

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT ON HIV PREVENTION MESSAGES THROUGH INTERACTIVE SOCIAL (DIGITAL) MEDIA

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Background

- Using interactive media to engage the public has gained momentum in the last five years.
- In 2011, Soul City Institute (SCI) began using digital media platforms alongside its TV, radio and print offerings to generate dialogue and debate on HIV prevention.
- A multi-platform digital media intervention during the *Kwanda Talk* show, a community development initiative used:
 - SCI's facebook platform: Soul City – It's Real.
 - SCI's twitter platform: all postings from the facebook page were automatically re-posted on twitter@SoulCityItsReal
 - Ummeli.mobi an open-access mobile platform run by Praekelt Foundation
 - A dedicated SMS line that ran while *Kwanda Talk* was on air. Selected SMSs were streamed live onto screen during broadcast.

Results

- SCI's 13-episode, prime-time *Soul City Series 11* TV drama reached an average of 6.8 million people an episode in 2011 on SABC 1. SCI reached an estimated 12 thousand people per episode in 2012 through *OneLove Talk* broadcast on Soweto TV, and 1.5 million people through *Kwanda Talk* on SABC 1.
- There was an increase in target audience engagement and interaction on SCI's digital media during this period. Postings have ranged from requests for clarity on a range of health issues, positive feedback of the shows and work done in communities, referrals to service points and sharing of experiences on a wide range of HIV prevention issues.
- The three platforms were used together and each platform referred audiences to the others. Straplines on screen during the broadcast of *Kwanda Talk* directed audiences to the social media platforms to post questions, comments, and join conversations which were mediated and answered by subject experts identified by SCI. Answers to questions on the Ummeli platform directed people to the Soul City – It's Real facebook page. Each SMS sent out received a reply directing the sender to the ummeli.mobi platform. All platforms were 'advertised' on our facebook page.

Facebook and Twitter

- SCI currently maintains active conversations with 4,443 facebook followers; and 1,413 followers on twitter. Twitter had 590 followers in 2011
- The number of likes of the Soul City-Its Real facebook page has increased since the beginning of *Kwanda Talk* and discussion on various topics rose during the show; the number of likes was at 2 959 during the broadcast of SC 11 and 3,795 during OneLove Talk. The page currently has an overall 4,443 likes – this number keeps growing as SCI advertises and posts general comments and questions on health and development issues.
- The engagement on the facebook page can be broken down into 2 categories:
 - Reponses to/ involvement in chat streams posted by SCI
 - Messages posted by individuals asking for information/ advice on issues (i.e. to Kwanda Talk/ Kwanda Chat topics or general information/ advice on health-related issues).



Ummeli.Mobi Live Chat

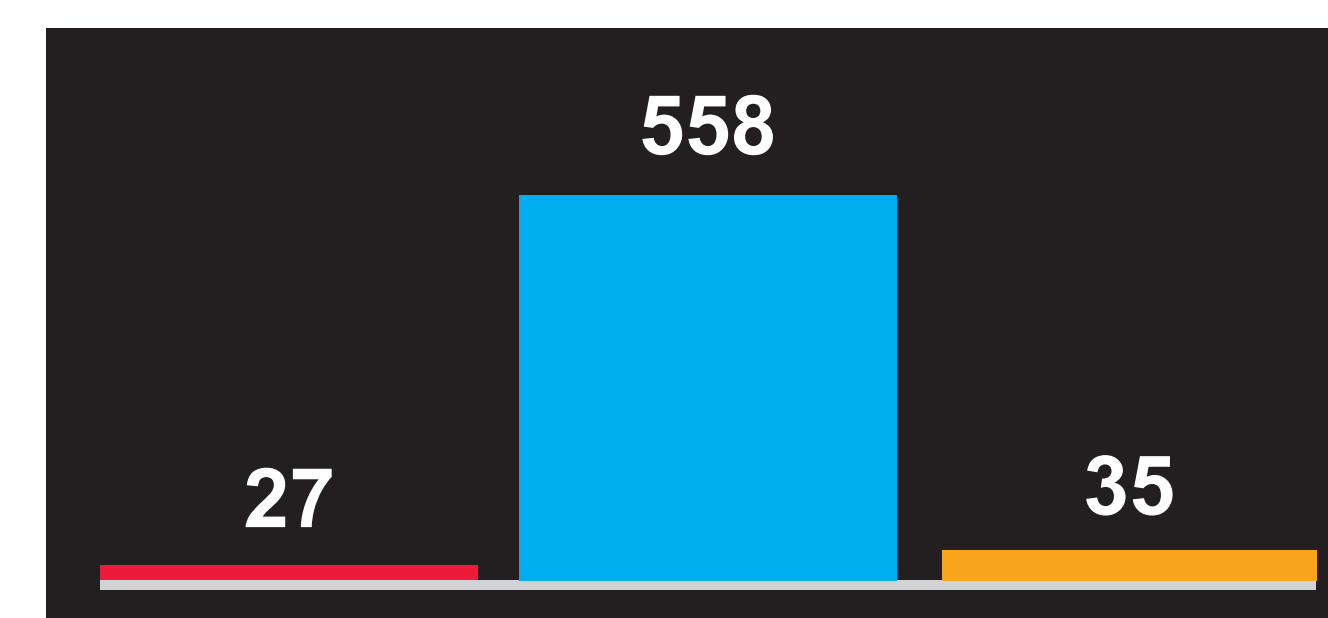
Ummeli is an open-access mobile platform run by the Praekelt Foundation, whom SCI partnered with on this project. Ummeli reaches about 120 000 people. The TV audience was directed to log onto www.ummeli.mobi between 21h30 and 22h30 to engage in a live chat.

During the rest of the week ummeli users could read articles posted, and cast their votes in a poll on an issue related to the week's *Kwanda Talk* episode. The .mobi site had a total of 543 327 visitors and 550 008 views during *Kwanda Talk*. The table below summarises the total number of people that engaged with the various *Kwanda Talk* topics through ummeli.mobi.

	Views	Comments	Votes
Articles	15 489	997	
Live chat	39 972	1 015	
Polls			7 663

The HIV and AIDS stigma episode received a total 892 and 2 812 views, and 104 and 89 comments for articles and live chat respectively. A total of votes 620 were received. The table below summarises the votes received for the HIV episode.

Poll 5: Can we challenge stigma together - and support people with HIV?



- NO** - I can change my ideas, but I can't make other people change.
- YES** - If we work together we can change some people's attitudes and other's lives.
- MAYBE** - But I don't know what to do or where to start.

{Published 29/11/2012 – Retracted 03/12/2012 (620 users voted)}

The audience welcomed the opportunity to engage with SCI and DSD representatives in the Live Chat. The users valued getting constructive advice for their personal and community problems in the language of their choice.

Anonymous

I live at kuruman nc we have problem like teenage pregnancy , drop out from school , alcohol I think we do not have a bright future.

Response

Hello anonymous, please do not give up hope. The Department of Social Development has programmes and services in place to assist with your challenges. Please go visit the social workers in Kuruman for assistance with these challenges.

Anonymous

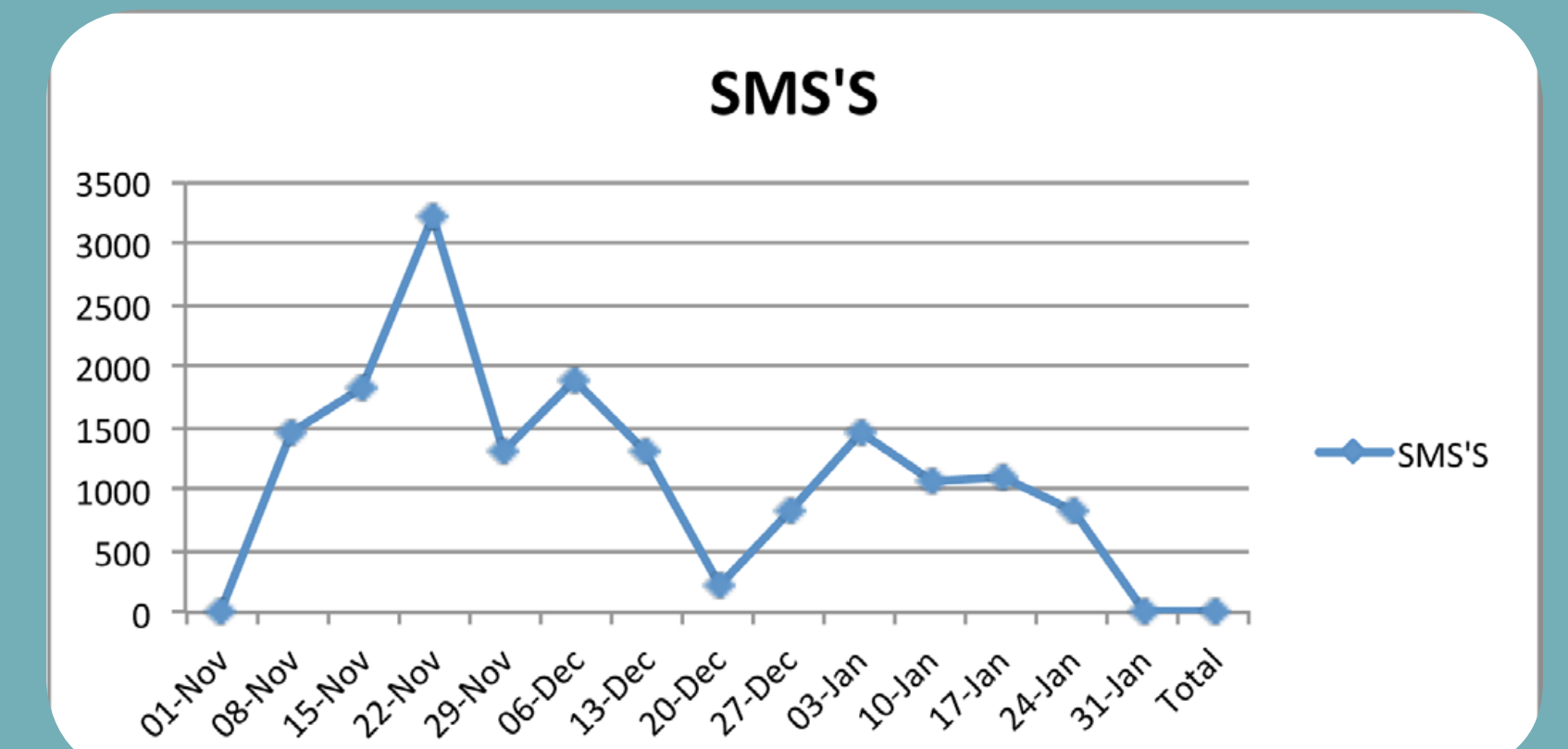
I have registered an agri business and have 100 hectares of space, I have tried to get financial aid but failed because I have registered a private company how do I as an individual access financial aid from government.

Response

There are various incentive schemes from the dti. Please write to them on contactus@thedti.gov.za or call them for a proper advise or go their offices. Telephone number 0861 843 384.

SCI's SMS line

An average of 1,271 SMS were received per 30-minute period while *Kwanda Talk* was on air. These were charged to the user at a rate of R1 per SMS. The HIV and AIDS stigma and discrimination episode had an overall 1,850 SMSs. An analysis of the SMS revealed the following categories of comments and/ or questions.



Discussion and Conclusion

- The use of multiple digital media platform was useful in engaging a wider audience. The number of people accessing the platforms increased throughout the broadcast of the *Kwanda Talk* show. The audience engaged with the content of the talk show by posting questions and receiving answers, offering comments and casting votes throughout the talk show. The numbers engaging through digital media remained good, though they fluctuated across all episodes. The feedback received suggested that the audience was interested in the talk show and shared their opinions and experiences.
- Audience engagement varied across the platforms as each was facilitated by different personnel and frequency of engagement by SCI with audiences differed across the platforms. More focused efforts on SCI's social media interventions are necessary to sustain audience engagement with the increasing number of fans.
- Challenges included capacity to meet audience demand for information and conversation, and the limitation of each of the platforms.
- In Conclusion, digital media has been a worthwhile platform to reach and engage audiences and to facilitate multi-directional dialogues. Research efforts need to ascertain the impact of using digital media.

