From the various research initiatives, a profound dissatisfaction with the popular perception and practice of HIV and AIDS awareness has been expressed. This popular perception tends to present and promote an oversimplified view of the real nature of HIV and AIDS awareness. This has generated a naive optimism about the possibilities for the transformation of the oppressive HIV and AIDS scenario.

As such, there is a disturbing need to re-examine the whole process with an aim of redefining the sorts of experiences which would characterize a true HIV and AIDS awareness enterprise. The main problem of this study hinges on the position maintained herein that while there is enough HIV and AIDS information in place, there seems not to be a corresponding change in behaviour on the part of the people. The study works from the premise that so far, the methods adopted by the efforts have unfortunately helped to sustain the existing unpleasant HIV and AIDS scenario. Indeed, the arguments sustained in this study have tried to expose the ways in which the popular theory and practice of HIV and AIDS awareness is inadequate through what the processes on the ground include and exclude.

The literature reviewed also indicates a clear lack of commitment to the development of preventive attitudes and critical dispositions on the part of the participants. Along this grain, this perception has tended to postulate awareness as a function of discrete packages of facts, figures and statistics to be made public and which are largely independent of action. HIV and AIDS awareness has therefore, been misconstrued as a physical rather than a process involving human attitudes and dispositions. In most of the awareness efforts made in learning situations, this content has been presented as a set of hurdles through which learners have to pass, be directed and assessed by the repository of content—the teacher. In this way, HIV and AIDS information has been turned into 'things to learn' other than experiences to share and reflect upon. Consequently, the possibility that such efforts could become opportunities for learners and facilitators to engage in a critical reflection aspects of HIV and AIDS that have often been taken for granted has in the process been systematically devalued. This has only served to widen the gap between knowledge and practice in HIV and AIDS even more, a point lamented in the present study.

This is basically a philosophical inquiry. As such, it draws its methodology from phenomenological reflection mainly in the interpretation of certain relevant phenomena such as awareness within the context of basic human experience. Critical questioning of positions and concepts often taken for granted has also been alluded to from time to time within the scope of the study. Its main objective was to provide a theoretical support to HIV and AIDS awareness efforts by providing a vivid demonstration on of the place of critical consciousness in the HIV and AIDS awareness process.

The main finding of the philosophical reflection done in this study is that the method most of the HIV and AIDS awareness efforts have adopted is deficient of a transformative orientation. Consequently, they have disseminated HIV and AIDS knowledge without a corresponding change in behaviour on the part of the learners. The implication of this finding is that HIV and AIDS awareness efforts need to visualize the whole process as one involving human potentialities and dispositions. As such, the HIV and AIDS awareness efforts need to aim at developing, in the human participants, dispositions and potentialities that would enable them adopt critical and reflexive attitudes in matters of HIV and AIDS. Drawing from Freire's view of an educational process (as conscientization), the study presents methodological guidelines for an authentic HIV and AIDS awareness experience.
This thesis is organized in five chapters. Chapter one introduces the problem under investigation while chapter two reviews certain aspects relevant to the study. The second chapter also provides the theoretical framework within which the problem under investigation has been visualised and approached. Chapter three is an analysis of selected HIV and AIDS projects in terms of the relative level of consciousness they have tended to promote. Chapter four comprises of facilitation methods considered appropriate for HIV and AIDS awareness whereas chapter five is a summary of the study as well as presentation of relevant conclusions and recommendations that logically follow from the findings of this study.