using Pearson's correlation coefficient as the determining measure.
  - In all cases in which we tested for meaningful differences between two figures, we used mean scores as our basis.

# Findings: *Stand Up Planet*

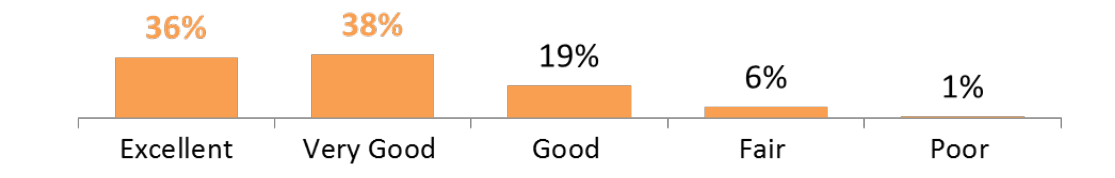
## WHAT DO VIEWERS THINK ABOUT *STAND UP PLANET* AS ENTERTAINMENT?

### A Balance Between Information & Entertainment

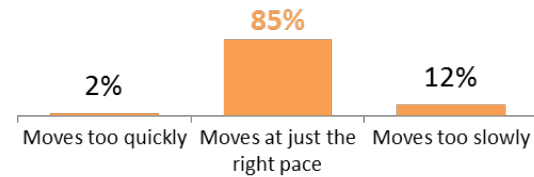
*The audience is entertained – and viewers see it as equal parts informative and interesting.*

The show's top-two-box program rating is 74 percent; almost three-quarters of viewers say the program is either "excellent" or "very good" in terms of overall quality. This top-two-box rating is well above established market research norms for a program test. Notably, the majority of viewers think the program strikes the right balance between entertainment and information; roughly 7 in 10 (70%) call the program both "informative" and "interesting."

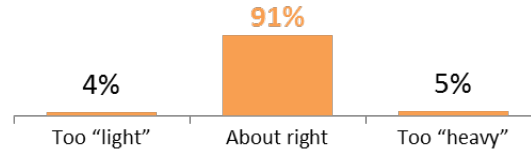
*Stand Up Planet* Program Rating



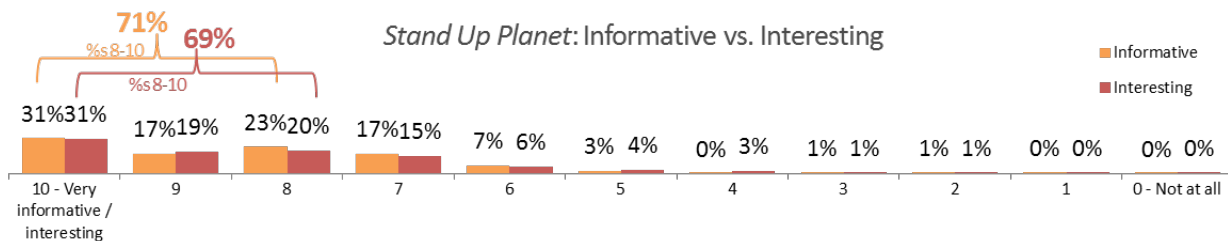
*Stand Up Planet* Program Pacing



*Stand Up Planet* Program Tone



*Stand Up Planet*: Informative vs. Interesting



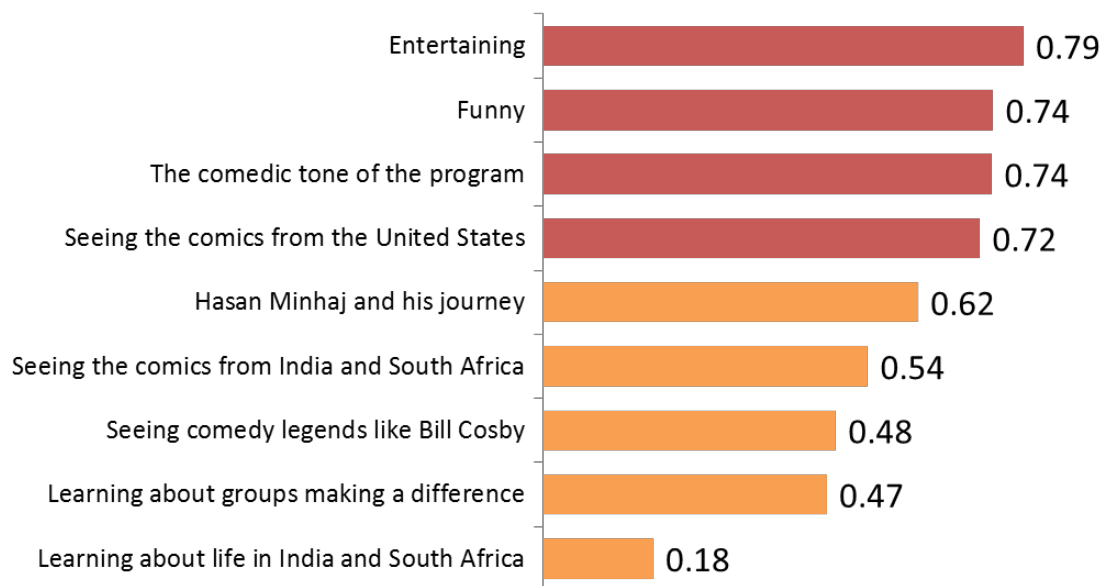
---

### **“Entertainment” = “Comedy” for *Stand Up Planet***

*When Stand Up Planet viewers call the film “entertaining,” they mean “funny.”*

Specifically, the meaning of “entertaining,” as articulated by viewers, is “comedy” – they mean the documentary is funny, they like the show’s comedic tone, and they like the comics. Using principal component analysis, we identified a latent construct in which, as the chart here demonstrates, the higher the figure, the more likely that any individual’s responses to these four elements will move up and down in concert. “Entertaining” loads most clearly with “funny,” “the comedic tone of the program,” and “seeing the comics from the U.S.” So when we talk about how entertainment matters for this project, the term “entertaining” is synonymous with the comedy approach.

### Explaining Viewers’ Impressions of *Stand Up Planet*



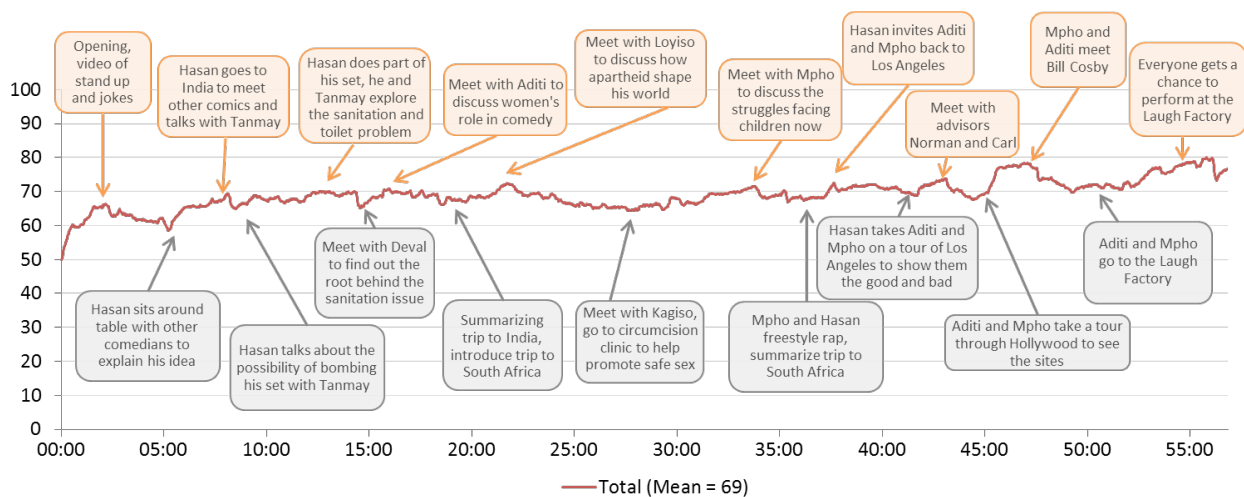
## Accessible, Memorable, Engaging & Inspiring to Viewers

Viewers say *Stand Up Planet* is easy to understand and accessible – and it holds their attention in between the facts and the entertainment (comedy).

Nearly three in four viewers find *Stand Up Planet* “unique” (74%), “easy to understand” (73%), “inspiring” (72%), and “memorable” (71%), while almost two-thirds say that it is “something I would watch by choice” (61%).

Via a dial test, viewers were asked to respond to *Stand Up Planet* with a second-by-second rating of how compelling they found it, using a score from 0 to 100. The show’s overall “dial trace” averaged 69 (composite mean score), with highs topping 80 – both figures above established market research norms for a program test. (Entertainment content dial testing in market research looks for dial trace averages in the mid-60s for a strong-performing TV show, with highs in the 70s.) Consistently, viewers find the entertainment moments to be highly compelling, with dips as they experience the factual or instructive material; but, the highs and lows are able to stay relatively consistent given the pacing and ordering of events. At no point in the program does audience attention drop off, and engagement builds steadily throughout the hour-long story.

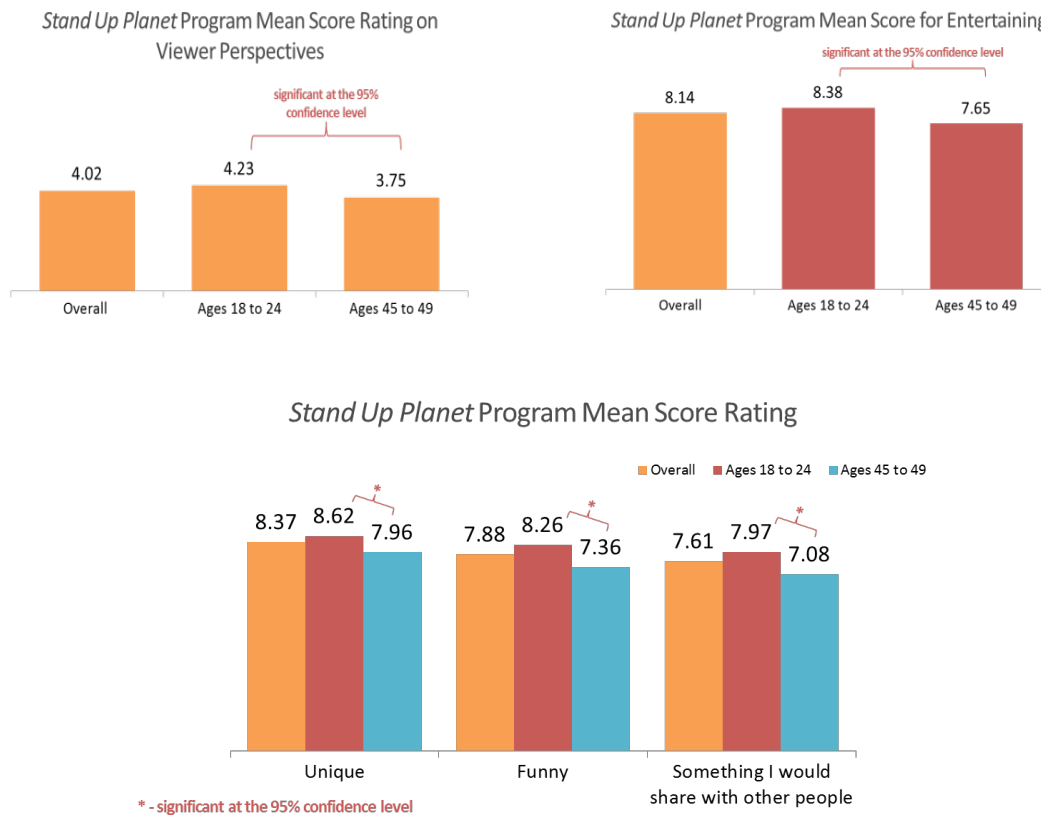
Additionally, when examining the dial test results by age (18-34 and 35-49), political affiliation (conservative or liberal) or broad ethnic identification (white, Hispanic, African-American), differences in the dial trace scores are slight, with African Americans and younger viewers showing marginally more interest in the program throughout. There is almost no difference in audience perspectives about various moments in the program with regard to political affiliation.



## Storytelling That Appeals to Younger Audiences

*Younger audiences are particularly engaged with Stand Up Planet.*

Although the overall trends of engagement and the feeling of being entertained are high for the full audience, younger viewers (18-24) are significantly more likely than older viewers (35-49) to find the show “compelling,” “entertaining,” “unique” and “funny.” Notably, younger viewers are also significantly more likely than older viewers to say they would share the program with others.





## DO AUDIENCE PERSPECTIVES ABOUT GLOBAL HEALTH & POVERTY CHANGE AFTER WATCHING *STAND UP PLANET*?

### Increased Interest & Perceived Awareness of Key Issues

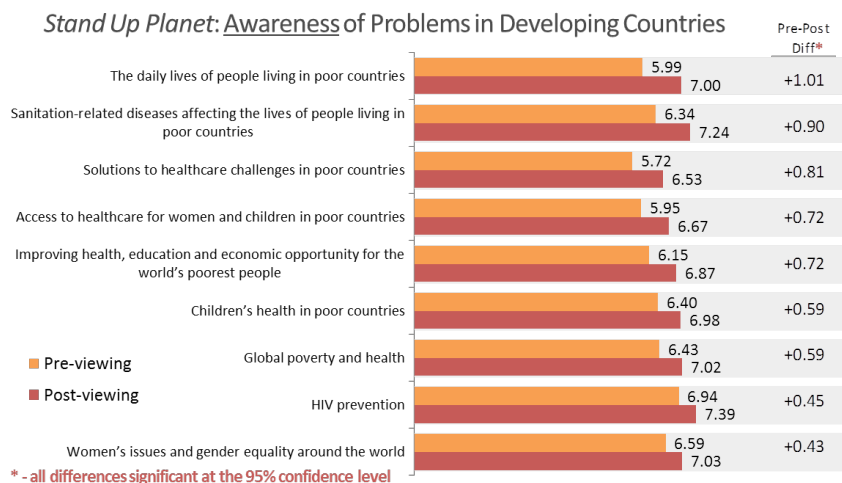
*Stand Up Planet is an effective generator of interest in – and awareness of – the broad social issues.*

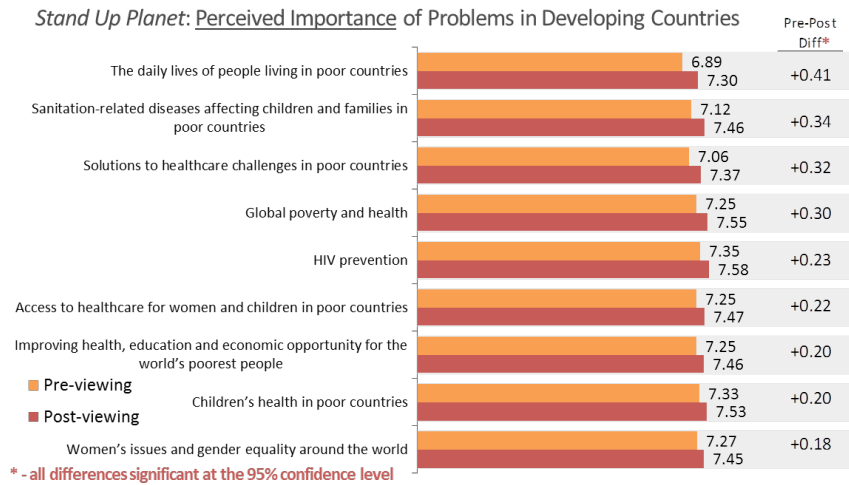
Nearly 8 in 10 (79%) viewers who watch *Stand Up Planet* come away more interested in global poverty and health. All but 5 percent feel like they know more about the topic of global poverty and health after watching. In terms of specific global poverty and health issues, viewers of the program say they learn about the two key issues included in the storyline – sanitation and HIV – but also that they learn what life is like for people living in poor countries far away. More than 6 in 10 (61%) say they learn about the daily lives of people living in poor countries, while more than half (56%) say they learn about HIV prevention.

### Shifts in Awareness, Caring & Self-Efficacy About Global Poverty

*Viewers’ levels of awareness and concern about global poverty increase to significant degrees after watching Stand Up Planet.*

When asked to answer a set of questions before and after watching, viewers express significantly more awareness of key issues, with the highest significant gains in the broad “daily lives of people living in poor countries” and eight other key global poverty issues, indicating a composite improved and changed image of people living in poverty-stricken places. Not only do viewers say they are more aware of global poverty issues, but they are significantly more likely to care about them: After watching, viewers are significantly more likely to say a list of related issues are important to them personally than they are before watching.



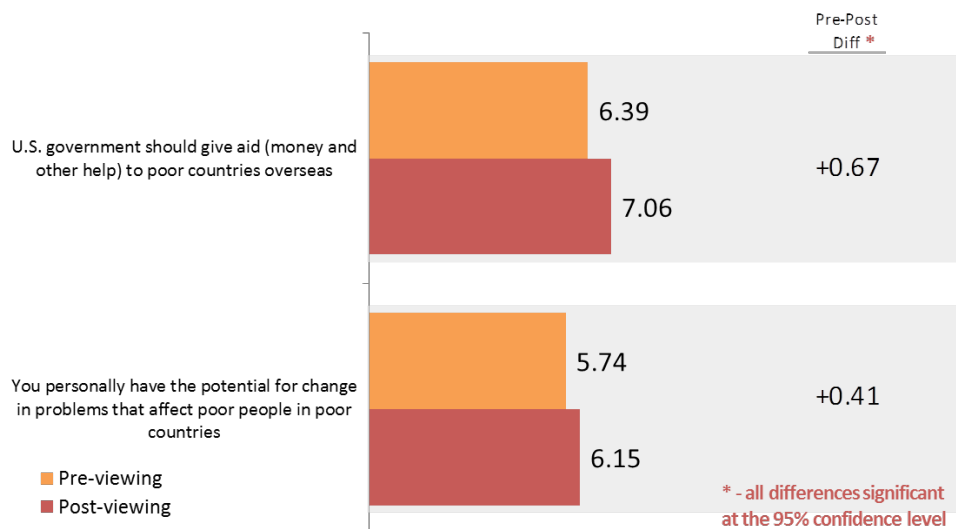


### Who Can Help? Self-Efficacy & Government Responsibility in Global Poverty

*Watching Stand Up Planet increases viewers' belief in the power of U.S. foreign aid – and themselves – to help poor people in poor countries.*

When asked who is responsible and able to make a change in issues related to global poverty and health, after watching the program, viewers are significantly more likely to say that they personally can make a difference in problems that affect people in poor countries. And, they are even more persuaded in favor of U.S. aid for poor countries. (No statistical difference is observed in the audience's feelings about NGOs' ability to impact change in global poverty.)

Who can and should make change? You personally? The U.S. government (via foreign aid)?



---

## DOES *STAND UP PLANET* REACH NEW “PERSUADABLES” OR PREACH TO EXISTING “SUPPORTERS”?

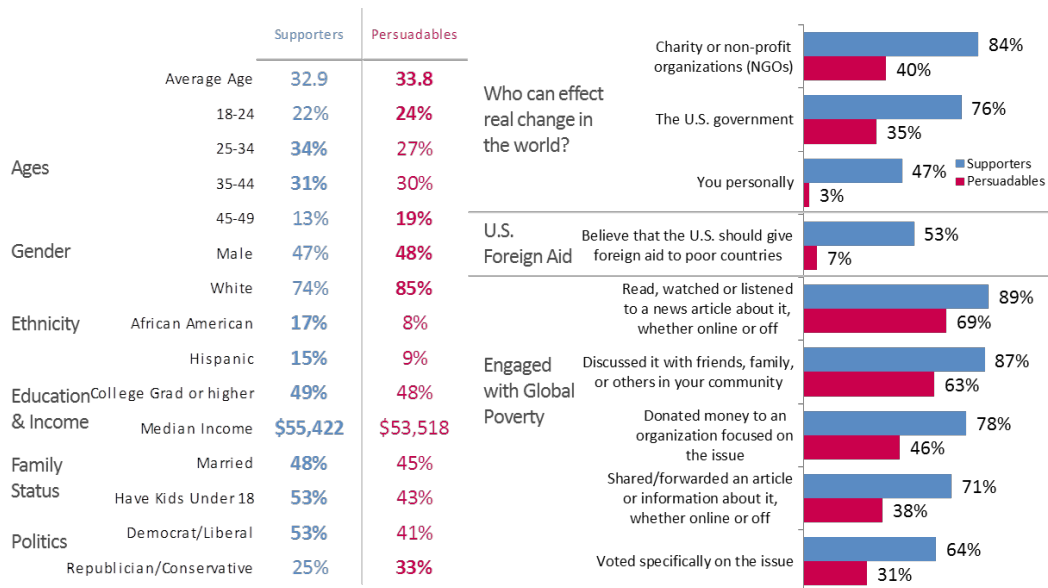
### Supporters vs. Persuadables: Who Are They?

*Supporters already care about global poverty and health, and Persuadables do not.*

Prior to viewing *Stand Up Planet* or *The End Game* – and well before they answered a series of detailed questions about global health and poverty – viewers were asked a question to gauge their first-response baseline social concern about the issue. Specifically, viewers were asked: **“Generally speaking, how interested are you in helping to address problems that affect poor people in poor countries (sometimes called ‘developing countries’)?”** On an 11-point scale (0 = not at all interested, and 10 = very interested), based on the distribution of the data, those viewers who responded from 0 to 6 were labeled “Persuadables,” and those who responded from 8 to 10 were labeled “Supporters.” The true neutrals – who responded with a “7” – were not included in analysis.

Based on this delineation, we find that a little more than half of all audience members claim a high baseline social concern for problems that affect poor people living in poor countries – before watching either program. For these viewers who are “Supporters,” the positive metrics for both films are higher across the board. But what about those who don’t care – the ones who rate their own social interest at a low level or as neutral at best? Advanced analysis suggests that those viewers, “Persuadables,” are the most ripe for influence – if we can get them to watch. And getting them to watch is the key. The “Persuadables” – those who rate their own concern about problems that affect poor people in poor countries as neutral at best – skew slightly older and notably whiter. They are also less likely to have kids under 17 and more likely to be conservative.

These two groups reveal a consistent pattern in how they view the issue of global poverty and health. “Supporters” are already engaged in reading, discussing, donating and voting related to the topic, and they have a strong sense of efficacy across the board – they believe U.S. foreign aid, NGOs and even “you personally” can effect change. By contrast, “Persuadables” are generally not heavily engaged in the topic, and they are dramatically less likely than “Supporters” to believe any institution or person can make a difference – not the U.S. government, not NGOs, and especially not “you personally.”

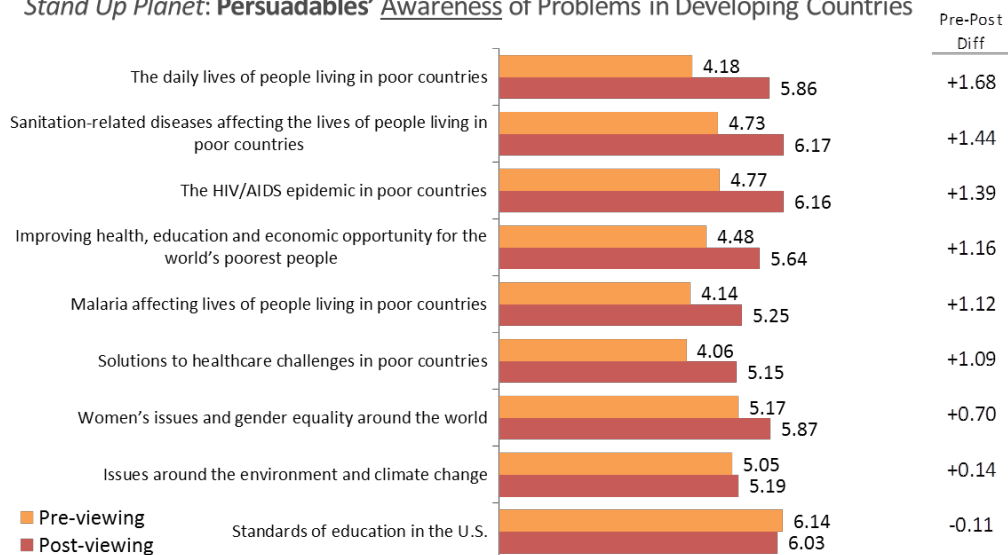


### Persuadables Are More Aware & Concerned After Watching

*Persuadables may not care about global poverty to begin with, but watching Stand Up Planet makes them care.*

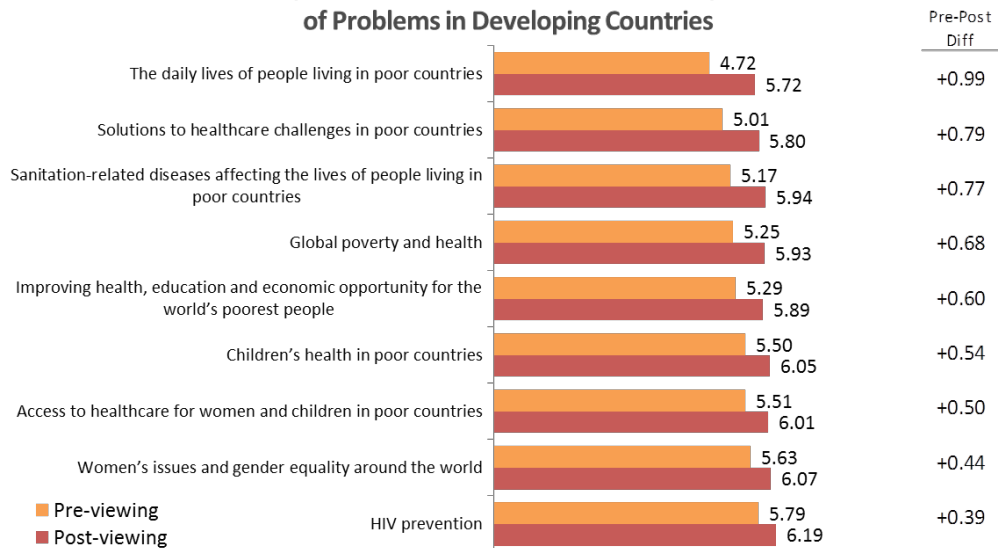
After watching the documentary, the Persuadables rate their own awareness of related issues significantly higher, particularly in areas like the daily lives of people living in poor countries; improving health, education and economic opportunity for the poorest people; and the two specific global development topics in the show, HIV and sanitation.

*Stand Up Planet: Persuadables' Awareness of Problems in Developing Countries*



Additionally, social concern about “helping address problems that affect poor people in poor countries” among Persuadables increases by a statistically-significant degree as a result of watching *Stand Up Planet*. After watching *Stand Up Planet*, the Persuadables see a range of particular issues in global health and poverty as significantly more important, with the highest gain in connecting with “the daily lives of people living in poor countries.”

***Stand Up Planet: Persuadables’ Perceived Importance of Problems in Developing Countries***



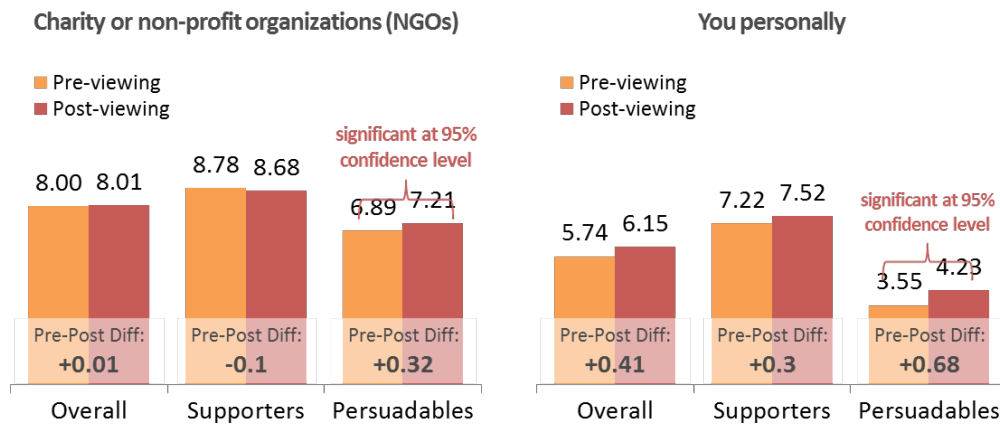
## Persuadables' Perspectives About Efficacy for Social Change

Stand Up Planet increases Persuadables' beliefs about the power of NGOs, U.S. foreign aid and themselves to make meaningful change.

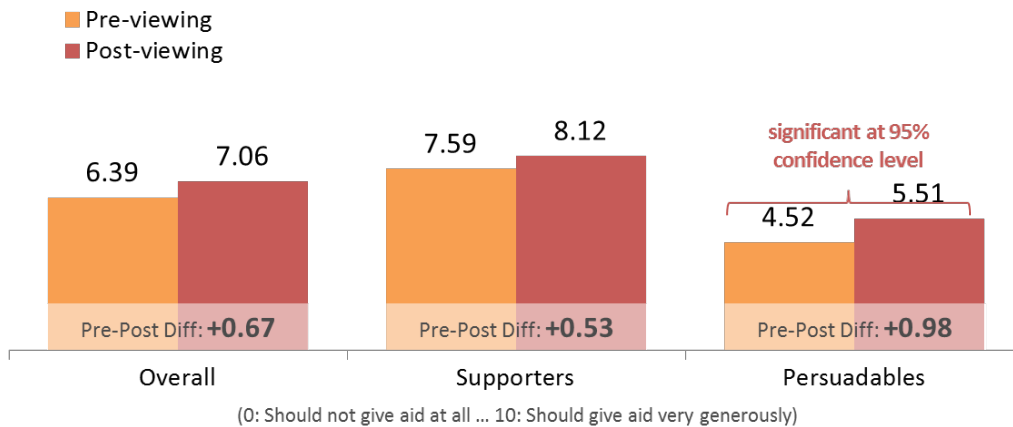
After watching, the Persuadables are significantly more likely to see NGOs – and themselves – as effective agents for change in the world. Additionally, after watching, the Persuadables' belief in the value of U.S. foreign aid to help poor countries increases by a significant degree.

### Stand Up Planet: Average Potential for Change in Addressing Problems

(0: Can't make any difference at all ... 10: Can make a great deal of difference)



### Stand Up Planet: Average Perspective on the Extent of Aid that Should be Given to Poor Countries Overseas



## WHAT MOTIVATES CONCERN & ACTION ON GLOBAL POVERTY?

### Happiness & Sadness Are Correlated with Increased Interest in Global Poverty

*Strongly-held emotions are motivators for increased interest in global poverty and health.*

Four in 10 viewers (40%) who watch *Stand Up Planet* strongly experience happiness or joy – and an equal number experience sadness; that is, they report they “felt this deeply” on a 0-10 scale. Whether a viewer experiences strong levels of “happiness/joy” or “sadness” while watching *Stand Up Planet* is a statistically significant predictor of a shift in that viewer’s overall interest in issues around global poverty and health. Sadness is a stronger predictor of a shift in interest than is happiness. (The relative advantage is slight, but it is real.)



### Happiness is Correlated with Low-Level Actions (Sharing, Learning)

*Stand Up Planet elicits happiness and sadness.*

Of five emotions – happiness/joy, anger, fear, disgust and sadness – the *Stand Up Planet* audience was most likely to experience equal parts happiness/joy and sadness when viewing. When viewers experience happiness or joy, they are more likely to express intent to engage in several “low-level” actions, including reading or watching news about a specific subject, discussing that topic with friends, sharing information about the subject, and interacting with a community on the subject, whether online or off. Happiness does not correlate with high-level actions at that level of strength, and no other emotional response – including sadness, the other main *Stand Up Planet* emotion – has a clear positive correlation above the 0.4 level with any intended actions.

		Low-Level Social Actions <small>(seeking info, learning info, sharing info)</small>	High-Level Social Actions <small>(taking real-world action)</small>
Strength of Relationship	Related at a <b>0.4 - 0.6</b> level	<b>Happiness or joy</b>	None
	Related at a <b>0.6</b> level or above	None	None

---

## Narrative Involvement & Actions

*The more deeply viewers are involved in the story, the more likely they are to be persuaded to take actions – both low-level, like sharing information, and high level, like participating in an event.*

Viewers were presented with a list of possible social actions they might take on the issue of global poverty and health after watching, from “discussing with friends and family” to donations, social media sharing, volunteering, contacting an elected official and more (see Appendix: Social Actions List). These possible social actions viewers might take after watching are divided into two main tiers: Low-level actions, like seeking and sharing information, and gaining knowledge; and high-level actions, in which an individual takes a real-world action, like donating money or volunteering for an organization.

Low-Level Social Actions	High-Level Social Actions
Reading, watching or listening to a news article, online or off	Donating money to an organization focused on the issue
Discussing with friends, family, or others	Fundraising for a cause you are involved in
Sharing/forwarding an article or information	Volunteering within the United States or abroad for an organization focused on the issue
Interacting with a community focused on the issue, whether online or off	Buying (or boycotting) products/services
Writing on a blog or commenting on an article online	Voting specifically on the issue
Using your voice to impact the issue (e.g. via social media, signing a petition, etc.)	Organizing a community focused on the issue
Using online tools (such as Twitter, or Facebook) to share opinions	Contacting an elected official about the issue, either in person, by phone, by letter, or by social media
	Participating in a march, rally, or sit-in



Do viewers’ levels of narrative involvement in the program correlate with their interest in taking particular social actions – either low-level or high-level actions? We see a positive relationship between viewers’ narrative involvement with the film and their intent to take actions – including both low-level actions and high-level actions. The correlation is particularly strong between the sense that the program “could change my life” and the intent to take all levels of action.

		Low-Level Social Actions <small>(seeking info, learning info, sharing info)</small>	High-Level Social Actions <small>(taking real-world action)</small>
		<b>Strength of Relationship</b>  Related at a <b>0.4 - 0.6</b> level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This program affected me emotionally.</li> <li>• I found myself thinking about how I would have responded.</li> <li>• I identified with a character in this program.</li> <li>• Events in this program are relevant to my everyday life.</li> <li>• I found this program difficult to put out of my mind.</li> <li>• I could see this program changing my life.</li> </ul>
Related at a <b>0.6</b> level or above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I could see this program changing my life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I could see this program changing my life.</li> </ul>	

---

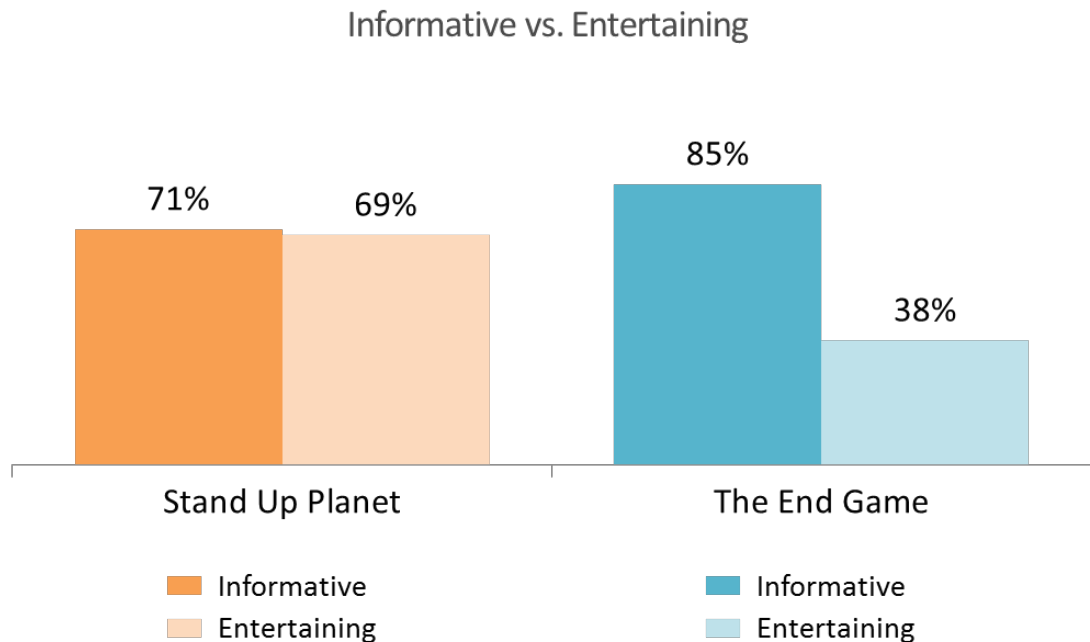
## How They Compare: *Stand Up Planet* vs. *The End Game*

### HOW DOES AUDIENCE IMPACT DIFFER BETWEEN THE TWO DOCUMENTARIES?

#### Entertainment vs. Information

*Audiences learn from The End Game, but they are entertained by Stand Up Planet.*

Viewers rate *Stand Up Planet* both “informative” and “entertaining” in roughly equal proportions. But with *The End Game*, the gulf between the two metrics is dramatic – viewers are more than twice as likely to call it “informative.” In fact, compared with *Stand Up Planet*, half of viewers (50%) feel like they know “a lot more” about the topic of global poverty and health after watching (only 39 percent of *Stand Up Planet* viewers said this). Viewers are significantly more likely to find *Stand Up Planet* “entertaining,” to identify with characters in the program, and to find it relevant to their daily lives, compared with *The End Game*.

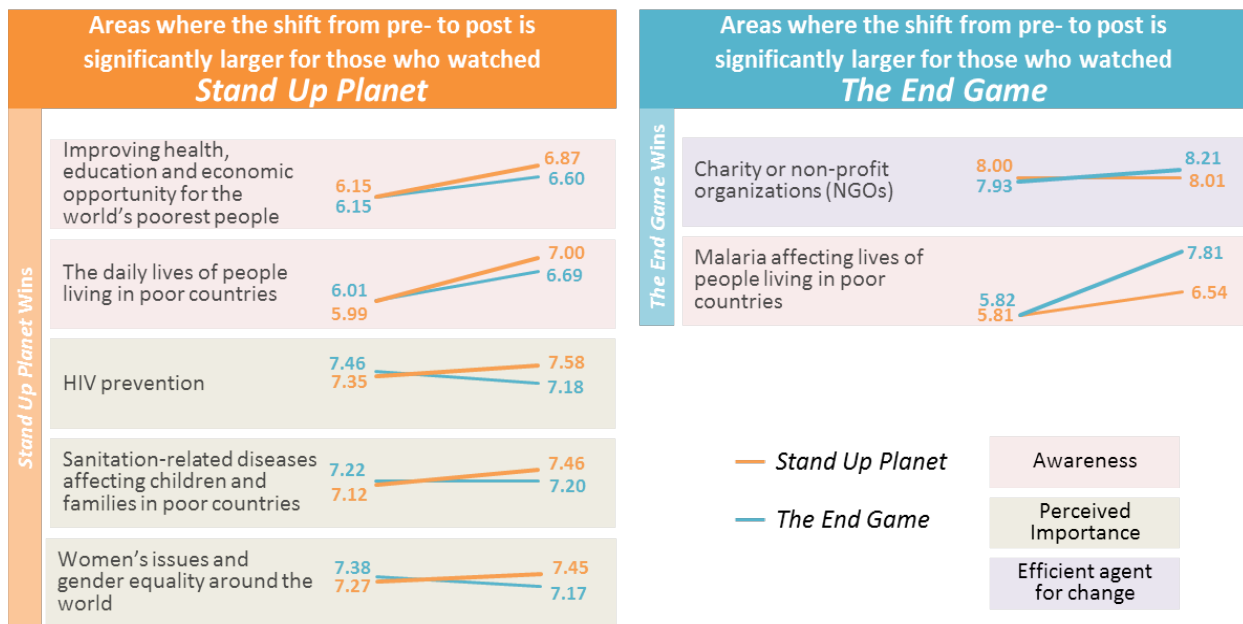


% 8-10

## Impact on Attitudes & Awareness of the Issues

Stand Up Planet viewers show greater concern and interest in global poverty and health than The End Game viewers.

We find seven key areas where viewers' perceptual shifts from pre-viewing to post-viewing are significantly different from *Stand Up Planet* to *The End Game* – notably, these differences include a fuller understanding and concern for “the daily lives of people living in poor countries,” not just the specific global development issues attributed to each show respectively.

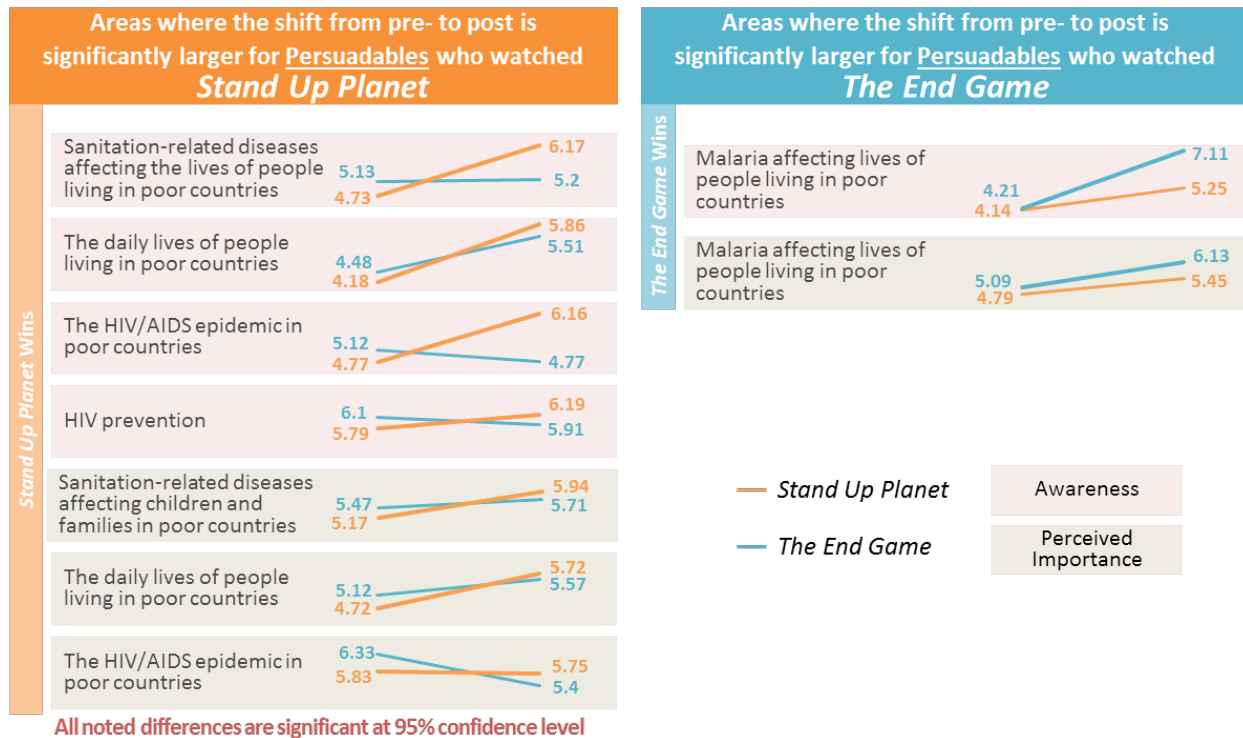


All noted differences are significant at 95% confidence level

## How Do *Stand Up Planet* & *The End Game* Compare in Ability to Engage Persuadables?

*Stand Up Planet* moves *Persuadables* – those who don't yet care about global poverty – to be more aware and to care more about global poverty than *The End Game* does.

When looking at the *Persuadables* in particular, *Stand Up Planet* is more engaging and able to create audience shifts on a number of areas compared to *The End Game*. We find nine key areas where *Persuadables*' perceptual shifts from pre-viewing to post-viewing are significantly different from *Stand Up Planet* to *The End Game*, including not only the specific topics themselves, but a broader understanding and feeling of concern about the daily lives of people living in poor countries.

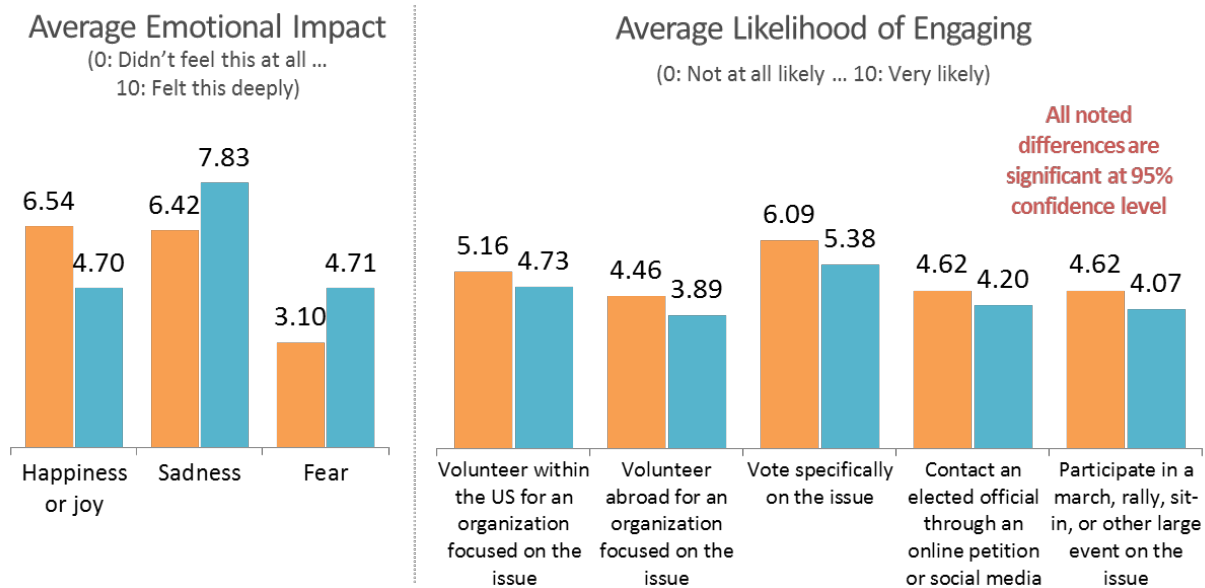


## Impact on Emotions & Likely Actions on the Issues

Stand Up Planet viewers are more likely to see themselves engaging in higher-level social actions than The End Game viewers.

Viewers are significantly more likely to experience happiness or joy while watching *Stand Up Planet*, and significantly less likely to experience sadness or fear than viewers of *The End Game*. They're also significantly more likely, after watching *Stand Up Planet*, to say that they could see themselves engaging in "higher-level" social actions that require a higher commitment than learning or sharing information, such as: volunteer work, voting, contacting an elected official, and participating in a march, rally or other event focused on the issue.

Stand Up Planet    The End Game



## Emotion & Action

Viewers of each show are motivated to act by different emotions – happiness for *Stand Up Planet*, and fear for *The End Game*. In both cases, however, the connection between emotion and action is statistically real – but relatively weak.

Does a connection exist between the specific emotions viewers experience (like happiness, sadness, fear) and their intent to take action? The emotional appeal differs for each show. An emotional experience watching *Stand Up Planet* correlates with action to a significant – but relatively weak – level. Most notably, viewers who experience happiness or joy are more likely to express intent to engage in several “low-level” actions, including reading or watching news about a specific subject, discussing that topic with friends, sharing information about the subject, and interacting with a community on the subject, whether online or off.

<i>Stand Up Planet</i> Correlations	Any Social Actions	Low Level Social Actions	High Level Social Actions	Strength of Relationship
Disgust	-	-	-	
Anger	0.31	0.31	0.30	
Sadness	0.34	0.37	0.31	
Fear	0.37	0.31	0.39	
Happiness or joy	0.43	0.46	0.39	

By contrast, among viewers of *The End Game*, fear is the strongest action motivator, with a correlation above the .4 level between that emotion and the likelihood of engaging in “high level” social actions. Other emotions also correlate with action at significant – but relatively weak – levels.

<i>The End Game</i> Correlations	Any Social Actions	Low Level Social Actions	High Level Social Actions	Strength of Relationship
Disgust	0.24	0.15	0.27	
Anger	0.38	0.34	0.39	
Sadness	0.35	0.39	0.31	
Fear	0.43	0.36	0.46	
Happiness or joy	0.28	0.32	0.24	

## Narrative Involvement & Action

*The connection between a deeply-felt level of involvement with the story and action holds across both programs – but Stand Up Planet shows a stronger correlation between involvement and action.*

In both programs, viewers’ intent to take action is significantly related to the degree of narrative involvement they experience with the story – the pattern holds regardless of each show’s primary emotion (happiness for *Stand Up Planet*, and sadness and fear for *The End Game*). According to other research in entertainment-education, this is consistent with the process of narrative involvement – that is, persuasion may be enhanced and barriers to counterarguments are decreased, as viewers are increasingly “transported” into the story.<sup>27</sup> For this study, the highest level of narrative involvement – finding either documentary to be “life-changing” – is statistically correlated to any level of social actions viewers intend to take after watching each show.

However, in *Stand Up Planet*, the correlation between viewers’ narrative involvement and their intent to take action is stronger than it is for *The End Game*. With *Stand Up Planet*, this relationship includes both low-level actions and high-level actions. The correlation is strongest between the sense that the program “could change my life” and the intent to take all levels of action.

<b>Stand Up Planet</b> Correlations	Any Social Actions	Low Level Social Actions	High Level Social Actions	Strength of Relationship
Afterwards, I found this program difficult to put out of my mind	0.44	0.47	0.40	
I identified with a character in this program	0.45	0.42	0.44	
This program affected me emotionally	0.55	0.56	0.51	
I found myself thinking about how I would have responded to a situation presented in this program	0.55	0.57	0.51	
Events in this program are relevant to my everyday life	0.56	0.51	0.56	
I could see this program changing my life	0.63	0.60	0.62	

The relationship between viewers' narrative engagement with *The End Game* and their intent to take action is not as strong overall – only “I could see this program changing my life” correlates with any actions at the .6 level or above.

<b><i>The End Game</i></b> Correlations	Any Social Actions	Low Level Social Actions	High Level Social Actions	Strength of Relationship
I identified with a character in this program	0.34	0.33	0.33	
Afterwards, I found this program difficult to put out of my mind	0.40	0.44	0.34	
I found myself thinking about how I would have responded to a situation presented in this program	0.41	0.46	0.35	
Events in this program are relevant to my everyday life	0.41	0.32	0.45	
This program affected me emotionally	0.46	0.50	0.40	
I could see this program changing my life	0.61	0.59	0.58	

Taken together, we reach the following straightforward conclusion to the findings across both emotion and narrative involvement in both programs: A strongly-held emotion while watching a story is motivating, whether it's sadness, fear or happiness. But narrative involvement (level of transportation into the story) is the key, given that it may erode viewers' barriers to persuasion – that is, viewers are absorbed into the story and find the information compelling. For *Stand Up Planet*, viewers are highly involved in the story, experiencing both happiness and sadness, and they are more likely to take a range of social actions after watching. The crucial factor is the degree of involvement in a good story, and a story that is able to involve them deeply rather than making them aware of “learning.” And again, in the case of *Stand Up Planet*, the entertainment is about the comedy.



---

## Discussion of Summary Findings

***Stand Up Planet* – comedy, entertainment, not didactic – is effective in encouraging the audience to care more about global health & poverty.**

The overwhelming majority of people who watch *Stand Up Planet* feel it is a high-quality show, achieving an unusual balance as both “informative” and “interesting.” Of all program elements, they enjoy both the comedic tone and meeting the comics from around the world, as well as learning about the groups and people making a difference in global poverty. After watching, viewers are significantly more likely to say they are aware of, and care more about, “the daily lives of people living in poor countries,” not only about the specific global development topics (HIV and sanitation) in the show. In other words, they are not focused solely on the instructional elements of the program, but on the much more expansive idea of caring about lives lived around the world – a connection with empathy and attitude shift that may be valuable over time. After watching, they are also significantly more likely to believe in their own ability, along with foreign aid from the U.S. government, to act as effective agents for change.

**“Caring more” may be more important than “learning more” in changing attitudes & actions.**

When it comes to encouraging audiences to care about a social issue like global poverty, a format that balances entertainment with facts may be more effective than explanatory, serious delivery of information alone. Both shows make people think, but *Stand Up Planet* makes them *care*, and *The End Game* helps them *learn* to a greater degree. Equal numbers of *Stand Up Planet* viewers experience happiness and sadness while watching, and they see the show as a balanced mix of entertaining and informative; they are more likely watch it on their own and take a range of higher-commitment social actions (volunteering, voting, contacting an elected official, attending an event) than those who watch *The End Game*. Viewers who watch *The End Game* experience sadness while watching, they learn more about the topics and feel that the show is high-quality and informative; they feel it gave them a much better understanding of an important social issue. But they are less likely to watch it on their own or take higher-level social actions than the comedy-focused show.

---

## **Comedy is more effective than a sober narrative tone in generating awareness, concern, empathy and intended action on global poverty.**

As a piece of entertainment, *Stand Up Planet* works. But importantly, the documentary also succeeds as a motivator of attitudes and intended action, in large part because of the comedic tone. On all interested measures – awareness, concern and intended action around global poverty – *Stand Up Planet* is the top achiever; but *The End Game* viewers clearly say they learned more. Learning is not a driver for attitude and behavior change in this study – it's all about awareness and caring. Given that the underlying meaning of “entertaining” as it applies to *Stand Up Planet* is comedy – as seen through advanced analysis – this can be extrapolated as a finding about the power of entertainment and comedy vs. somber journalistic storytelling about global poverty.

## **Light-hearted storytelling is key in engaging “Persuadables” – not just preaching to “Supporters” who already care.**

Although Supporters – those who already care about global poverty – are engaged and willing to take action after watching *Stand Up Planet*, Persuadables, who don't already care, are significantly more likely to change their attitudes, interest and intent to take action around global poverty after watching. After watching *Stand Up Planet*, Persuadables see a range of particular issues in global health and poverty as significantly more important, with the highest gain in connecting with “the daily lives of people living in poor countries.” After watching *Stand Up Planet*, Persuadables' belief in the value of U.S. foreign aid to help poor countries increases by a significant degree, as does their own sense self-efficacy and that of NGOs to help. Given that dial testing revealed no perceptible partisan difference in engagement with the show, we could surmise that global poverty and health is not a social issue that has yet been captured by the ideological culture wars – and thus, the Persuadables are still persuadable.

## **The comedy format particularly connects with its likely target – young people.**

*Stand Up Planet's* entertainment and comedy format connects with young people and persuades them to share with others. Although the broad audience who watches *Stand Up Planet* (aged 18-49) agrees the show is memorable, unique and generally engaging, young people (aged 18-24) are significantly more likely than older viewers (aged 45-49) to find *Stand Up Planet* compelling, entertaining, funny and unique. They are also significantly more likely than the older audience to share information about the show with others.

---

## **Content that is accessible and engaging is the key to motivating action – and offers valuable insight for marketing storytelling designed to inform through entertainment.**

All audiences – the general audience, young people, and even those not yet reached by global poverty and health information – find *Stand Up Planet* to be accessible, something they would watch on their own, and motivating for action. In the choice between overt, didactic fact-offering content vs. content that may focus on empathetic portraits, entertainment (and even comedy), the unexpected learning of entertainment content may be the more strategic choice – *if* motivating attitudes and action is the goal (which is not the objective for all storytelling projects on this topic). Marketing this kind of project can be valuable given its likely appeal to a broader audience (beyond the choir), thus increasing its likely reach.

## **Regardless of the emotion experienced while watching, a strong level of “involvement” in a story connects with social action.**

A strongly-held emotion is highly motivating, whether it's sadness or happiness or fear. But narrative involvement (level of transportation into the story)<sup>28</sup> is the key, given that it may break down cognitive barriers that bolster viewers' resistance to argument or persuasion. But what is the major difference between the two shows that could explain why it moved viewers to a greater degree in attitudes (awareness and caring) and likely actions? In *Stand Up Planet*, the difference is the entertainment value, which is all about the comedy.

## **Facts wrapped in entertainment and comedy may lead to greater concern for people living in poverty.**

In several areas, viewers' changes in interest, attitudes and concern about global poverty from pre-viewing to post-viewing are significantly different for *Stand Up Planet* compared to *The End Game*.

- Areas in which the audience shift before and after watching is significantly larger for those who watched *Stand Up Planet*:
  - An understanding of issues around improving health, education, and economic opportunity for the world's poorest people
  - An understanding of the daily lives of people living in poor countries
  - The perceived importance of HIV prevention
  - The perceived importance of sanitation-related diseases
  - The perceived importance of women's issues and gender equality around the world
- Areas in which the audience shift before and after watching is significantly larger for those who watched *The End Game*:
  - A belief in the efficacy of NGOs as an agent for change
  - An understanding of the impact of malaria on the lives of people living in poor countries

---

### **Mixing entertaining stories with facts keeps the audience engaged in a tough topic.**

In dial testing to examine the audience's involvement and assessment show of the show as "compelling," the mix of facts and entertainment in *Stand Up Planet* show a consistent engagement pattern; viewers indicate that they find the scenes heavy with facts to be less "compelling" than the purely entertaining moments, but the combination keeps viewers paying attention throughout the entire program.

### **Viewers are more likely to choose entertainment like *Stand Up Planet* than a sober journalistic treatment like *The End Game* – suggesting an impactful way of reaching new audiences with a tough topic.**

If the goal of global development storytelling is to share insights and change perspectives about people living the poorest countries around the world with audiences who are not already thinking about the issue, then entertainment that creates a connection between "us" (the U.S. and other wealthy donor countries) and "them" (those working or living in poverty in faraway places) offers a powerful tool. Viewers of *Stand Up Planet* are significantly more likely than viewers of *The End Game* to identify strongly with a character in the show, to find the events relevant to their daily lives – and, most importantly, to say it was a show they would "watch by choice."

---

## Conclusions & Future Considerations

The data here provide specific insights, although follow-up research would continue to build upon these patterns. As is the case with all social science and market research, the study here is limited in a few ways, worthy of spotlighting here as we think about future examinations that can help tell a complete story about audience engagement in global poverty storytelling – and stories about other tough social issues.

First, given the challenges of reaching large enough samples of audiences who have seen the two niche cable-network programs examined here, we used a recruited screening format. In future research, it would be ideal to attempt to examine these issues with audiences who have watched the shows out in the marketplace, although finding adequate sample sizes of viewers for niche-focused programming poses an expensive methodological challenge – for all but the highest-visibility media projects – in a fragmented U.S. media environment. Additionally, this research examines audience response at one point in time; in order to assess whether and to what degree these effects may be long-lasting, we recommend querying audiences at a future point in time to look at long-term shifts.

And finally, this research used two TV programs that were produced in the marketplace – not controlled in a lab – so future research might dig even deeper by attempting to create more identical storytelling examples distinguished only by format and tone. However, we believe quasi-experimental research using real-world productions provides valuable findings that may be more reflective of how audiences experience entertainment in “the real world,” so lab-created experimental design compared to real-world comparisons offers a set of tradeoffs.

The data and insights here may be validating, discouraging or enlightening – depending on perspectives – for those working to engage audiences in tough social issues like global poverty. Stories that help people to learn are valuable in the broad efforts to solve global poverty. But stories that make people care – and that may inadvertently persuade the non-converted – are instrumental in efforts to create empathy, identification and action to help.

---

## Appendix: Social Actions List

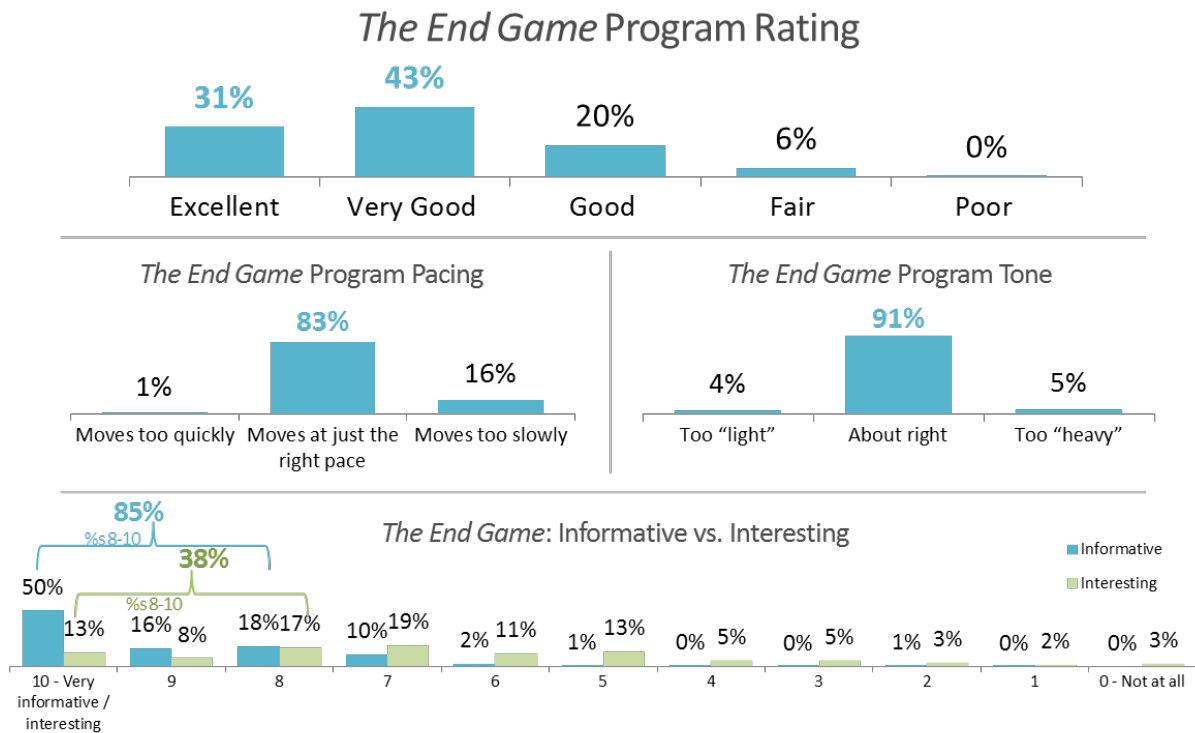
- Read, watch or listen to a news article about the issue, whether online or off
- Discuss it with friends, family, or others in your community
- Share/forward an article or information about it, whether online or off
- Interact with a community focused on the issue (e.g. join, follow, like/fan/friend, subscribed to a newsletter) whether online or off
- Write on a blog, or commented on an article online
- Use your voice to impact the issue (e.g. via social media, signing a petition, etc.)
- Use online tools (such as Twitter, or Facebook) to share your opinions on the issue
- Donate money to an organization focused on the issue
- Fundraise by asking for donations from others for a cause you are involved in (such as a charity, or trip)
- Volunteer within the United States for an organization focused on the issue
- Volunteer abroad for an organization focussed on the issue
- Purchase products/services or boycotted products/services related to the issue
- Vote specifically on the issue
- Organize or help to start / started a community focused on the issue, whether online or off
- Organize or help to set up an organization focused on the issue
- Contact an elected official in person or by phone or letter about the issue
- Contact an elected official through an online petition or using Twitter, Facebook or other social media
- Participate in a march, rally, sit-in, or other large event on the issue

# Appendix: *THE END GAME* Findings

## WHAT DOES THE GENERAL AUDIENCE THINK ABOUT *THE END GAME*?

### The Audience Finds *The End Game* Informative

The general audience enjoys *The End Game* and rates it highly, with about 74 percent saying it was either excellent (31%) or very good (43%). However, we see a dramatic gulf between the ratings for “informative” and “interesting” – 85 percent describe the show as “informative” and 38 percent call it “interesting.” Seven in 10 (70%) find *The End Game* easy to understand, and slightly more than that (72%) say it gave them a better understanding of the issue. Just half (50%) would watch the film by choice.

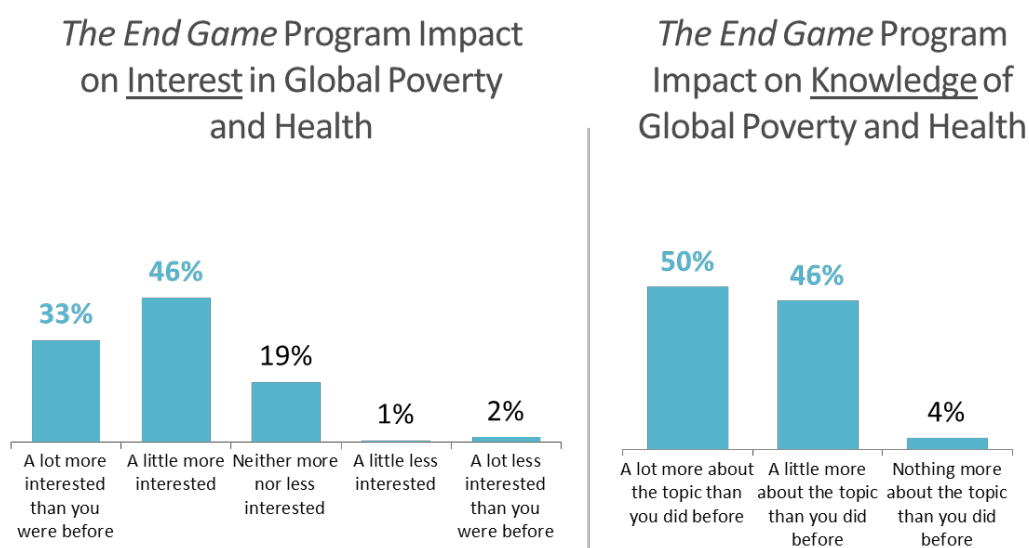


---

## HOW DOES *THE END GAME* IMPACT VIEWERS' PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE OF GLOBAL HEALTH & POVERTY?

### Viewers Say They Learn A Great Deal

Nearly eight in 10 (79%) who watch *The End Game* come away more interested in global poverty and health. However, compared with *Stand Up Planet*, half of viewers (50%) feel like they know “a lot more” about the topic of global poverty and health after watching (39 percent of *SUP* viewers said this). Nearly two in three people (64%) learn something about children’s health in poor countries from watching *The End Game*, and more than half (51%) learn about solutions to healthcare challenges in poor countries.



## HOW DO VIEWERS RESPOND EMOTIONALLY & BEHAVIORALLY TO *THE END GAME*?

### The Audience Feels Sadness & Empathy

The overwhelming emotional experience for most viewers of *The End Game* is sadness – two in three people (66%) have that response to the film, while just 20 percent experience happiness or joy. As with *Stand Up Planet*, a majority of viewers (75%) have an empathetic response to *The End Game* (“I found myself thinking about how I would have responded to a situation presented in this program”) and were affected emotionally. However, just over one in four people (28%) found the program relevant to their everyday lives.

### Viewers Are Likely To Explore the Issue

Half of those who watch *The End Game* would talk about it with friends, and nearly that many (45%) would explore further, whether online or off. A quarter or less would take higher-level actions, like volunteering, fundraising or contacting an elected official.



---

## Appendix: Online Chat Select Quotes

### STAND UP PLANET VIEWER CHAT

#### On what works about *Stand Up Planet* overall:

It highlighted so many of the chronic problems that the vast majority of the world's people face, yet it did so in a positive spirit by showing how much individuals who really set their minds to improving the situation can accomplish.

- Male, 25 to 34

There was not anything really that I did not like which is why I gave it the highest rating possible. Kudos to the team that put it together!

- Male, 45 to 49 (and yes, this was a real quote. I thought you might like to read it.)

#### On the value of comedy in *Stand Up Planet*:

I enjoyed how they presented the content with a comedic tone, while still giving viewers some valuable information. It kept the hour-long program more engaging.

- Male, 18 to 24

Yes, at first I thought that stand up comedy mixed with how people live in other countries and their rough life was not a good idea, but then it makes sense and it actually worked! Not everybody will agree with it but I think its awesome!

- Female, 25 to 34

#### On whether they would watch *Stand Up Planet* outside of a test setting:

If I knew what it entailed, I would probably watch it as it carries an inspiring message and so many intricate personal stories/cultural scenes/striking information. Human interest stories with a global component tend to keep my attention rather nicely, and who doesn't love comedy?

- Male, 25 to 34

If I came across it or it was recommended I would definitely watch it. I feel like it should be more widely spread, because I had never heard of it till now. One specific outlet where I know I would have watched it after hearing about it is The Daily Show with Jon Stewart. He tends to bring in guests during his last segment that are vocal about a specific issue. In the past I have read books, done more research or gotten involved somehow. And the content from the film fits the style and format of the show. I just personally think it would be a good fit from this film and a great way to give it more exposure, especially to the audience the film seemed to be trying to target, a younger more proactive one.

- Male, 18 to 24

---

### **On how *Stand Up Planet* changes minds:**

I've never seen a show like this where you can change so many lives by doing stand up comedy. This show changed my mind about comedy and about all the issues concerning India and other countries!

- *Female, 25 to 34*

I'm the kind of person that focuses more on the issues in her country, and even though you know people are having a rough time in other countries right now in every possible way, you don't know how deep it is until you see it in shows like this. You never really understand about global poverty until you see shows like this. The children dying from preventable illnesses most of the time because of something as simple as not having clean water.

- *Female, 25 to 34*

I liked the different comedians and seeing different parts of the world. It helps one to understand the problems that other parts of the world are going through. Seeing the areas in India where people go to the bathroom right on the ground was eye-opening.

- *Male, 35 to 44*

### **On what viewers learn from *Stand Up Planet*:**

I did not know the statistics about India. I knew there were slums right near big cities, but not of 54% of people having to "sh\*t" outside because of an inadequate amount of toilets and that there are 1,600 children dying because of the sanitation issues. Also I honestly did not know circumcision helped reduce the risk of HIV. But as far as the complete disparity in poverty levels and actually witnessing it first-hand, that wasn't new to me.

- *Male, 18 to 24*

I learned more a lot from the sanitation portions and HIV portions. I did not know that 54% percent of India used the restroom outside or that circumcision helped prevent HIV. The jokes about MTV cribs in the small container home and how life was like for Mpho (not sure if I spelled that correctly) as a kid after the apartheid, they were enjoyable and insightful as well.

- *Male, 18 to 24*

[I learned about] the poverty issues that people have to deal with in other countries. I didn't realize it was so bad, especially for girls and women.

- *Female, 25 to 34*

I learned that 40% of India lives in poverty. Also that getting a circumcision reduces the chances of contracting HIV in South Africa.

- *Male, 25 to 34*

---

### **On whether they would share information about *Stand Up Planet*:**

But in terms of talking about it with friends and family, yes. I will definitely be sharing this film, if possible, with them. I will also most likely do some research on companies supporting these world issues and promote them more.

- *Male, 18 to 24*

The issues are important to me, but I don't know how interested my "social media friends" would be in me posting that. I usually just put up family pics.

- *Female, 25 to 34*

### **On whether they would take action:**

Yes, because when people have more knowledge about the situation, they will help in any way they can. Donating, blogging, talking about it through social media and of course people will hear it, talk to their friends and help in any way they can.

- *Female, 25 to 34*

I would probably take it upon myself more to try to find new ways to create opportunities to help those in need...whether it's through donations of time, money, food, or whatever was needed.

- *Male, 25-34*

### **On how *Stand Up Planet* helps people understand what they share in common with people in far-off places:**

It's a show about a comic who is interested in world issues and wants to tell the story of comics from other countries. Basically helps us to understand other cultures and how in the end, we are all alike. ... We all face issues that challenge us, it's how we persevere that makes us the same.

- *Female, 35 to 44*

I liked seeing the conditions in the other countries and how they lived so I could relate and understand the situation.

- *Female, 35 to 44*

Well, even though I'm going through some rough times, I would say it's just an economical matter. These people are having more difficult issues for sure than just the economical factor. I actually feel blessed after watching the video.

- *Female, 35 to 44*

---

### **On what other social issues they would like to see get the *Stand Up Planet* treatment:**

If there were other similar programs, the first one that pops into mind is women's rights in other countries. I know it was touched on in this one, but only briefly in comparison to the sanitation, HIV and apartheid issues. Maybe a sequel with female comedians from Middle Eastern countries, where women a beginning to have more of a say. Included with it could be more information on the hunger issues affecting the world too.

- *Male, 18 to 24*

There are so many things that could be addressed that are major problems for the majority of the world's population: health problems brought about by poverty, lack of education, poor employment prospects, domestic violence, discrimination against women or religious and ethnic minorities, government corruption...it's tough to focus on just one.

- *Male, 25 to 34*

Topics like the importance of education, women's way of life in poorer countries, access to sanitation, infrastructure and the like.

- *Male, 45 to 49*

### **Advice for *Stand Up Planet* producers:**

I'd like to see them travel to even more remote places on another episode. Places that I dont know much about. I like to learn. Mexico or more places in the Middle East. Each destination differs.

- *Female, 25 to 34*

I would just say there needs to be more exposure of this [show], through social media and other outlets.

- *Male, 18 to 24*

Have a little more of the stand up in the show, I love that!

- *Female, 25 to 34*

---

## **THE END GAME VIEWER CHAT**

### **On what works in *The End Game*:**

This is the type of documentary I love to watch. It made me sad and happy all at the same time. I wish there was something that could be done... I get tired of watching all the nonsense on TV and this show is something I can watch with the family and also learn at the same time. I love shows like that.

- *Female, 25 to 34*

### **On the difficulty of watching *The End Game*:**

The scenes that depicted the children suffering were difficult to watch, particularly the scene where the child, whom we previously saw receiving treatment, died and we saw him covered with the blanket.

- *Female, 18 to 24*

I wouldn't really say boring but the environment and the issue is a bit depressing.

- *Male, 25 to 34*

I did not like to see the children suffering and the child that was shown that died, but I also know that this is the reality of poor countries and awareness of this is everything in the battle to save lives.

- *Female, 35 to 44*

Guest: I would like to have seen the children and their families after they went home. I would have liked to share in their home life and share some of their happiness as well as I shared their sadness and despair while sick and fighting for their lives.

- *Female, 35 to 44*

### ***The End Game* is a show that viewers would watch – but maybe not often (or not really).**

Not every day, perhaps, but I like to watch documentary films of this type at least a few times a month... I like to watch heavy material in a certain amount of moderation so that I do not get too emotionally upset.

- *Female, 18 to 24*

Yes [I would watch] because I would like to show my kids and family how other people live in other countries to show that some have it better than others and that we should be thankful for what we have because some people don't have much.

- *Female, 25 to 34*

---

### **On what they learn from watching *The End Game*:**

I learned how deadly malaria can be and I did not know that mosquitoes carry the disease.  
- *Female, 35 to 44*

### **On what they would do next (mostly talking about the film):**

If presented with a way, even if small, to make a difference I know that I will be inclined to do so.  
- *Female, 35 to 44*

I usually don't address issues like this on social media but I would use word of mouth to talk about it with people. I think some topics are way too serious for social media where people can be cruel and indifferent.  
- *Female, 35 to 44*

### **On how *The End Game* viewers relate (or don't relate) with the people in the film:**

Life right now is tough for everyone. We all have this in common. We all have different diseases popping up every day. So in return, we are all the same. No different.  
- *Female, 25 to 34*

I think I'm living in luxury compared to their situation but there are some homeless people in the U.S. dealing with similar situations as well.  
- *Female, 45 to 49*

I don't have anything in common, two very different aspects of living.  
- *Male, 25 to 34*

---

## End Notes

1. World Health Organization. (2014). Poverty and Health Fact Sheet. <http://www.who.int/hdp/poverty/en/>
2. Rice, S.E., Graff, C., & Pascual, C. (2010). *Confronting poverty: Weak states and U.S. national security*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution. (See Chapter 1, "The National Security Implications of Global Poverty.")
3. United Nations News Centre. (October 31, 2011). As world passes 7 billion milestone, UN urges action to meet key challenges. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40257>
4. United Nations. Millennium Development Goals Facts. See the poverty fact sheet at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml> and the fact sheet about preventable diseases at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/aids.shtml>.
5. Singhal, A., & Rogers, E.M. (1999). *Entertainment-Education: A communication strategy for social change*. New York, New York: Routledge.
6. Singhal, A., Cody, M. J., Rogers, E. M., & Sabido, M. (Eds.). (2004). *Entertainment education and social change: History, research, and practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum
7. Horton, D., & Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and parasocial interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry*, 19, 215–229
8. Bandura, A. (2004). Health promotion by social cognitive means. *Health Education & Behavior*, 31(2), 143–164.
9. Bandura, A. (2004). Social cognitive theory for personal and social change by enabling media. In A. Singhal, M. J. Cody, E. M. Rogers, & M. Sabido (Eds.), *Entertainment education and social change: History, research, and practice* (pp. 75–96). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
10. Singhal, A., & Rogers, E.M. (1999). *Entertainment-Education: A communication strategy for social change*. New York, New York: Routledge.
11. Green, M. C., & Brock, T.C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 79, No. 5: 701-721.
12. Murphy, S.T., Frank, L.B., Moran, M.B. & Patnoe-Woodley, P. (2011). Involved, transported, or emotional? Exploring the determinants of change in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior in entertainment-education. *Journal of Communication*. 61 (2011) 407–431.
13. Green, M. C., & Brock, T.C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 79, No. 5: 701-721.

---

14. Green, M. C., & Brock, T.C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 79, No. 5: 701-721.

15. See: Nabi, R. L. (2002a). Anger, fear, uncertainty, and attitudes: A test of the cognitive-functional model. *Communication Monographs*. 69(3), 204–216; Nabi, R. L. (2002b). Discrete emotions and persuasion. In J. Dillard & M. Pfau (Eds.), *The persuasion handbook* (pp. 289–308). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; and Murphy, S.T., Frank, L.B., Moran, M.B. & Patnoe-Woodley, P. (2011). Involved, transported, or emotional? Exploring the determinants of change in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior in entertainment-education. *Journal of Communication*. 61 (2011) 407–431.

16. Good Magazine. (June 8, 2013). Poverty porn and a new way to regard social impact. <http://magazine.good.is/articles/poverty-porn-and-a-new-way-to-regard-social-impact>

17. See Oxfam America’s storytelling, for example. [www.OxfamAmerica.org](http://www.OxfamAmerica.org)

18. See a deeper examination of this topic in: Dogra, N. (2012). *Representations of global poverty: Aid, development and international NGOs*. New York, NY: Palgrave McMillan.

19. Slovic, P. “If I look at the mass, I will never act”: Psychic numbing and genocide. *Judgment and Decision Making*, vol. 2, no. 2, April 2007, pp. 79-95.

20. Stand Up Planet. KCETLink. <http://www.standupplanet.org/mission-team/>

21. Stand Up Planet. <http://www.standupplanet.org/mission-team/>

22. Stand Up Planet. <http://www.standupplanet.org/mission-team/>

23. Stand Up Planet. KCETLink. <http://www.standupplanet.org/mission-team/>

24. The End Game. Al Jazeera. <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/lifelines/2014/01/end-game-20141291063664974.html>

25. The End Game. Al Jazeera. <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/lifelines/2014/01/end-game-20141291063664974.html>

26. The End Game. Al Jazeera. <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/lifelines/2014/01/end-game-20141291063664974.html>

27. Green, M. C., & Brock, T.C. (2000).

28. Green, M. C., & Brock, T.C. (2000).



# Center for Media & Social Impact American University 2015



The Center for Media & Social Impact at American University, formerly the Center for Social Media, is an innovation lab and research center that studies, designs, and showcases media for social impact. Focusing on independent, documentary and public media, the Center bridges boundaries between scholars, producers and communication practitioners across media production, media impact, public policy and audience engagement. The Center produces resources for the field and academic research; convenes conferences and events; and works collaboratively to understand and design media that matters. [www.cmsimpact.org](http://www.cmsimpact.org)