

Soul City (South Africa¹)

Target population

Men and women 16-65 years old from metropolitan and rural areas

Intervention description

Soul City uses edutainment by integrating social issues into popular and high-quality entertainment formats, based on a thorough research process. It also uses multiple media – prime time television drama, radio drama and print media – to capitalize on each medium’s strength and to reach a variety of audiences.

In 1999, Soul City’s fourth series addressed violence against women (including domestic violence and sexual harassment), as well as AIDS (including date rape), small business development and personal savings and hypertension. Series 4 consisted of:

- a 13-episode prime time television drama,
- a 45-episode radio drama in 9 languages,
- distribution of three full-color information booklets (with a nationwide distribution of 1 million copies each),
- community events (including school-based programs).

Two elements are at the heart of Soul City’s work: formative research and partnerships.

Formative research is carried out with both audiences and experts to develop and field-test materials to ensure their effectiveness.

Steps in the formative research process:

Step one: Consulting widely with experts and key stakeholders on the topic issues.

Step two: Consulting audience members about what they know, their concerns, their attitudes to the issue and the barriers that exist to positive change.

Step three: Presentation of the findings from first two steps to role players and experts.

Step four: Development of a message brief or ‘blueprint’ for the creative team who will develop the TV and radio dramas.

Step five: Integration of issues into the entertainment vehicle by the creative team.

Step six: Production and testing (with experts, role players and audience members) of a draft outline.

Step seven: Writing and testing of scripts.

Step eight: Production, broadcast and distribution of the material

Step nine: Evaluation of material and integration of lessons learned into future productions.

¹ The initiative has also been implemented in 8 additional countries, including: Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique. However, data presented here refers to the evaluation that took place in South Africa.

Partnerships are established with organizations active in the relevant issues. To address gender-based violence, Soul City established a partnership with the National Network on Violence Against Women (NNVAW). The objectives of the partnership included:

- Conveying information on women’s rights, raising awareness of the topic, promoting changes in attitudes, social norms and practices around gender-based violence;
- Helping connect audiences to needed services, including through a toll free helpline;
- Promoting individual and community action;
- Creating an environment conducive to legislative change;
- Developing training materials on GBV for various audiences.

Evaluation and findings²

The evaluation of Soul City 4 involved several studies involved extensive and rigorous qualitative and quantitative studies, including population-based surveys, extensive qualitative data collection through focus groups and key-informant interviews, and a cost-effectiveness study.

Soul City 4 reached 82% of the population in South Africa. Quantitative and qualitative data indicate a positive impact between exposure to Soul City media and small increases in knowledge and awareness of:

- the severity of domestic violence,
- the definition of violence against women (in particular of domestic violence),
- the status of the law on violence against women,
- what to do and where to go in cases of violence.

The evaluation also demonstrated an association between exposure to Soul City and improvements in attitudes around violence, including:

- whether violence against women is a private issue;
- whether women should put up with abuse;
- whether women deserve to be beaten;
- the seriousness of violence against women.

Amongst men, there was an 11 % increase in the proportion of men that at post-test indicated that women never deserve to be beaten. However, there were no changes observed in some important attitudes, including: “As a head of household, a man has the right to beat his wife” and “It is culturally acceptable for a man to beat his wife.”

There was also a policy-level impact in that the initiative contributed to the passage of an act on domestic violence.

Resources

² Research results presented here focus on the impact of Soul City 4 on gender-based violence, however, detailed results are available on the program’s impact on the other issues addressed, namely AIDS, hypertension and personal finance.

Soul City's website contains numerous resources; however, they are not specifically directed at men. An annotated list of the materials available can be found at:
<http://www.soulcity.org.za/publications/soul-city-handbooks/soul-city-materials-final-15-feb-07.pdf/view>

Some of the resources available include:

- synopsis of the TV and radio series;
- print materials that accompanied the different series;
- advocacy materials such as one directed at journalists "Violence against Women in South Africa: A resource for Journalist";
- A Step-by-Step Guide to Edutainment, including a facilitator's guide, the main book "Edutainment: How to make Edutainment work for you?", and an explanatory poster of the phases involved in an edutainment project.
- the evaluation reports of Series 4

<http://www.soulcity.org.za>

Sources

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Guedes, A. 2004. Addressing gender-based violence from the reproductive health / HIV sector: A literature review and analysis. Washington, DC: USAID, Bureau for Global Health.

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Singhal A, Usdin S, Scheepers E, Goldstein S, Japhet G. 2004. Entertainment-Education Strategy in Development Communication (In Okigbo C & Eribo F, (eds.). *Development and Communication in Africa*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. P. 141-153.)

Usdin S, Christofides N, Malepe L, Maker A. 2000. The value of advocacy in promoting social change: Implementing the new Domestic Violence Act in South Africa. *Reproductive Health Matters* 8 (16): 55-65.

For a brief write-up of a more recent evaluation of Stepping Stones in rural South Africa (Eastern Cape), please refer to:

<http://www.mrc.ac.za/policybriefs/steppingstones.pdf>