



LANEY THORNTON DISCUSSES WHY HE GIVES TO PMC AND THE OPPORTUNITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE, SCALABLE SOLUTION

When Laney Thornton thinks about philanthropy, he thinks about long-term sustainability,

which leads him toward numerous environmental initiatives, but he also thinks about opportunities for his own learning and for the greatest impact.

“PMC is one of my top organizations in terms of giving because, as a donor, I want to know how I can be effective,” says Laney, Founder of the Laney Thornton Foundation and Chair of Trustees for the Flora Thornton Foundation. “I want to understand the issues directly and personally and be a better philanthropist.”

It’s been more than fourteen years since Laney first began giving his money and his time to PMC, and his belief in the strength of PMC’s intervention and approach to addressing environmental issues continues to show results.

“Addressing climate change must be one of the top activities for our planet right now. PMC has a way to do it that’s effective, a great return on investment, and is scalable. This is one of the real solutions that exists.”

PMC’s primary activity has been to create long-running serial dramas for radio, TV, and the web that engage audiences with authentic characters facing culturally appropriate challenges and opportunities. Through dramatic storylines, the characters role model behaviors. PMC trains in-country teams to write and produce each drama and has impacted more than 50 countries.

“In environmental organizations, work is often organized around geographical locations, and that means that teams often have to invent the wheel each time because each area and each culture is so different. PMC’s approach, using entertainment-education, is scalable across countries, cultures, religion. This scalable model is a tremendous opportunity,” says Laney.

But it’s also what PMC is modeling in these serial dramas that inspires Laney. PMC addresses population growth. The human population is currently adding more than 220,000 per day—more than 9,000 people per hour—to the planet, which exacerbates every environmental concern, ranging from consumption

to pollution to food production to water availability. But not only does addressing population growth benefit almost every environmental initiative, PMC’s work on population focuses on improving individual lives just as much as that of the planet.

“Population is a vital part of environmental efforts, and what’s so great is that PMC is humanitarian-based. PMC works to empower women and individuals to make conscious decisions about their own lives, and it impacts whole countries,” says Laney. “It’s so very satisfying when environmental issues have a humanitarian aspect. There’s huge potential for PMC to have a profound impact on the planet.”

PMC works within a human health and human rights enhancing framework, focusing on issues such as women’s rights, education, reproductive health, family planning, and gender equality. All of these issues, and more, work to combat the almost 50 percent of pregnancies around the world that are unplanned or unwanted, helping PMC ensure that every child is a wanted child.

“If you get into the weeds and talk with people, you’ll find that there is an urgent, unmet need for family planning,” says Laney. “Communities are ripe for change. The donor community is becoming more aware and a lot of organizations are now seeing this as vital.”

Laney has supported a broad array of PMC programs and organizational initiatives over the years, including a current organizational capacity building effort. Laney and others realized that the combination of PMC’s humanitarian approach to environmental issues, scalability of intervention, and the urgency of the situation requires PMC to accomplish more.

“By generating a little more money, we could increase effectiveness and the scope of what we’re doing. This is a great opportunity for philanthropists to make a difference. PMC has found an important key.” ■

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30 KIMBALL AVENUE, SUITE 302 | SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT 05403 USA

Population Media Center (PMC) works worldwide using entertainment-education for social change.

Find more PMC news online at www.populationmedia.org/news

POPULATIONMEDIA.ORG



30 Kimball Avenue, Suite 302
South Burlington, VT 05403
802.985.8156
info@populationmedia.org
www.populationmedia.org

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IT'S TIME TO *SPEAK OUT!* JOIN US TODAY.

On February 16th, Population Media Center began giving away more than 4,000 copies of a dramatic new coffee table book. *Overdevelopment, Overpopulation, Overshoot* (OVER) features more than 300 pages of stunning, full-spread photography and is the centerpiece of the 2015 Global Population Speak Out (Speak Out) created in partnership with Population Institute.

Speak Out uses social media, word-of-mouth and direct action to engage opinion-leaders, scientists and citizens of the world to respond creatively to environmental degradation. Speak Out emphasizes elements of environmental protection that are rarely discussed: promoting human rights and human health as strong, indispensable solutions to preserving the health of the planet.

“Speak Out works to equip people with strong materials and messages to help them raise awareness and catalyze change,” says Joe Bish, Director of Issue Advocacy at Population Media Center. “We are really looking forward to crowd-sourced, creative ideas for how to put this amazing book to work as an agent of positive change.”

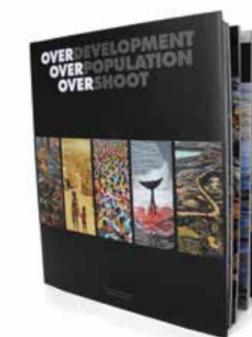
Speak Out organizers are granting free copies of OVER to people and organizations around the world who can be ambassadors of information and inspiration, and who promise personalized delivery to policymakers, opinion leaders, activists, allied organizations, and other audiences.

OVER and Speak Out purposefully join two ever-present parts of environmentalism together: the number of human beings and our socio-economic behaviors. The book intentionally moves beyond tired arguments that only one side of the equation matters and pictorially

depicts the importance of both the number of people and the way people live.

Speak Out organizers hope that the book and accompanying online tools — such as sharable postcards, videos, and activist sign-ups — and the positive and inspirational solutions presented will incite action.

“The world population is increasing by over 220,000 people per day,” says Bish. “We have come to expect the Earth to automatically and easily provide land, food, shelter and other resources for these fellow people, plus all of us already here, even as we terribly mistreat the natural world and our fellow species. With 4,000 copies of this book — which is as large and dramatic as the problems we face as a global community, we hope to spark a new environmental awareness.” ■



CHANGING THE WORLD,
ONE SOAP OPERA AT A TIME

HELP CHANGE THE WORLD: WWW.POPULATIONMEDIA.ORG/DONATE

Request Free Books to Speak Out:
PopulationSpeakOut.org

A HANDBALL GAME IN RWANDA HAS GOALS BEYOND THE NET, IMPACTING CHILD NUTRITION AND FAMILY PLANNING

On Sunday, January 11th, a crowd gathered around a handball court in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda. It was the second day of a handball tournament – and today the senior players were on the court.

“About 4,500 people attended the event on Sunday,” says Alfred Twahirwa, Head Writer and Producer for Umurage Media



One of the handball teams poses for a photo.

Center, Population Media Center’s partner organization in Rwanda.

But the happiness and exercise on the court weren’t the only health impacts. The tournament was organized to promote an ongoing radio drama, *Impano n’Impamba* (“A Gift For Today That Will Last a Long Time”). The drama addresses child nutrition, gender-based violence, adolescent reproductive health, and family planning using PMC’s entertainment-education approach to address health and human rights issues.

“Our number one rule is that every drama must be top-notch entertainment,” says Kriss Barker, PMC’s Vice President for International Programs.

The tournament drew teams from around the country to make it a truly national event in what the organizers called “Drama and Sport for Change.”

“It was a good opportunity, as teams from all over the country attended and now you can see *Impano n’Impamba* t-shirts in different



Impano n’Impamba T-shirts on staff & attendees.

districts,” says Alfred.

Time-outs and breaks were used to share information about the drama and simultaneously entertain with dancers, comedians, inline skaters, and acrobats. The event drew media attention from numerous media outlets, including Rwanda TV, Lemigo TV, Tele 10, and Radio Salus.

“Even local TV journalists were amazed by the power of our edutainment approach,” says Emmanuel Rugira, the Country Representative for Umurage Media Center, “and proposed that we could conduct joint outreach interventions.” ■

HIGH LISTENERSHIP AND GOOD STORIES COMBINE FOR LARGE-SCALE BEHAVIOR CHANGE IN SIERRA LEONE

Imagine that for 53 cents, you could reach someone in Sierra Leone with entertaining stories that educate about family planning and using bednets to prevent malaria. That’s what happened with Population Media Center’s (PMC) *Saliwansai* (“Puppet on a String”). It was a 208-episode drama that aired on nine radio stations throughout Sierra Leone from April 2012 through April 2014.

The results indicate that *Saliwansai* reached an estimated audience of three million people between 15 and 59 years old. The estimated cost per behavior change for listeners who began discussing family planning with family, friends, or neighbors was \$2.54 US and listeners who began using bednets to prevent malaria was \$1.62 US. At clinics, 53 percent of new reproductive health clients named the program as the source of information that motivated them to visit the clinic.

Listeners of *Saliwansai* were also:

- 3.1 times more likely than non-listeners to say you can decrease the risk of getting AIDS by using a condom every time you have sex
- 4.1 times more likely than non-listeners to say it’s okay for information about condoms to be discussed on the radio
- 2.9 times more likely than non-listeners to say they know where they could get a condom if they wanted one



PMC actors in the studio recording episodes of *Saliwansai* in Sierra Leone.

- 3.7 times more likely than non-listeners to say that a healthy-looking person can have HIV
- 2.3 times more likely than non-listeners to say that becoming pregnant every year can impact the health of the mother
- 1.6 times more likely than non-listeners to say they know of an organization or people that advocate against domestic violence

“Results like these are promising,” says Scott Connolly, PMC’s Director of Research. “Sierra Leone ranks as one of the lowest in the world on some of the United Nations Human Development Index health indicators. We’re pleased to address some of these issues.” ■

PMC NEWS CURRENT EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ARIZONA CAN CREATE A VIDEO TO IMPROVE THE WORLD AND WIN A CASH PRIZE

High school students in Arizona can win cash prizes for creating a short video exploring how a rapidly growing human population might impact the world, Arizona, or their future quality of life. A video contest called “One Planet, Many People” is being presented by Population Media Center’s (PMC) Arizona chapter.

The grand prize features \$1,000 and publication of the video on PMC’s website. Four special category prizes of \$250 each will also be awarded, along with publication of the videos on PMC’s website. PMC-Arizona got the idea from Population Connection.

“We are very excited about making a difference in the world, allowing youth to learn about how population growth underlies most of the pressing environmental and social issues confronting our world today, and building a video contest program that can hopefully be expanded in the coming years,” says Keith Kaback, PMC-Arizona’s Executive Director.

The contest began on January 31, 2015. Videos must be submitted in digital format by midnight on March 31, 2015. For more information, visit www.populationmedia.org/Arizona. ■

POPULATION MEDIA CENTER REVEALS NEW WEBSITE

An interactive map of projects around the world, population projections for countries, amazing photography, and audio and video clips are just a few of the things you’ll find when you visit Population Media Center’s (PMC) new website: www.populationmedia.org.

“We wanted the website experience to be informative but also engaging and fun,” says Missie Thurston, PMC’s Director of Marketing and Communications. “We wanted web visitors to see passion, urgency, and optimism. Our work is about empowering people and showing that change is possible.”

The new website is responsive, allowing the site to function well across devices such as smart phones, tablets, laptops, and desktops.

“This site clarifies the issues we address as well as our approach to the issues,” says Joe Bish, PMC’s Director of Issues Advocacy. “It shows how entertainment-education is constructed and employed.” ■

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Jean Bosco Ndayishimiye
PMC-Burundi
Country Representative

JEAN BOSCO NDAYISHIMIYE: A BURUNDIAN DEDICATED TO TEAMWORK AND SERVING THE POOR

Jean Bosco Ndayishimiye’s trusted advisor, Rose, who also happens to be his wife, helped Jean Bosco decide to apply for a job with Population Media Center (PMC). Jean Bosco is Burundian and has dedicated his life to improving his country.

“I wanted to lead a team using the values I had obtained through my various experiences. I wanted to pass those values to others, working together in productive, collaborative work,” says Jean Bosco.

Jean Bosco accepted the job of Country Representative for PMC’s Burundi office, building and leading a powerful team for behavior change ever since. PMC hires all local staffs to create long-running serial dramas for TV or radio that address social and health issues through entertainment.

In Burundi, PMC began broadcasting *Agashi* (“Hey! Look Again!”) in January 2014. An independent UNICEF assessment found *Agashi* to have an astounding



FROM THE FIELD: THE IMPORTANCE OF META-MONITORING

Excerpts from guest writer: Alex Bozzette, PMC-Burundi Global Health Corps fellow

“She can’t write, so we skipped the signature. That’s OK, right?”

Wrong. When you’re interviewing a patient and navigating the complex world of rural informed consent: very, very wrong. As a project coordinator with Population Media Center (PMC)

national listenership of 76 percent.

“The messages we’ve received say that people not only love the themes being broadcast, but that they are used as true teaching tools to help peer educators persuade and engage their fellow citizens. We are on a roll,” says Jean Bosco.

PMC couldn’t agree more. The work and the impact stemming from the PMC-Burundi team has been growing.

“Getting people to take ownership of transformational messages through entertainment-education and empowerment is effective,” says Jean Bosco. “The approach works because audiences listen to stories that are connected to their everyday lives. Gradually, as people listen, they themselves become agents of change for those around them.”

The same could be said for Jean Bosco himself, whose leadership and personality directly impact the PMC-Burundi staff.

“Jean Bosco continues to use his multitude of skills to enhance and strengthen his team, the drama, and PMC’s process,” says Kriss Barker, PMC’s Vice President of International Programs.

The PMC-Burundi staff underwent PMC’s in-country training and Jean Bosco’s leadership has allowed a number of useful additions to PMC’s process through the

in Burundi, one of my most rewarding experiences so far this year was had over the course of a week up-country.

On a Monday, my co-fellow Jean Sacha and I left Bujumbura—Burundi’s loud, vibrant, gritty, juxtaposition-loving capital—for five days of rural clinic monitoring. More precisely, we monitored monitoring.

Gauging the impact of our work at PMC is essential, and clinic monitoring is a cornerstone of that effort. We use structured interview questionnaires to determine what type of information motivates clinic clients to seek health services and, as a result, what proportion of patients are influenced by our radio drama. Our team at PMC-Burundi is small,

continued innovations of the staff, such as conducting monthly randomized phone calls to get timely and specific feedback to the writers to influence future scripts.

“I love the sense of complementarity and togetherness that permeates the PMC staff. In our small team in Burundi – I call them the ‘Musketeers’,” says Jean Bosco, “everyone is ready to give one another support anytime there is need for it.”

Jean Bosco, who intended to study law, got his undergraduate degree in clinical and social psychology and then got his masters in development. His dedication to helping people exacts a demanding schedule. Jean Bosco explains that workdays are 12 or more hours, which he says stems from his education, upbringing, and love of the work.

“All of the positions I have had allowed me to improve the lives of people by helping them to change their behavior,” he says. “I am determined to help young people develop altruistic values, proactivity, endurance, honesty, and integrity because those principles are very difficult to teach to adults.”

“I am and have always been focused on the development concerns of the poor – in Burundi, especially the rural poor,” adds Jean Bosco. “I hope with all my heart that, after three years, the project will have initiated a considerable amount of behavior change in the Burundian population.” ■

which means that we have to contract out our major monitoring and evaluation work. Over two weeks, our contractors for this particular study interviewed 1,224 patients at 102 health structures in 10 of Burundi’s 17 provinces. Jean Sacha and I joined them.

The week was exhausting, illuminating, challenging, productive, life-affirming, and fun. Most importantly—particularly for you, the public health-interested reader—it was crucial for our work. Mistakes were made despite extensive efforts to train our interview staff thoroughly (multiple days of training and a pilot study). People are people, and people are human.

Learn more at www.populationmedia.org/2014/11/12/meta-monitoring. ■