



Using Audience Research to Understand and Refine a Radio Drama in Myanmar Tackling Social Cohesion

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Myanmar's media environment has undergone massive change over the past decade, but drama remains a top choice for audiences. At the same time, though an increase in news has created a more informed population, Myanmar has also seen a proliferation of fake news, misinformation, and hate speech which can often exacerbate long-running religious and ethnic divides. BBC Media Action created the radio drama the *Tea Cup Diaries* to tackle some of these issues and engage audiences in a family-based drama which would increase audiences' understanding of diversity in Myanmar and challenge negative portrayals of different ethnic and

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religious groups. On air since 2015, audience research has been critical throughout the series broadcast to inform storylines and characters, to test content, and to evaluate whether drama can play a role in challenging negative attitudes and increasing tolerance and understanding of different groups. This chapter showcases how audience research has been used throughout the creative process, and the importance of investment in research on a sensitive and challenging subject to ensure that dramatic storylines balance between reflecting and challenging audiences' lives and attitudes.

MYANMAR'S ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Myanmar is a country rich in ethnic and cultural diversity. The Bamar majority makes up about two-thirds of the population, but there are a further 134 ethnic groups in the country. While the large majority of people are Buddhists, a significant minority are Christian, Muslim, or Hindu (World Population Review, 2019). Decades of military dictatorship and domination of Myanmar's political, educational, and religious institutions by the Burmese Buddhist majority have resulted in discriminatory laws, differentiated access to social services, and widespread discrimination and negative stereotyping of ethnic and religious minority groups in the country. The concept of national identity and unity is heavily contested and citizenship is politicized, with powerful political interest groups often using media to sow division and deepen the divides. In addition, many people have limited exposure to other ethnic and religious groups, particularly in rural parts of the country. These factors have narrowed the public space for constructive discussion on inter-faith and inter-ethnic issues. The proliferation of hate speech, misinformation, and fake news has been exacerbated by the rapid expansion of mobile internet access among audiences with limited digital literacy, which has made divisions deeper and more widespread, heightening the climate of mistrust and antagonism. Amid these tensions, an uncertain political climate, and active conflict in the north and eastern border states of the country, information for the public that aims to promote social inclusion is severely limited. Both rural and urban populations have limited access to information that acknowledges Myanmar's diversity, or that provides a more tolerant narrative, and that helps to bridge divides rather than create them.

THE *TEA CUP DIARIES* RADIO DRAMA

Myanmar has undergone a transformation in its media landscape over the past decade. Strict censorship rules have eased, transforming it from a society dependent on a few radio stations and a heavily censored print media to one where most people have access to a range of broadcast, online, and print media. Based on our BBC Media Action 2020 national survey of the population ages 15 and older, radio is used by 39% of adults in Myanmar, and remains an important platform for rural, Bamar, and poorer audiences; 40% of people on low income levels and 43% of rural audiences still rely on radio, compared to 32% of their urban counterparts.

To reach this key target audience of rural Bamar Buddhists, BBC Media Action launched the radio drama *Tea Cup Diaries*. The drama aims to increase understanding and tolerance between different ethnic and religious groups across Myanmar. Specifically, it aims to increase audiences' understanding of, openness to, and respect for people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds, challenge negative portrayals of different groups, and encourage discussion and reflection around negative views or stereotypes about different religious and ethnic groups which are prevalent in the population. For example, the widespread use of fake news, hate speech, and misinformation targeting Muslims and notably the Rohingya community in Myanmar has been well documented (Human Rights Council, 2018).

Drama is a popular format in Myanmar and is an effective vehicle to address complex or sensitive issues related to conflict or division, ranging from facilitating communication between opposing groups to strengthening civil society and tackling misperceptions of, and changing attitudes toward, the 'other' (Cramer, Goodhand, & Morris, 2016; DFID, 2000). Dramas and soap operas enable audience members to put themselves in others' shoes and can address a range of pertinent issues in a compelling and emotive way. Indeed, research suggests that when audience members are highly engaged, transported by, or immersed in a fictional narrative, they often experience attitude and belief change in line with those expressed in the story (Green, 2021; Nabi & Green, 2015).

The 15-minute weekly radio drama is aimed at rural audiences and has aired on Myanmar Radio, the national broadcaster, since 2015. It focuses on the family and community around a local tea shop in the outskirts of Yangon (see Fig. 10.1). Listeners follow the funny, heart-warming, and



Fig. 10.1 The *Tea Cup Diaries* production team recording on location in Yangon. (Credit: BBC Media Action)

realistic stories of various characters that reflect Myanmar’s religious and ethnic diversity. These characters include the tea shop owners, their friends and children, as well as the tea master, a cook, and waiters as they face the day-to-day struggles that everyone experiences—worries about money, jobs, family, friends, and relationships.

HOW RESEARCH HAS SHAPED THE DRAMA

Since the drama began, across the course of nearly 6 years, we have spoken to more than 10,000 people in Myanmar to understand their media habits, access to information, views on fake news and misinformation, and how this relates to ethnic and religious tension. Through a combination of surveys, focus groups, and in-depth interviews, we have systematically understood our audiences and used these insights to help shape the different strategies the project has used to develop and refine the drama.

Audience Research Helped Shape the Premise of the Drama

Research Method. At the start of the drama in 2014, we conducted an in-depth qualitative study which included 24 paired interviews with a mix of male and female adults in Myanmar from a range of different religions and ethnicities. We also did 13 key informant interviews with media experts, members of Civil society organisations (CSOs), and international experts on peacebuilding. This initial formative research aimed to understand how key target audiences felt about people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Research Insights. We learned that people’s main struggles and concerns were around money and the future of their family—regardless of their ethnic or religious background. Poverty and unemployment were the key issues people were worried about. Secondly, when we dug down to try and understand what people thought about those from other ethnic and religious groups and their interaction, we found that people often lived ‘side by side but not together’. Most people had few and often very limited interactions with people from different backgrounds, and interaction usually occurred outside the home, or at places like local tea, snack or beer bars, during work, and, for young people, at school. Sometimes people talked about having casual friendships with people from different religious or ethnic backgrounds, but it was not the norm. Thirdly, it was very clear that there was a perceived hierarchy of religions—especially among the Bamar Buddhist majority. They felt that Hinduism was most similar to Buddhism. People from the Christian faith were less close to them. They had the least in common with Muslims, and they did not feel that Rohingya Muslims were even part of the country. Large-scale nationally representative media survey data confirmed that in order to reach the key target audience of rural Bamar Buddhist populations, radio would be the most effective platform.

Research Uptake. This research helped the production team shape the very premise of the drama itself. For example, the production team began to craft a radio drama which centered around a family struggling with the same key issues the audience told us about in our research—money, their livelihoods, and the future of their families. The decision to set it in a tea shop also came from the audience telling us what type of locations they would interact with people from different backgrounds. The tea shop in the drama is set in a community on the outskirts of the capital, Yangon—a place where a diverse range of characters would realistically come and

mingle, interact, and chat. Tea shops in Myanmar have a reputation for welcoming people from all backgrounds and walks of life. They provide a space for people to share a cup of tea, some food, and exchange ideas, opinions, problems, hopes, and aspirations, so the drama aimed to leverage this.

Finally, the research helped production make decisions about character selection. The research used case studies of research participants' experiences as someone from a particular ethnic or religious group; the production team drew on these real-life examples to shape the drama's characters and their experiences. The aim of the drama was to reach and engage the Bamar Buddhist majority; therefore, characters in the drama were carefully chosen—with a Bamar Buddhist couple as central characters who were the tea shop owners. The research had found that there were different levels of acceptability toward people from different religious faiths, so this had to be considered in how much to feature characters from these different faiths.

For example, to challenge misinformation around Christian beliefs, James, the young tea shop waiter, has been a central character across the series, and the audience has followed him growing up over the years. The plots have featured him in baptism ceremonies, going to bible camps and participating in Christmas hymn singing. In contrast, the introduction and featuring of characters from the Muslim faith have been more gradual. The research highlighted the negative attitudes around different religions and ethnicities held by the target audience. Therefore, owing to audience sensitivity and fear of Muslims, Muslim characters were introduced in early episodes as secondary characters in the neighborhood. They gradually became more central to storylines as the audience became fonder of them (see Fig. 10.2).

Characters and Plot Development Responded to How Audiences Were Reacting to the Drama

Research Method. At the outset, qualitative research with target audiences helped the production team shape the drama. The production team appreciated having these audience insights but wanted them regularly in order to continuously understand how audiences were reacting to the show to inform the future direction of the series. As a result, audience panels were set up to ensure that the production team could draw on feedback from listeners to inform the program. Listeners from regions where



Fig. 10.2 Recording an episode of the *Tea Cup Diaries*. (Credit: BBC Media Action)

media data indicated high program listenership were selected to participate in short telephone and face-to-face interviews (depending on circumstances) every 2 to 3 weeks. Questions focused on recall, engagement, and new learning from the program.

Using a research panel (albeit small) has been integral to helping the creative team understand how content is engaging audiences and to help them make creative decisions. For example, the panel studies allow for a highly adaptive and responsive research and creative process as it provides timely and relevant feedback for production teams, and the research team could update the questionnaire set depending on production needs at that time.

Furthermore, given the sensitive nature of some of the issues the drama aimed to tackle and a constantly changing socio-political landscape around these issues (e.g. the Rohingya crisis igniting in August 2017, continued ongoing armed clashes between ethnic groups, and increasing levels of fake news and misinformation fueling ethnic and religious tension), it became very important to keep abreast of how audiences were engaging with *Tea Cup Diaries*.

Research Insights. The audience panels helped us to understand how audiences were reacting to and engaging with the drama. Research conducted early in the series found that audiences did not always recognize different characters' ethnic or religious backgrounds—despite the clues and signifiers given in the show. This was a problem because if people were unable to recognize the different backgrounds of the characters, then it would be difficult for them to begin to reflect on and discuss that difference. Audiences began to warm to characters having friendships or romantic relationships with people from different ethnic or religious backgrounds, but it was evident from the ongoing research that deep-rooted beliefs and discriminatory beliefs were still present.

Different races are not the problem, but it is a problem for different religions [in response to an inter-ethnic marriage in the show].—Female, Listener, Hinthada

Audiences engaged with storylines or characters which dealt with everyday issues that they also experienced, such as arguments with partners, money worries, and concerns for their children. For example, older audience members said they were most interested in the characters U Chit Maung and Daw Kin Thit, the couple that owns the tea shop. They dealt with the challenges of married life, keeping peace within their family, and managing their business. Female listeners regularly mentioned that they identified with Daw Khin Thit and her daily workload, while male listeners related to U Chit Maung's perspective as head of the household.

I like Daw Khin Thit most in the drama because she works for her family and I'm also doing the same for my family. I am identical with Daw Khin Thit. By listening to the *Tea Cup Diaries*, I learn from Daw Khin Thit how to guide my children.—Female listener, Myaing

Research Uptake

Every two weeks the research team gave us feedback. When we first started having the feedback from the audience panel, we didn't hear what we expected. We learned more about our audiences' engagement with the program and how they sometimes missed the themes we thought they understood. We saw that we needed to repeat key points we'd mentioned in the start of the series—for example that lending with interest is not used by Muslims—a number of times. We then started to see that audiences were talking about this more.—Maung Maung Swe, Managing Editor of *Tea Cup Diaries*

The research found that at the start of the series, audiences were not always recognizing subtle markers of characters' ethnic or religious backgrounds. For example, there was a lack of recognition that a Muslim father and son were of the Muslim faith; signifiers which were used at the start of the series such as the son not coming to band practice on a Friday or declining to eat pork were not cutting through. These findings gave confidence to the production team to be bolder and more explicit, for example having the characters talk more openly about Muslim traditions and practices—around managing money or weddings. These characters also became less secondary and more central to storylines. For example, they created more storylines which showed tension between these characters and other members of the community. One storyline featured a local plumber U Hla Mint (of Muslim faith) who was defended by his friend, tea shop owner U Chit Maung (of Buddhist faith), when the community elders did not want him to come and fix the plumbing in the local community center.

The research also helped the production team to understand how far they could press different inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships. For example, a romantic relationship between Sam (a Karen Christian man) and Htet Htet (a Bamar Buddhist woman) was developed which the audience warmed to. A friendship between Inn Gine (Buddhist woman) and Naing Gyi (Muslim man) did not develop into a romantic relationship as it was clear from the audience panel this would not yet be acceptable.

The *Tea Cup Diaries* is unique in its timely reflection of real-life events woven into the drama's plotlines, and the impact of COVID-19 is no exception. The production team was quick to adapt to the upheaval—from setting up home recording studios (see Fig. 10.3), to introducing new storylines reflecting how different characters are dealing with the pandemic. Recent storylines have included the economic impact on the Tea Shop (and the commencement of a food delivery service!), the implications of lockdown, characters discussing rumors and fake news they have seen about the virus, and implementing physical distancing measures with those around them. Feedback from the audience found that they were surprised the show continued to air, but very much appreciated the fact that it did. They reflected on the fake news and misinformation characters were finding (which they were also experiencing) and the reality of how relationships were being affected (such as young people in relationships not being able to see one another). They also reported learning specific health information from the show, such as the 6 feet physical distancing



Fig. 10.3 Recording an episode of the *Tea Cup Diaries*. (Credit: BBC Media Action)

measure, effective handwashing, and avoiding large gatherings. With the audience panel research approach already set up, we shifted to a focus on telephone-based interviewing to ensure that continuous feedback between the audience and production was maintained, despite the significant changes in working practices for both the production and research teams.

We should respect and follow [COVID-19 advice], as it is happening all over the world. We should not be neglectful and forget. [The show] is presenting according to what is practically happening outside—it is more complete and meaningful as they warn us with storylines and drama.—Male listener, Bago

MAKING AND MEASURING THE IMPACT OF THE DRAMA

Ongoing audience panel feedback has been critical for making speedy production decisions. But across the broadcast period, we have also undertaken more in-depth impact studies using a range of methodologies to

measure the reach and impact of the drama. To measure the number of people listening to the show, we put questions in three of our other project's nationally representative media and impact surveys in 2015, 2018, and 2020. We have also conducted several qualitative impact studies earlier in the series to understand how and why listeners are engaging with the show. This in-depth qualitative research helped us to think about how to frame quantitative survey measures in a bespoke impact survey we conducted in one state where listenership to the show was particularly high. In 2018 in the Irrawaddy region, we sampled 800 radio listeners (400 who were *Tea Cup Diaries* listeners and 400 who were not) to test and measure quantitatively, for the first time, how the *Tea Cup Diaries* was influencing people's knowledge and attitudes around social cohesion issues.

Impact of Tea Cup Diaries

Reaching the Target Audience. In a nationally representative survey of adults in Myanmar, 39% listen to the radio and Myanmar Radio (which broadcasts the *Tea Cup Diaries*) remains the most popular radio station. The *Tea Cup Diaries* reaches 4.3 million adults, 1.7 million of whom are tuning in regularly (at least to every other program). This survey also found that *Tea Cup Diaries* regularly reaches rural audiences particularly well—its audience is 73% rural, 40% female and 60% male. Based on our 2020 nationwide survey of 2985 people, over three-quarters (78%) of the audience are from the Bamar ethnic group, indicating the show is successfully reaching its target audience.

Listening for Education and Entertainment. Qualitative research to evaluate the drama found that audience members listen to *Tea Cup Diaries* to be entertained and educated. As discussed above, believable characters and storylines that include romance, marriage, family, and romantic relationships and running a business have helped engage listeners, as many see themselves and their lives reflected in the program. When asked in our 2018 impact survey what engages them most in the drama, 52% of listeners said they liked the drama because it educates them, 43% said they liked the characters, and 24% said it was entertaining.

Listeners Discussed Diversity Issues and Gained Knowledge. Discussion plays a key role in social and behavior change communication (Chatterjee, Bhanot, Frank, Murphy, & Power, 2009; Frank et al., 2012). There is growing evidence that where discussion takes place, attitudes are

more likely to change (Snow & Taylor, 2015). Listeners also reported discussing issues raised in the drama in their everyday lives. They talked about certain storylines—particularly dramatic and controversial ones such as Nway Nway’s adoption (the tea shop owner’s daughter finding out she was adopted and belonged to a different ethnic group) or U Chit Maung (the male tea shop owner) going to see an old sweetheart. In our survey of 800 radio listeners, people who listened to *Tea Cup Diaries* who were more emotionally engaged with the drama were 1.6 times more likely to discuss issues relating to ethnic and religious tension compared to less engaged listeners.

The same survey also found that people who listened to *Tea Cup Diaries* were 1.6 times more likely to have higher levels of knowledge about religions other than their own compared to non-listeners. Qualitative impact research provided the examples of how this had happened. For example, listeners reported learning about different money management practices, citing a scene when U Hla Myint explained to U Chit Maung about the pitfalls of lending or borrowing money (as per the rules of his Muslim faith).

The drama showcases the diverse groups of people living in Myanmar by using authentic voices and actors—a device that audience members appreciated. Listeners also reported learning about the customs of different ethnic and religious groups from the program.

We learned that Christian people go to church every Sunday and they ask for forgiveness and have prayer. At first, I thought they didn’t have devotion, that they only sing and it’s finished. Now I know that they also pray.—
Female listener, Pekon

Emotional engagement with the drama was key for impact. Attitudes toward different ethnic and religious groups can be deep-rooted and take a long time to shift. While research participants sometimes had mixed views on storylines that feature inter-ethnic and inter-religious friendships and relationships, survey analysis found that the more emotionally engaged listeners were with the program, the more likely they were to accept such relationships, compared to those who do not listen. Regular listeners who were highly emotionally engaged were 1.9 times more likely than non-listeners to demonstrate higher levels of acceptance toward inter-ethnic and religious friendships and relationships.

I like the parts that [the program] includes about religion. They don't discriminate. They are very united.—Male listener, Ayeyarwady

Negative Ethnic and Religious Attitudes Remain. Though the impact data indicated that the *Tea Cup Diaries* had been effective in key areas such as improving knowledge, discussion, and attitudes, it was evident that many discriminatory attitudes remain prevalent among the audience and will continue to take a long time to change. For example, the 2018 impact survey asked all 800 respondents (92% of whom were Buddhist) which religious groups it would be most unacceptable to marry or be friends with. People from the Muslim faith continued to be on top of this list (59% felt it was unacceptable to be friends with someone Muslim and 68% felt it was unacceptable to marry someone Muslim). Those who were more likely to hold negative attitudes were women. This may be because of their lower levels of interaction with other groups, as women, particularly within the older generation, are more likely to stay at home. It may also be linked to common narratives related to Islam in Myanmar which suggest that Muslim men pose a risk of physical and sexual violence against Bamar women. In contrast, people who were more likely to demonstrate more accepting attitudes were people with higher education levels, people from non-Bamar groups, and those with wider social networks.

The whole world knows that Muslims tortured Myanmar girls and women after they got married to them.—Young Female Listener, Bamar Buddhist

Tea Cup Diaries also aims to get people discussing these issues more through its engaging storylines—but it is clear that this also remains a challenge. When we asked audience members in our impact survey if they discussed the show with others, only 20% of listeners said they did. When we look at this within the broader picture we start to understand why—across the whole sample only 30% of respondents reported discussing religious or ethnic tension with other people (in comparison to 74% reporting they discussed key social and political issues). This indicates that this remains a highly sensitive topic for people to talk about. Discussion has been a key driver of impact in drama; therefore, it's important that the *Tea Cup Diaries* continues to find the right angles and methods to encourage reflection and discussion among its audience members going forward.

LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

Using a Variety of Different Evaluation Methods to Understand Impact has been Key. We used lots of qualitative research to first understand how the drama was landing and engaging audiences. We then looked at other key measures and indicators used in measuring ethnic and religious conflict in order to design an evaluation which would measure the effect *Tea Cup Diaries* was having at a larger scale—through a bespoke impact survey of 800 radio listeners. Advanced regression analysis on this data helped us demonstrate clearly that there was a positive association between the outcomes the drama was aiming to have and measured levels of emotional engagement. This was always our hunch from what we heard in qualitative research but having it emerge from larger-scale quantitative research was critical for building our evidence base—and helped crystallize a key insight for the production team—emotional engagement is key to ensuring drama has real impact.

Identify Your Key Stakeholders to Ensure Research Uptake. The *Tea Cup Diaries*' creative lead (Managing Editor, Maung Maung Swe) is the key person in the creative team who values research, can easily understand and digest findings, and knows how to adapt the *Tea Cup Diaries* content accordingly. He acts as a champion for research and makes sure his team and freelance writers understand what the research insights are telling them and makes sure changes are made in relation to these findings. We always think about who our primary client is (Burmese producers and script writers) and ensure research is communicated to them in the most relevant way. Reports are written in Burmese, are written in plain language, and include quotes to illustrate key points so the whole team can understand. An English summary is then circulated for international staff to follow. Even when sending emails to production with the panel findings we think about how we can make sure they will read them—this includes snappy titles in the email header (“Want to know what impact your show has made this week?”) to telling them how long it will take to read attached reports. The key way to engage them, however, is to ensure the production team attends field research when it is taking place—so they can meet the audience themselves. This helps them feel a sense of ownership of the research and have led to analysis discussions with their own production team as a result. Researchers have also employed production techniques when talking to audiences in the field—such as creating short “vox pops” of audience members talking about why they like the show.

Adapt Research Methodology Based on Learnings. To do such quick testing and feedback, having a strong research team and embedded process within production is key. We have an inquisitive local research team with a strong understanding of the audience and we have strong engagement from our ‘client’—the production team. The sensitivity of the topic being discussed means having that feedback loop from the audience is vital. The research methodologies have also improved over time, having ongoing feedback mechanisms initially with the same audience members were very useful. However, now the audience panel is set up in such a way that new listeners are included in each round of recruitment—this is in order to minimize bias from previous participation and ensure we rigorously capture an accurate and open picture of how audiences are engaging with the drama. Conducting survey research with audiences on what they think and feel about people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds required significant cognitive testing and piloting to ensure survey measures were as effective as they possibly could be and ensuring we were asking questions in a sensitive way. For example, names and terms used to describe other religious or ethnic groups vary a great deal by location and community. As such, sometimes it can be difficult to know which groups are being referenced. We learned that among people in Myanmar, there is quite a bit of confusion between religion and ethnicity. When we talked to Bamar Buddhist audiences, for example, they often refer to ‘Kalars’ as a catchall derogatory term for people from South Asian descent—who may be Muslim, Hindu, or just generally darker skinned. Within this context, it can be really tricky to understand and measure impact on how people think and feel about specific different groups we put in our drama.

Quantifying Attitudes and Beliefs Is Difficult. It can be difficult to capture the nuance in quantitative studies, especially when tried and tested measures looking at these issues have been developed in very different countries and contexts. We adapted measures as best we could, tested them thoroughly, and always ensured we used both qualitative and quantitative research to fully understand these complex issues.

Know Your Audience (and how that may affect your research findings). In Myanmar, audiences rarely offer ‘negative’ feedback on content. To encourage more constructive criticism, we framed interview questions in simple terms of ‘likes and dislikes’ and ‘ways the program could be improved’.

Build Partnership Between Creative and Research Teams. We strongly believe that the evidence of *Tea Cup Diaries* creating a positive impact has been, in part, owing to the overall approach of using audience research to shape and test the drama. The creative team's engagement with audience research—especially methodological approaches which have enabled ongoing monitoring and feedback which they can act upon in line with production timelines—has been particularly effective. Rapid and regular feedback (even if it's small scale) is valued and helpful. For example, the use of audience panel studies to gather small-scale but frequent feedback to gauge how listeners are engaging with content has been very useful for our production team as it creates a continuous feedback mechanism to help production teams adapt and review storylines regularly. It also allowed the research team to change questions we ask listeners based on new areas of interest that arise and to match production needs. The longer the program is on air, the more it pushes boundaries in addressing sensitive storylines (such as more inter-ethnic and inter-religious relationships being featured). Working in partnerships between the creative and production teams is vital for checking how sensitive storylines or different character development could be. This fusion of knowing the audience and creative ideas is especially important in creating a drama which tackles sensitive subjects, dissimilar to any other drama in the market.

Develop Relationships to Enable Sensitive Storylines. Using regular systematic audience research to shape storylines is also very helpful in facilitating our relationship with our broadcast partner, state broadcasters, Myanmar radio. For example, when sensitive storylines have been included in episodes and the broadcaster is worried about potential backlash, we are in a position to share audience feedback with them in order to help convince them that these are acceptable, appropriate, and realistic storylines. As a result, we find that when we share audience research with our broadcast partners they really value and appreciate it (as they rarely conduct any themselves). The number of series produced over several years has also provided the needed space and time to take the audience on a journey with the characters and to address sensitive issues gradually. The drama has been funded by a range of donors for the length of series, but during series breaks the production team has rebroadcast highlights of episodes in order to retain audience engagement.

These lessons learned and best practices continue to guide and shape the development of the *Tea Cup Diaries* which, though popular and making an impact, is competing for audiences in an increasingly digital media

space. As such, the drama's Facebook page is a new focus for building and engaging newer, more urban, and younger audiences. The audience research going forward will also focus more on understanding the engagement and impact we can have in this online space.

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