
HIV / AIDS

South Africa is suffering from an AIDS epidemic; it was estimated that by the end of 1996 2,4 million adults in South Africa would be HIV positive. New HIV infections are increasingly occurring among young, economically active people.

The storylines concerning HIV / AIDS in both the TV and radio series featured prominently in all the episodes. The overall aim was to make AIDS an open issue, portraying it as a disease which can affect ordinary people, living ordinary lives, in a “typical” township (TV) or rural area (radio).

The messages contained in the programmes were:

- Anyone can get HIV / AIDS
- Care for and support of HIV positive people
- There are ways of living positively with AIDS
- Condoms can and do prevent the spread of HIV
- STD's should be treated
- People with AIDS have rights

PIC

HIV / AIDS

How did Soul City affect knowledge?

TV

“Some people do not believe AIDS exists; they claim it happens in white cultures only.”

[Male, 16-25 yrs, metro]

RADIO & TV

“It was worrying us about AIDS and that we should be aware that it does exist.”

[Male, 25-40 yrs, metro]

TV&RADIO

“I too never believed in the reality of AIDS.

I took it as a joke. I thought it is a way parents try to keep their children away from sexual activities.

Through Soul City I now carry condoms with me all the time.”

[Male, 25-40 yrs, informal]

TV

“I have learnt that STD’s are curable but AIDS is not, so prevent it with condoms.”

[mixed, 16-25 yrs, urban]

TV&RADIO

“There is nothing I did not like because everything is explicit. On AIDS, issues such as how you contract AIDS and how AIDS kills were dealt with explicitly.”

[Mixed gender, 25-40 yrs, urban]

The evaluation showed impressive results in knowledge gain around the issue of HIV / AIDS.

- General awareness of the epidemic increased after the intervention, with 92% of those who had accessed the Soul City media being aware of HIV (7% higher than those who had not been exposed to Soul City).
- Respondents exposed to the campaign were more likely to know that AIDS cannot be contracted through non-sexual contact (hugging, kissing etc), an important misconception which Soul City aimed to set straight. For instance, 68% of the Soul City audience knew that people cannot contract the virus by kissing an HIV+ person – compared to 52% of respondents who did not access Soul City.
- The most dramatic knowledge gain was amongst the 16-24 year olds. Before Soul City was flighted, only 3% of respondents in this age group could correctly answer a series of questions about transmission of the virus. This figure rose to 70% correct immediately after Soul City was flighted - a significant achievement for Soul City, whose primary target is youth.



PIC

HIV / AIDS

Behavioural change

TV&RADIO

I have learned to have one partner and that is my husband.... Yes, before I watched Soul City I used to have a lot of boyfriends but now it is just my husband."

[Female, informal]

TV

"Before I did not like the use of condoms on me but after I watched Soul City I have changed."

[Male, 16-25, urban]

RADIO

"I argued with my husband about the condom issue because he did not understand why we have to use a condom. He said 'why don't I trust him?' I tried to explain to him that I am doing it for both of us because we cannot be sure, so it's for our own safety."

[Female, 40+ yrs, metro]

TV&RADIO

"In the past I used to think that my girlfriend made a fool out of me if she demanded a condom for our sexual intercourse, but now I see the need."

[Male, 16-25 yrs, informal]

TV

"I have learnt that STD's are curable but AIDS is not, so prevent it with condoms."

[mixed, 16-25 yrs,

The baseline survey for Soul City revealed frightening statistics: two thirds of respondents reported that they never used condoms. Soul City made considerable headway in tackling the daunting task of changing attitudes and behaviour.

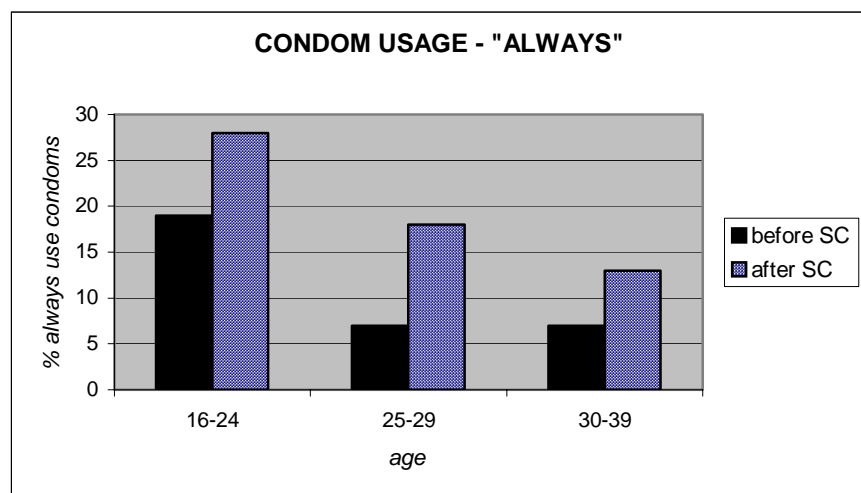
In the post intervention research respondents talked about limiting their sexual activity to a single partner, and the use of condoms. Reasons for those not using condoms fell into four main categories:

- Practical reasons (no clinics, can't afford them, etc.)
- Reduced pleasure (don't like them - vs "flesh to flesh")
- Fears and misconceptions (unreliable, might get lost, etc.)
- Social concerns (people will think I'm dirty, etc)

"Me and my partner used to convince one another over flesh to flesh (natural) sexual intercourse. It is no longer the case because of what we learned from Soul City."

[Mixed gender, 16-25 yrs, urban]

Results show a greater acceptance of condoms after the intervention, and there was a reported increase in condom usage. The proportion of sexually active people who said they always used a condom increased by 9%, with changing behaviour most evident in younger age groups.



Perceptions, misconceptions and practices relating to safe sex tend to be socially entrenched. Far from being a private affair, sexual activity among youth is often the focus of peer pressure.

“Another problem with us males is that we tend to get pressure from friends just because friends are making you feel inferior by boasting that they have many girlfriends whereas you only have one. You end up going out with many girls, having sex with all of them, and sometimes do not even use condoms. Some even make it a custom not to have one girlfriend.” [Male, 16-25 yrs, metro]

TV

“I have noticed that most of my friends do not believe in condoms. They always brag that they prefer flesh to flesh, as you cannot buy meat from a butchery and eat it with the plastic on.” [Mixed gender, 13-15 yrs, metro]

TV

Soul City tackled these issues by including strong messages which targeted the youth. The storylines made them easier to remember:

“I like that part played by Stanza who forced his girlfriend to sleep with him because he was influenced by his friends. That part shows us that we must not always listen to friends as peer pressure can mislead sometimes.” [Male, 16-24. metro]

TV

“I also liked the part where Stanza’s brother was studying with his girlfriend and they both agreed that they spend the night together and he slept on the couch and let her use his bed. From that I learned that one does not have to rush into bed with a new partner before actually going for an AIDS test.” [Mixed gender, 13-15 yrs, metro]

TV

“I learnt that it is good to practise safe sex by using a condom. As a result I have been using it ever since I watched Soul City. And I always educate my friends about condoms and advise them as they are for their own safety. I sometimes provide them with condoms because I always carry them.” [Male, 16-25, metro]

TV



PIC

HIV / AIDS

Attitudes towards HIV / AIDS

TV

"I think people with AIDS should discuss it ... instead of keeping it quiet and spreading the disease.

They should tell their parents and relatives."
[mixed, 13-15 yrs, metro]

TV

"For those who are HIV positive, the message is that you must not withdraw into loneliness, but live as normal."
[mixed, 13-15 yrs, urban]

TV

"Hiding it goes with fear of being rejected by your own community."
[Male, 16-24 yrs, metro]

TV

"I do not blame them for hiding it because if I had it I would hide it myself."
[Male, 16-24 yrs, metro]

TV

"A support for the HIV+ was encouraged too, because it is natural for HIV+ people to be suicidal."
[mixed, 16-24, urban]

TV

"I think a true friend as shown in the film is someone who does not reject his friend just because he has AIDS. He or she gives the victim the support he needs. I liked that part so much in the film."
[Male, 16-24 yrs, metro]

TV

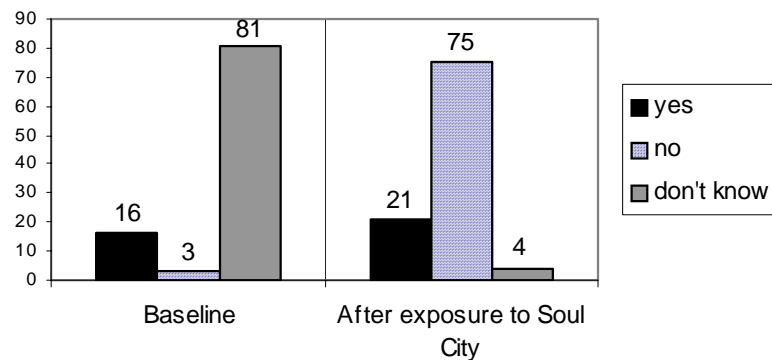
"It has taught me that there is no difference between an AIDS person and oneself... she or he deserves to be treated like any person"
[mixed, 16-24 yrs, urban]

One of Soul City's goals was to address the stigma commonly attached to AIDS, and to encourage support for HIV positive people. This entails understanding that HIV+ people are not to blame for their condition and that they are human beings who can live a normal life. Direct messages concerning this and other issues were included in the radio and TV story lines.

Overall, attitudes to people with HIV / AIDS improved, and levels of uncertainty were reduced dramatically. This was particularly striking amongst the younger age groups. People with higher levels of education gained most from the messages tackling prejudice and attitudes towards HIV / AIDS.

One of the Soul City messages was that HIV positive people should not keep their illness a secret. Questions about this issue were included in surveys before and after Soul City; results show enormous decrease in uncertainty and increase in desired response:

SHOULD AN HIV POSITIVE PERSON KEEP IT A SECRET?



The slight increase in the number of positive responses may be linked to a general rise in knowledge about the nature of HIV / AIDS.

What is important, however, is that after Soul City, desirable responses outweighed undesirable responses to attitudinal questions, and uncertainty decreased. Soul City gave the audience knowledge about the disease, enabling them to have informed opinions.

SMOKING

With shrinking Western markets, tobacco companies are targeting new and emerging markets – particularly in developing countries where less stringent controls apply. It is estimated that half of all adult males in developing countries now smoke, and smoking rates are increasing all the time. Women and youth in developing countries are an important target for tobacco companies.

In South Africa, relatively good tobacco control policies and anti-smoking campaigns have to compete against advertisers and the media in general, where smoking is often portrayed as sophisticated or cool.

Soul City conveyed these main messages:

- Smoking is not cool
- People should try to resist peer pressure to smoke
- It is illegal to sell tobacco to children under 16 years
- Smoking affects the health of people around you
- Giving up smoking is possible and beneficial
- Smokers need support from their families and friends to help them give up

Storylines in the series featured a smoker trying to quit, community initiatives to stop shopkeepers selling cigarettes to children, and youngsters trying to pressure others into starting smoking.

PIC

SMOKING

How did Soul City affect knowledge?

TV&RADIO

“I liked the part where they were showing us the danger of cigarettes; that if a person is smoking in front of others they will be affected.”
[Female, informal]

TV

“Pertaining smoking I have learnt to avoid smokers near me because I too will inhale the smoke.”
[Mixed gender, 16-24 yrs, urban]

TV

“I have learned that one can harm her baby if she smokes when pregnant.”
[Mixed gender, 16-24 yrs, urban]

RADIO

“Smokers must do it outside the house or they will affect the children.”
[Female, 40+ yrs, urban]

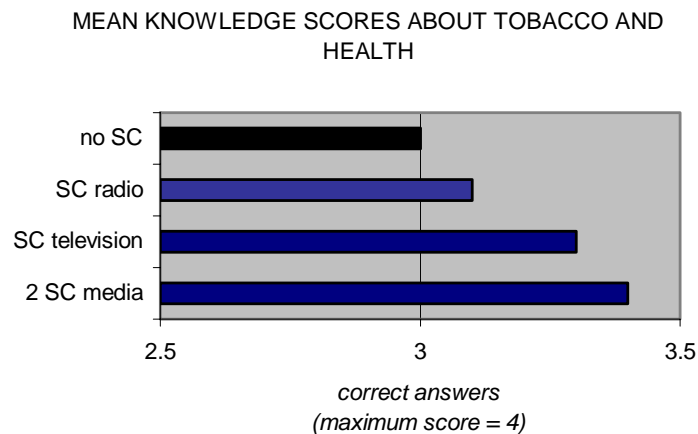
TV

“With me it taught me not to smoke because it is bad to lungs.”
[Mixed gender, 16-24, urban]

TV&RADIO

“I’ve got a mother who smokes cigarettes. Since we saw Soul City, we ask her not to smoke in front of us, especially children, though she shouts at us but we do and we also try to discourage her – we tell her that smoking is dangerous to her.”
[Mixed gender, 40+, informal]

- People who had accessed the Soul City campaign had better knowledge about the effects of smoking on health.
- Respondents were asked a series of four questions to test their knowledge about the effects of smoking. The graph below illustrates the performance of the Soul City audience in answering questions correctly. It also demonstrates the relative strength of the respective Soul City vehicles in conveying the message, and the power of media synergy in reinforcing knowledge.



- Much of the knowledge gained was around the issue of passive smoking and its harmful effects on children and unborn babies. This knowledge is empowering for non-smokers, who may in turn pressurise smokers around them to kick the habit.
- The storyline featured a character (Ali) who repeatedly tried to stop smoking. These humorous episodes captured the imagination of the audience, and contained important lessons about how to quit and how to support people who want to quit.

“I liked Sipho because he has this way of advising people, like in the case of Ali he told him ways to stop smoking and he succeeded.”
[Mixed, 13-15, metro]

SMOKING

Attitudes and behavioural change

RADIO

“With me I used to smoke heavily. Through the story and my children, I quit.”
[Female, 40+ yrs, urban]

RADIO

“In my family we do not allow any visitor to smoke inside the house. We attend one organisation against alcoholism and smoking.”
[Female, 40+ yrs, urban]

TV & RADIO

“My husband does not smoke anymore in front of my children.”
[Female, informal]

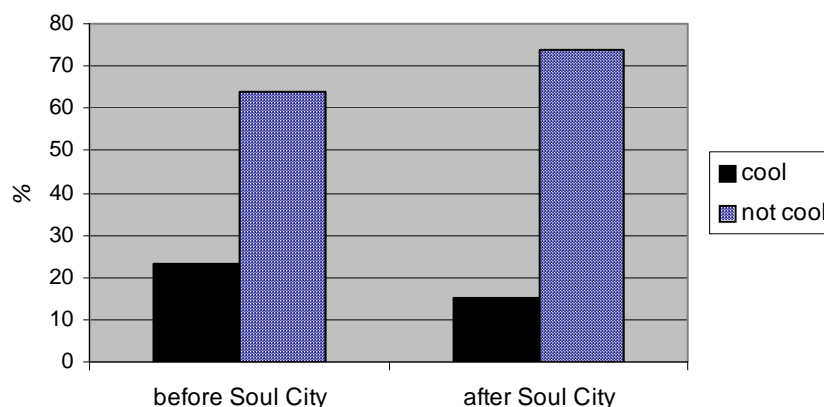
TV&RADIO

“The other lesson is how one can quit smoking. I have seen many quit smoking as a result of the dangers exposed by Soul City.”
[Male, 16-24 yrs, informal]

TV&RADIO

“It has helped me to reduce the amount of smoking. I used to smoke a pack of 20 cigarettes a day, but now I smoke the same amount over three days.”
[Male, 16-24 yrs, informal]

IS IT COOL TO SMOKE?



- The surveys showed changing perceptions about smoking, with a greater proportion of people saying it was not cool to smoke after being exposed to Soul City. This indicates that anti smoking campaigns, including Soul City, may be having the desired effect in changing social attitudes towards smoking.
- Qualitative feedback revealed that a number of people had been inspired to stop smoking or cut down as a result of Soul City.
- However, surveys showed that there was no significant change in smoking habits over the three-month period. Smoking rates remained the same before and after Soul City, with just under a quarter of respondents (24%) saying that they smoked every day.

“Yes, I know there is a danger; whenever I light a cigarette I know that I might have an asthma attack next week, but I still do it anyway.”

[Male, 16-25 yrs, metro]

- Anyone who has been a smoker and experienced the extent of the addiction will know that awareness of the harmful effects of smoking does not necessarily lead to behavioural change. Soul City recognises how difficult it is to impact directly on behaviour and that raising consciousness and shifting attitudes are precursors to changing practices. In this respect, the smoking component was successful.

TUBERCULOSIS

The scale of the TB epidemic has been largely overshadowed in South Africa. Yet TB continues to claim more lives each year, and is now the biggest killer in the Western Cape, which has the highest rates in the world. Frequently regarded as a disease which affected our grandparent's generation, many younger people do not recognise the symptoms of TB. The disease does not command the same level of public interest as more recent epidemics like AIDS, even though a large proportion of the upswing in the Tuberculosis epidemic is due to HIV/AIDS.

An important issue affecting the control of TB in this country is the problem of ensuring that people with TB recover from the illness. Very often, TB sufferers do not go for treatment, or discontinue treatment as soon as they start to feel better, and the disease returns with renewed strength. This can lead to drug resistance which makes the epidemic even more difficult to deal with.

Soul City included information about the symptoms and treatment of TB, and also tackled some of the thornier issues of prejudice towards people with TB.

Soul City messages about TB were:

- TB can be cured
- People who take medication for TB are no longer infectious
- Anyone can get TB
- People with TB need support and help
- People with TB can work
- Symptoms of TB
- People with TB must complete their treatment

PIC

TUBERCULOSIS

Knowledge gain

RADIO

“I was discussing with my family because we had a child that suffered from TB within the family. We found advice on how to deal with TB.”

[Female, 40+, urban]

TV&RADIO

“I think it was a good thing (that the doctor should not treat patients) because the one with TB can contaminate others; sticking to the treatment and taking ones pills are the best things to do. One heals and will not contaminate family members.”

[Mixed gender, 25-40, urban]

“I liked the way Soul City encouraged people with TB not to keep it a secret.”

[In depth interview, urban]

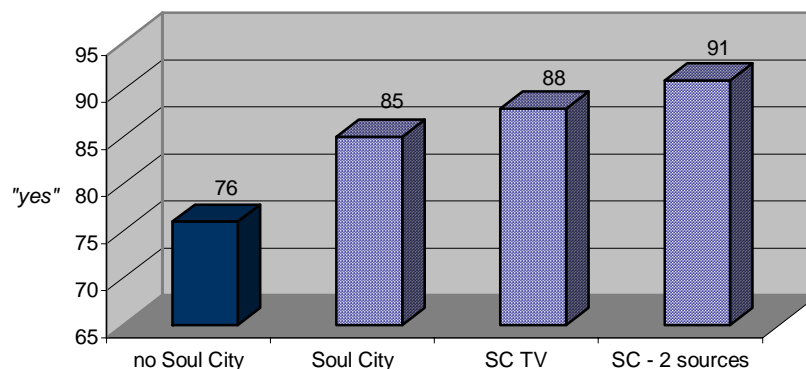
TV&RADIO

“I have learnt about TB sufferers. I must not hate him or her, I must love him.”

[Mixed gender, 25-40 yrs, urban]

- Awareness of TB had increased in the evaluation survey, with only 7% of respondents not having heard of it. Significant increases in knowledge of TB was recorded among those groups which were most ignorant of the disease before flighting, namely:
 - Respondents with no formal education,
 - Younger respondents (under 40 years), and
 - Rural respondents (increase of 17%)
- In to determine the perceived prevalence of the disease, respondents were asked whether they regarded themselves as being personally at risk. Before flighting Soul City, more respondents with formal education perceived themselves to be at risk than those with no formal education. This pattern was, correctly, reversed after flighting. There also appeared to be an accurate correlation between age and perceived risk of contracting TB, with older people perceived as being more at risk.
- Television was the most effective medium in conveying the message that TB is curable. This message was strengthened when respondents had access to two media sources, demonstrating the effectiveness of media synergy.

CAN TB BE CURED?

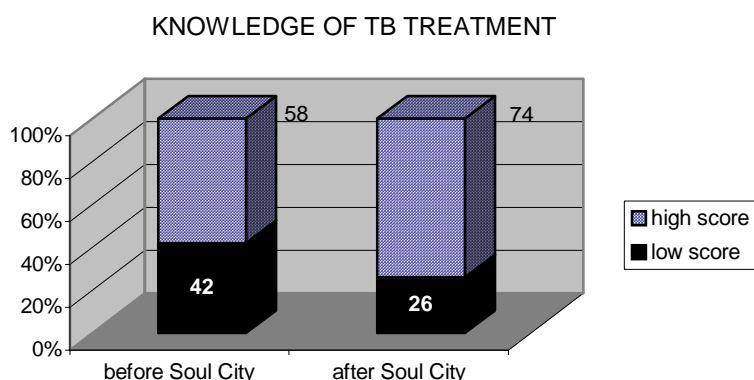


- Surveys results also reflected knowledge gain around symptoms of TB – with increases in the number of people who would associate the disease with weight loss, night sweats and a persistent cough.

TUBERCULOSIS

Knowledge gain

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the treatment of TB, and the number of correct answers was scored:



RADIO

“[Soul City] teaches us that TB is not that dangerous or contagious if the carrier sticks to the medical treatment regularly. We cannot easily get infected even if we live in the same house as the carrier.”

[Female, 40+ yrs, urban]

The results show a considerable improvement in knowledge about treatment after Soul City – particularly that TB sufferers should not stop taking treatment after a few weeks, but should continue the course even if they feel better.

“[Soul City] teaches us that TB is not that dangerous or contagious if the carrier sticks to the medical treatment regularly. We cannot easily get infected even if we live in the same house as the carrier.”

[Female, 40+ yrs, urban]

RADIO

While there was considerable improvement in knowledge levels after the Soul City intervention, the results did not reflect hugely significant disparities between those respondents who had accessed the Soul City media and those who had not. It was noted that there were a number of public awareness campaigns around TB at the time of filming, resulting in a general increase in common knowledge.

Moreover, TB was not dealt with as extensively as other issues such as HIV / AIDS – TB issues appeared in only three of the Soul City TB episodes, and were not woven throughout the series as was HIV / AIDS.

TUBERCULOSIS

Attitudes and behavioural change

There are a number of misconceptions about TB which affects society's acceptance of TB sufferers.

"They think that someone who has TB has been bewitched." [Female, urban]

TV

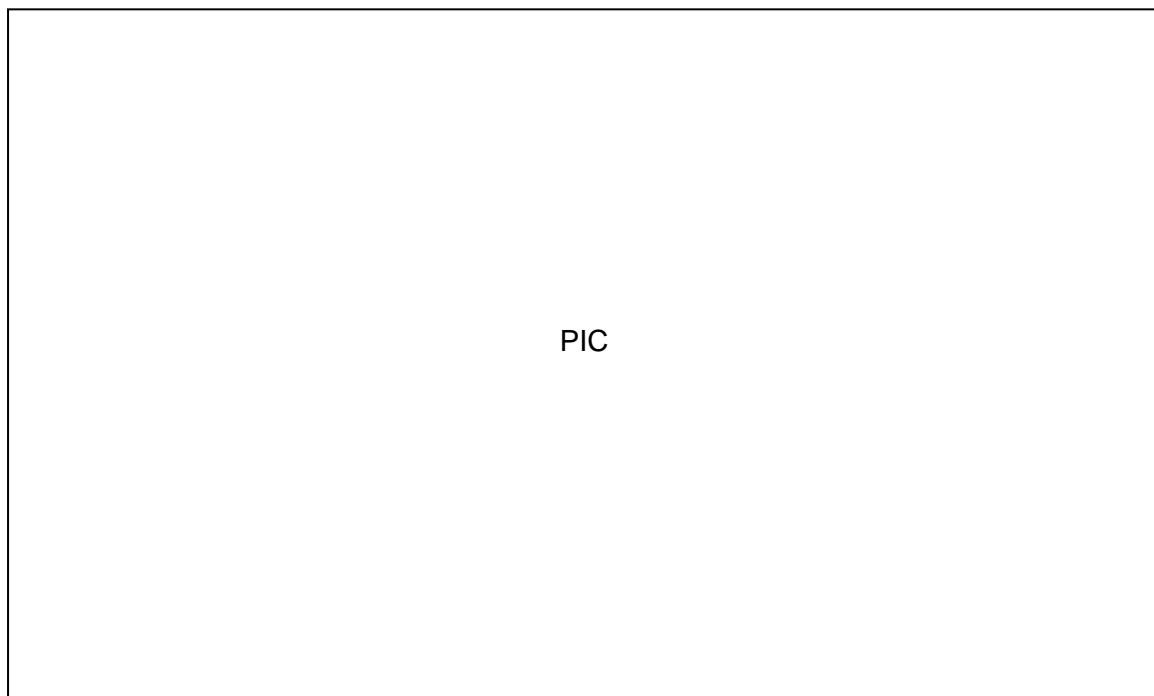
Other participants spoke about TB being used as a threat to discourage people from smoking.

Respondents in both surveys were asked to comment on the statement: "Only alcoholics and dirty people get TB". In the pre-Soul City survey, over half the respondents agreed with this statement – an alarming misconception which was reduced by 12% after Soul City.

Soul City tried to raise knowledge of TB and to address some of the prejudice around TB by emphasising that anyone can get TB – in the case of Soul City TV, it was the clinic doctor.

"I liked the episode where the nurse contracted TB. It shows that TB is not only meant for those who could be perceived as lower class – but is a disease that can be contracted by anyone." [Mixed gender, 25-40 yrs, urban]

TV & RADIO



LAND & HOUSING

TV&RADIO

“It taught us that we should stand up and not wait for the government to do things for us, but we should help the government otherwise we will stay in our shacks forever.”
[Female, informal]

RADIO

“It alerted me that we’ll have to fight to get houses.”
[Female, 40+ yrs, urban]

TV&RADIO

“It taught us that we can come together as the community and give each other advice on how to build our houses.”
[Female, informal]

TV

“They organised moneys from the banks, and they did this as a collective. I have also learned that if people unite around particular goals they succeed ultimately.”
[Mixed gender, 16-24 yrs, urban]

TV&RADIO

“I liked Thabang when he worked with Nonceba to help people from the shacks to get houses from the government when their shacks were destroyed by floods.”
[Male, 25-40 yrs, metro]

In South Africa, under apartheid, access to land and resources have been historically manipulated, with millions of black South Africans being strategically dispossessed of their homes and land. The new democratic government has committed itself to land reform and restitution, and the right to land, basic housing and services are now enshrined in the Constitution.

Soul City aimed to raise awareness of land and housing issues and encourage people to discuss them by focussing on the process of characters coming together to resolve land and housing problems. Soul City radio focused on restitution and tenure issues in rural areas.

The Soul City media incorporated a number of messages, including the following:

- All South Africans have equal right of access to land
- Accessing land and housing can be a lengthy process
- Land reform is a demand-driven process, and communities can organise and work together to access land
- Land issues are not only for men
- There are laws protecting security of tenure
- A government subsidy scheme and other forms of financial assistance are available
- Land redistribution and restitution programmes

In order to cater for particular land and housing needs in urban and rural areas, completely different storylines were evolved for the TV and radio series:

- In Soul City TV (accessed largely by urban residents), people living in shacks had their homes flooded after heavy rains. They discussed their problem, established a committee which drew up a housing plan and identified a piece of land suitable for housing. The plan was submitted to their local councilor and they succeeded in acquiring a piece of land to settle on.
- The radio series, by contrast, focused on restitution issues. The storyline was about a group of farmworkers who were evicted from farm land and started to build shacks on a piece of land in the village. When threatened with legal action they approached the Department of Land affairs to find out about land reform and land tenure.

LAND & HOUSING

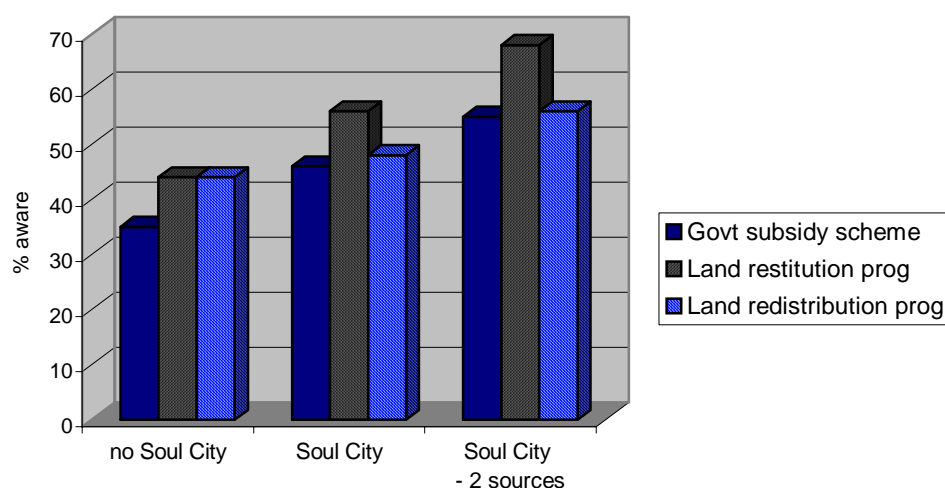
Knowledge gain

The survey tested awareness regarding three particular land reform programmes, namely:

- the government subsidy scheme,
- the land restitution programme, and
- the land redistribution programme.

Results showed that Soul City audiences had considerably higher levels of knowledge than those who had not accessed Soul City, and the efficacy of the multi-media vehicle in reinforcing messages was once again endorsed.

AWARENESS OF LAND REFORM PROGRAMMES



As would be expected, urban and more educated people had higher levels of knowledge. Further, knowledge was greater in the middle age group (30-49), being those people most likely to have to be responsible for providing housing.

Much of the knowledge gained was in the form of practical information gleaned from the storyline. Shack dwellers, in particular, found this helpful:

“We are put in the light about the realities of people living in shacks. It also advises us on safe areas in order to erect a shack, not near the river, and how to zone your area for security reasons.”

[Male, 16-24 yrs, informal]

TV&RADIO

“With Soul City I have learnt that before we build our shacks we should check the quality of the soil because if we don’t our shacks will be full of water in rainy days.”

TV&RADIO [Female, informal]

LAND & HOUSING

Attitudes

TV&RADIO

“What Soul City shows is that women are capable of doing what men can do. And likewise, men can do what women can do.”

[Male, 16-25 yrs, informal]

TV

“I liked Nonceba where she was fighting for people who were staying in shacks and advising them to go to the government and demand houses as a group.”

[Mixed gender, 13-15 yrs, metro]

TV&RADIO

“I think that part was good because it showed mothers that they can work together as one group if they want their demands to be met.”

[Male, 25-40 yrs, metro]

TV

We became concerned about supporting shack dwellers to find themselves homes just like us.”

[Mixed gender, 16-24 yrs, urban]

TV&RADIO

“It also showed most of people on how to get land and houses from the government and that people from the shacks have to work together in order to get houses.”

[Male, 25-40 yrs, metro]

Results showed considerable disparities in awareness levels among men and women – particularly with regard to the housing subsidy scheme. Soul City challenged traditional gender roles by depicting women as active role-players in the process of acquiring land and housing. In the surveys conducted before and after Soul City, respondents were asked to respond to the statement:

“Women-headed households should have the same rights to land and housing as male-headed households.”

The greatest shift of opinion was in rural Belfast, where the number of people agreeing with the statement increased by 23% after Soul City.

Responses to attitudinal questions about land and housing were encouraging: the majority of respondents wished to participate in building their own homes, and agreed that people should pay for household services – reflecting the spirit of reconstruction and development in this country.

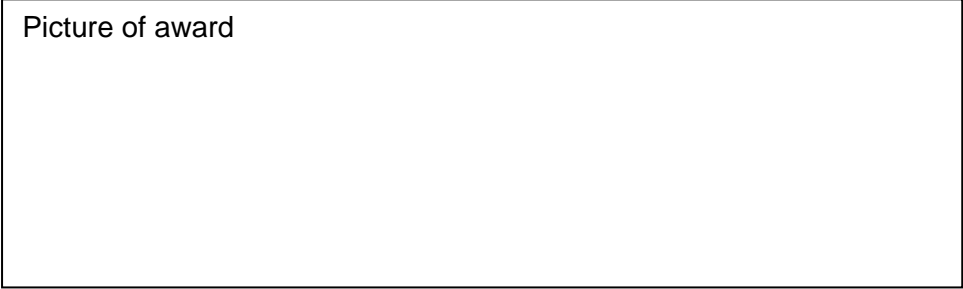


PIC

ACCOLADES FOR SOUL CITY

Soul City 2 won the AVANTI (Independent Television Producer's) award for excellence in educational broadcasting.

Picture of award



Letter about booklets

