

Achieving social change on gender-based violence: A report on the impact evaluation of Soul City's fourth series

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Abstract

The Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication—a South African multi-media health promotion project—together with the National Network on Violence Against Women, formulated an intervention to address domestic violence. Recognising that behavioural change interventions aimed solely at individuals have limited impact, the intervention was designed to impact at multiple mutually reinforcing levels; individual, community and socio-political environment. The intervention and its evaluation results are presented. Soul City successfully reached 86%, 25% and 65% of audiences through television, print booklets and radio, respectively. On an individual level there was a shift in knowledge around domestic violence including 41% of respondents hearing about the helpline. Attitude shifts were also associated with the intervention, with a 10% increase in respondents disagreeing that domestic violence was a private affair. There was also a 22% shift in perceptions of social norms on this issue. Qualitative data analysis suggests the intervention played a role in enhancing women's and communities' sense of efficacy, enabling women to make more effective decisions around their health and facilitating community action. The evaluation concluded that implementation of the Domestic Violence Act can largely be attributed to the intervention. While demonstrating actual reductions in levels of domestic violence was not possible, the evaluation shows a strong association between exposure to intervention components and a range of intermediary factors indicative of, and necessary to bring about social change. This paper reports on the evaluation, discusses its limitations and challenges as well as lessons learned regarding multi-level interventions on domestic violence.

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Background—domestic violence in South Africa

Domestic violence is described as endemic to South Africa. A 2003 antenatal survey in one city found 38%

of women had experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives; 35% of women during their current pregnancy (Mbokota & Moodley, 2004). A prevalence study across three of nine provinces found that 9.5% of women had been physically abused in the previous year. In one province 28.4% of women reported ever being physically abused, and over 50% of women reported of emotional abuse in the previous year (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Levin, Ratsaka, & Schrieber, 1999). In another study over 40% of male workers in three municipalities

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reported having physically and/or sexually abused their female partners in the previous 10 years (Abrahams, Jewkes, & Laubsher, 1999).

Domestic violence is a public health concern. It has been associated with serious health problems among women, ranging from physical injuries to depression and suicide (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999; Berrios Grady, 1991). Women's autonomy is undermined with far reaching impact on sexual and reproductive health (Heise, Moore, & Toubia, 1995). Violence against women is both a co-factor and a consequence of the AIDS epidemic, South Africa having one of the biggest epidemics worldwide.

Introduction—the Soul City/NNVAW partnership for social change

The Soul City vehicle is developed by the Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication (SC: IHDC)—a South African NGO utilising mass media for social change. The vehicle consists of prime time radio and television dramas and print material. It uses edutainment, where social issues are integrated into entertainment formats, which has been shown to be a powerful mechanism to achieve social change objectives. Through drama Soul City is able to reach prime time audiences, and through radio particularly, reach marginalised, rural communities. Edutainment has been shown to achieve strong audience identification with characters and stories. This phenomenon, known as parasocial interaction (Papa et al., 2001), allows for audiences to experience the lives of the characters vicariously and is an important device to enhance feelings of individual self and collective efficacy. The genre also allows for role modelling of positive norms, attitudes and behaviours, including help-seeking and help-giving actions. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory stresses the importance of a sense of self-efficacy in the process of behaviour change (Bandura, 1977).

Domestic violence was a major focus of the fourth series of Soul City (SC4). For the reasons outlined above, edutainment was viewed as a powerful tool to bring about change in this area. The intervention aimed to impact at individual, community and socio-political levels, recognising that social change happens through an interplay between these levels (Hornick, 1990). The intervention aimed to catalyse community dialogue, mediate shifts in social norms, facilitate collective action and create an enabling legal environment. The intention was to support individual and social change which recursively would reinforce collective action, and enhance societal impact (Bird & Gray-Felder, 2001) (Table 1).

To achieve this, a partnership was formed with the National Network on Violence Against Women

Table 1
Objectives of SC4

Level of change	Objectives
Societal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase public debate in the national media ● Advocate for the speedy implementation of Domestic Violence Act
Interpersonal and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote interpersonal and community dialogue ● Promote community action ● Shift social norms
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shift attitudes, awareness, knowledge, intentions and practice ● Enhance self-efficacy ● Increase supportive behaviours ● Connect people to support services

(NNVAW)—a coalition of organisations across South Africa. SC4 provided the mass media vehicle; the NNVAW provided a platform for community mobilisation and support.

Formative research (literature reviews, focus groups, in-depth interviews and stakeholder consultations) revealed a patriarchal society with high levels of tolerance of domestic violence. A major barrier to action was the pervasive belief that domestic violence is a “private affair”. Women respondents revealed a frustration with existing legislation and police reluctance to assist.

This research helped to inform the objectives of the project, reinforcing the need for an ecological approach. The research also informed the content of the series and advocacy efforts.

Societal level: Advocacy for healthy public policy

At a socio-political level, the intervention aimed to impact on legislation to create an enabling environment for behaviour change. An advocacy campaign was conducted to ensure the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA). The Act was gazetted into law in 1998 but remained unimplemented due to lack of political will on the part of government, particularly the police service.

Workshops were conducted with the NNVAW to build capacity and formulate a national campaign

strategy. The DVA featured in all the SC4 materials. The television and radio series role modelled the use of the DVA. Counsellors on the helpline were trained to provide information on it.

Media advocacy and social mobilisation were used to gain public support and reach decision-makers. A resource pack for journalists was produced and workshops were held to familiarise journalists with the issues. SC4's celebrity actors were used to attract media attention. NNVAW members invited government officials to community meetings where they were challenged on the DVA delays. Special hearings were organised in parliament where community members questioned ministers. Media coverage was generated throughout.

Interpersonal and community level

SC4 aimed to create an enabling community level environment to facilitate behaviour change through the promotion of interpersonal and community dialogue, collective efficacy and action to shift social norms, increase supportive behaviour and connect people to help.

This was achieved through a range of activities including the SC4 mass media, pamphlets, posters and community events. Community action was built into the narrative of the drama with the aim of enhancing collective efficacy.

Individual level

At an individual level, the intervention aimed to impact on knowledge and awareness, personal attitudes, self-efficacy, intention to change, and practices.

The partnership established a toll-free helpline to support audiences. The helpline was role-modelled in the drama and advertised in all SC4 materials.

The intervention took place between July and December 1999. This paper reports on the evaluation of the intervention.

Evaluation methodology

In order to evaluate impact at the above three levels, the evaluation was multifaceted, consisting of six interrelated studies, triangulated to investigate consistency of findings and improve validity of the results. Findings presented here draw on the following studies:

(1) *A national survey*: Baseline (pre-intervention) and evaluation (post-intervention). Data were collected in June 1999 and February 2000, respectively, through standardised, face-to-face interviews, in the language of the respondent on comparable samples of 2000 adults (aged 16–65) in each survey.

A multi-stage stratified national random sampling design was used. Samples were stratified by area

(metropolitan areas, urban smaller towns and rural areas) within each of the nine provinces. The samples were statistically representative of the SC4 target population nationally.¹ The baseline sampling frames were retained for use during the evaluation survey but different enumerator areas, households and respondents were selected, ensuring that different but comparable samples were drawn.

The questionnaire used closed and open-ended questions designed to measure general media exposure, exposure to SC4 awareness, knowledge, personal attitudes, subjective norms, behaviour, behavioural intention, interpersonal communication, social support, perception of risk, efficacy, and barriers at the individual and community level. All of the items formulated for the purposes of this evaluation.

Analysis, using SPSS involved two stages:

- (a) *Pre- to post-intervention comparison*: this entailed firstly identifying significant shifts ($p \leq 0.05$) from pre- to post-intervention using χ^2 tests, for all outcome items in the questionnaire. Secondly, modelling responses from the pre- and post-intervention surveys using binary logistic regression analysis on the combined data set. Explanatory variables used were phase (pre-/post-intervention), area (urban, rural), age, sex, race and education level. Thirdly cross-tabulations were carried out on each item by phase, controlling for variables that were significant in explaining responses. (χ^2 tests were used to measure significance.)
- (b) *Investigating the relationship between exposure to SC4 and outcome measures*: a similar approach to the one described above was used to explore the association between SC4 media and responses to items in the post-intervention data set. The same explanatory variables were included in the model except for phase (pre-/post-intervention), in addition to exposure to different components of SC4. Separate analysis was carried out to assess the relative impact of each multi-media component.

(2) *A national qualitative impact assessment*: 29 focus group interviews and 32 in-depth interviews were conducted amongst SC4's target audience and community members representing leadership, services and civil society. 52 of the interviews were conducted in two sites (one urban and one rural) in two provinces, and nine focus group interviews were conducted in a further four provinces. Thus, data collection was conducted in six of nine provinces in South Africa. Participants in urban

¹The Soul City adult series targets previously disadvantaged "African" and "Coloured" South Africans, aged 16–65. These terms are official classifications used in post-apartheid South Africa for purposes of redress.

and rural sites were part of a panel (cohort) participating in survey research in these sites (not reported on here), and were recruited on the basis of similarities in their responses to a selection of survey items. Respondents were allocated to homogeneous focus groups profiled as follows: respondents displaying positive change in attitudes, subjective norms and behaviour from one measurement to the next; respondents displaying negative change; and respondents displaying no change. This profiling and recruitment of participants enabled researchers to qualitatively investigate “change” in a way that is not possible using survey methodology alone. Participants in the other four provinces were purposively selected, with exposure to SC4 as the only criterion. Participants were interviewed on their awareness, attitudes and social norms relating to the content themes dealt with in SC4, their exposure to or use of SC4 material and their perceptions of the role of SC4 in their communities or organisations.

All qualitative interviews were conducted in the language of preference of the participants, recorded electronically and transcribed and translated verbatim.

The qualitative data analysis consisted of computer aided thematic analysis of transcriptions of interviews (using Atlas). Codes were generated from the data itself keeping the integrity of the context in which they emerged. Coding adhered closely to the words and phrases used by respondents to eliminate premature interpretation or distortion of data. Similar codes were grouped into themes. Each interview was analysed generating codes and themes unique to that interview. Subsequently, all interviews were analysed identifying similarities and unique features within relevant audience segments (e.g. male/female respondents). In a last stage of analysis descriptive models were built, accurately reflecting the prominence and contextualised meaning of themes emerging across qualitative interviews, within the theoretical model underpinning the SC4 intervention and evaluation.

(3) *Evaluation of the partnership between SC4 and the National Network on Violence Against Women (NNVAW)*: Data collection consisted of 97 semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with Government; service providers; NGOs; journalists; training institutions; community members; intervention partners and stakeholders; and external observers of the DVA policy process. Participants were interviewed on the implementation of the DVA, their involvement with the SC4/NNVAW advocacy strategy. Individual interviews were recorded through note taking; group interviews were recorded electronically and transcribed verbatim. The study further monitored the national print and electronic media over a 6-month period, and monitored the helpline calls over a 5-month period using records obtained from the telecommunications service provider.

In the partnership evaluation study, a simple quantitative descriptive analysis of helpline calls (calls answered and attempted) was performed. Quantitative content analysis of media coverage of violence against women (and domestic violence in particular) was conducted. Relevant articles and bulletins were coded, using a coding sheet with pre-determined codes to ascertain key aspects covered. Coding categories were collapsed in the final analysis in order to further increase reliability. The electronic database of press releases and interviews conducted or initiated by the Partnership over the first 3–4 months of the evaluation period was used as a comparative measure in assessing the impact on the Partnership on media advocacy.

The evaluation was conducted and managed by independent researchers. The evaluation period coincided with the time that SC4 was on air.

Results

Demographic profile of the national survey samples

Table 2 shows that the sociodemographic characteristics of the samples were very similar for the baseline ($n = 1979$) and follow-up survey ($n = 1981$).

About 48% of the respondents lived in rural areas, 52% resided in urban and metropolitan communities. 90% were African with the remainder of the sample “Coloured” (10%). There was a 2–1 ratio of women to men. 66% of respondents were between 16 and 35, while 34% were 35 and older. Over 50% had completed at least a secondary education. As a general rule, no significant differences emerged between the two samples, with the exception of employment status and general media exposure. These characteristics were controlled for in analysis.

Exposure to SC4 media

Table 3 shows that SC4 television reached 68% of its target population nationally. Radio reached 65%, and 1 in 4 target audience members nationally had seen or read the print material—24% of men, and 26% of women, respectively. 60% of rural respondents watched SC4 on TV; 68% listened to it on radio. 69% of rural women listened to SC4 on the radio, and 58% watched SC4 on television. More than 1 in 5 rural women had seen or read the print material.

Table 4 shows the distribution of exposure to different intensities of SC4 media in the study population. 33% of the sample reported high exposure to SC4 on television, 28% reported high exposure on radio and 15% reported high exposure to print material.

Table 2
Socio-demographic Characteristics of Baseline (1999) and Evaluation (2000) Respondents

Characteristic	Baseline survey (n = 1979)		Follow-up survey (n = 1981)	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Area				
Rural	48	950	48	951
Urban smaller towns	22	435	26	515
Metropolitan	30	594	26	515
Sex				
Male	36	712	34	674
Female	64	1267	66	1307
Race				
African	90	1781	91	1802
Colored	10	198	9	179
Education				
None	7	139	6	119
Primary	12	237	17	337
Secondary	53	1049	52	1030
Matric	21	415	20	396
Post-Graduate	7	139	5	99
Employment				
Unemployed*	35	693	42	832
Full-Time	23	455	19	377
Student*	22	435	15	297
At-Home	8	158	7	139
Part-Time	5	99	3	59
Temporary	3	59	5	99
Pension	4	79	5	99
Other	0	0	4	79
Age				
16–24	33	653	30	594
25–35	30	594	33	654
36–45	19	376	19	376
46–65	18	356	18	357
General radio use				
Every day**	66	1306	57	1129
2–3 Times per week	16	317	19	376
Once per week	5	99	6	119
2–3 Times per month	2	40	2	40
Hardly ever	4	79	8	158
Never	8	158	7	139

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$.

Totals may not add up to sample size due to missing values.

Impact at socio-political level

Implementation of the DVA in 1999 was an achievement that can largely be attributed to the advocacy

initiative, and the multi-media component of the SC4 intervention (Christofides, 2001). As significant role-players, the partnership contributed to the changing discourse on, and concomitant prioritisation of domestic violence within Government. The SC4/NNVAW partnership succeeded in playing a facilitating role in the implementation of the DVA, through mobilising funding for training of service providers, facilitating training and support, and community education.

There were pressures ... from occasions where people held marches ... [SA Police Services]

Because they [Soul City] were so powerful—media, the radio, television, work books. And I found the momentum of Soul City very, very crucial to the process. ... I thought that Soul City really contributed to the national network's momentum on Domestic Violence. [Observer]

Media analysis over the intervention period suggests that the partnership succeeded in increasing public debate in the media, and giving more prominence to domestic violence through increasing coverage of the issue (see Fig. 1). 49% of print media monitored dealt with domestic violence. Approximately 1 in 5 articles directly referred to SC and/or the NNVAW.

Facilitating an enabling environment for change: Impact at community level

The community impact of the mass media together with the partnership with the NNVAW operated at two levels. Firstly, a direct impact on communities and secondly through its impact on community leaders, services and organisations.

Direct impact was mediated through resonance with the media, participation or observing community activities and events, an increase in community efficacy, a feeling that “people” are talking about the issue and a change in subjective norms.

Subjective norms were measured on the same matters as personal attitudes (items shown in Table 5). Comparison between baseline and evaluation measurements was characterised by positive shifts in subjective norms around domestic violence (see Table 5). An increase (from 37% to 59%) was observed from baseline to evaluation on the item “my community feels that violence between a man and a woman is not a private affair”. 53% of respondents with no exposure to SC4 radio compared to 63% of respondents with high exposure to SC4 radio held this view. Changing norms are illustrated through the following quote:

Soul City has changed the mindset of people a lot...It has taught people that they should not keep quiet when they are being abused. [Urban Community Based Organization]

Table 3
Percentage exposure of African and “Coloured” South Africans to SC4 Media in 1999–2000

Soul City medium	% national (%) (N = 1981)	% male (%) (N = 681)	% female (%) (N = 1300)	% urban (%) (N = 1027)	% rural (%) (N = 954)	% rural female (%) (N = 625)
TV series	68	67	67	75	60	58
“Help stop women Abuse” booklet	25	24	26	27	23	22
Radio series (African Listeners)	65 (N = 1731)	56 (N = 598)	58 (N = 1131)	52 (N = 836)	68 (N = 879)	69 (N = 603)

Table 4
Percent distribution of intensity of exposure to each SC4 medium, South Africa, 1999–2000

Medium								
Television		Radio			Print material			
High exposure 9–13 episodes	Moderate exposure 5–8 episodes	Low exposure 1–4 episodes	High exposure all or most episodes	Moderate exposure some episodes	Low exposure a few episodes	High exposure every month	Moderate exposure every 3 months”	Low exposure Hardly ever
33%	20%	15%	28%	23%	14%	15%	20%	20%

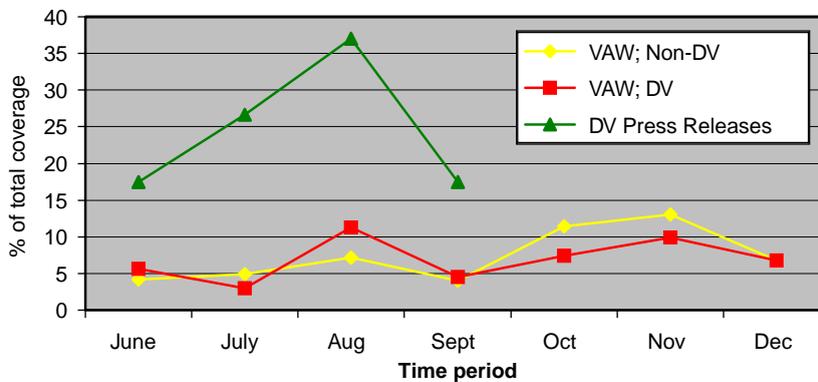


Fig. 1. Comparison between press coverage and Soul City/NNVAW Domestic Violence press releases.

That the intervention promoted action is illustrated by the following:

Soul City influenced us to organize the march, emotions were high ... [Rural Female]

You know, women of the rural areas, they are very kind women, they don't take any action—especially against men. But when I see now, I see it happening, in our areas. I think Soul City inspired them to act against the abuse of their rights.... When I see women standing up against the abuse of their rights, one can wonder who taught them? How? Who inspired them to do this? Yeah, then I can realise that Soul City is the source. [Rural Police Commander]

Qualitative data also indicated an association between SC4 and community efficacy. SC4 fostered a sense of community co-operation and togetherness in problem-solving; facilitated a sense of collective empowerment to effect change, facilitated collective action and the formalisation of community structure; it reinforced social networks and facilitated a positive vision for a better future for the community.

At the end [of SC4] we too decided that when a man is beating his wife we should all wake up and try to help that woman. [Urban community member]

What I am saying is that we are not giving up, we are not telling ourselves that things are not going to get better. Even if there are obstacles along the way we

Table 5

Some significant shifts in individual behavioural indicators from baseline to evaluation associated with exposure to a selection of SC4 media, 1999–2000 (Binary Logistic Regression Analysis, $p \leq 0.05$)

Item	Significant shift from baseline to evaluation in the desired direction ($N = 1981$)			No/low exposure to Soul City media	Moderate exposure to Soul City media	High exposure to Soul City media
	Pre-	Post-	Difference	Within column percentages		
<i>Knowledge and awareness:</i>						
Heard about the Helpline—yes (National audience)	36	41	14% increase	16% ($n = 373$)	45%* ($n = 524$)	61%* ($n = 436$)
Know of VAW organizations (Women)	Not measured at baseline			5% ($n = 851$)	15% ^b ($n = 257$)	8% ^b ($n = 187$)
(Men)				4% ($n = 432$)	12% ^b ($n = 138$)	15% ^b ($n = 110$)
<i>Personal attitude</i>						
I agree domestic Violence is a serious problem (rural audience)	83	89	7% increase	88% ($n = 162$)	95%* ($n = 209$)	97%* ($n = 191$)
I disagree that violence between a man and a woman is a private affair (National audience)	56	66	18% increase	60% ($n = 312$)	66%** ($n = 219$)	76%** ($n = 584$)
I agree no woman ever deserves to be beaten (National audience)	77	88	14% increase	86% ($n = 350$)	88%* ($n = 511$)	93%* ($n = 419$)
I disagree that women who are abused are expected to put up with it (National audience)	68	72	6% increase	58% ($n = 317$)	72%* ($n = 478$)	86%* ($n = 417$)
I disagree that in my culture it is acceptable for a man to beat his wife (National Audience)	85	84	No significant shift	81% ($n = 290$)	85%** ($n = 298$)	89%** ($n = 533$)
I disagree, as head of the household, a man has the right to beat a woman (National Audience)	87	89	No significant shift	82% ($n = 292$)	91%* ($n = 467$)	94%* ($n = 403$)
<i>Subjective norm</i>						
My community agrees that domestic violence is a serious problem (National audience)	74	90	22% increase	No evidence of association with SC4 media		
My community disagrees that Violence between a man and a woman is a private affair (National Audience)	37	59	59% increase	53% ($n = 600$)	63% ^a ($n = 328$)	62% ^a ($n = 464$)
My family agrees that no woman ever deserves to be beaten (National audience)	73	86	18% increase	84% ($n = 1196$)	90% ^b ($n = 372$)	88% ^b ($n = 285$)
My family disagrees that women who are abused are expected to put up with it (National audience)	55	66	20% increase	58% ($n = 1155$)	77% ^b ($n = 377$)	82% ^b ($n = 274$)
<i>Intermediate behaviour</i>						
Made contact with VAW organisations/services during the evaluation period—yes (National audience)	Not measured at baseline			0% ($n = 372$)	4%* ($n = 525$)	5%* ($n = 436$)
Never talked about domestic violence while SC4 was on air (National audience) (Men)	Not measured at baseline			60% ($n = 371$)	44%** ($n = 357$)	39%** ($n = 611$)
Participated in public protest against DV during the evaluation period (National audience)	Not measured at baseline			62% ($n = 244$)	39% ^a ($n = 118$)	35% ^a ($n = 162$)
				1% ($n = 372$)	3%* ($n = 524$)	5%* ($n = 432$)
<i>Behaviour</i>						
Did something to stop DV during the evaluation period (Urban audience) (Rural audience)	Not measured at baseline			10% ($n = 195$)	15%** ($n = 184$)	17%** ($n = 376$)
				9% ($n = 171$)	8% ($n = 169$)	15%** ($n = 224$)

* Exposure to three sources of SC4.

** High exposure to SC4 Television—all/most (9–13) episodes.

^aHigh exposure to SC4 Radio—all/most episodes.

^bHigh exposure to SC4 Print (newspaper inserts, booklets, lifeskills material, editorial coverage)—“every month”.

know that we will get there. And that strength we have gotten from *Soul City* the movie. [Urban Female]

The SC4 intervention increased participation in community action. In total 3% of respondents reported participating in public protest around VAW. 1% of respondents with no exposure to SC4, while 5% of respondents with exposure to 3 sources of SC reported participating in public protest.

There have also been anecdotal reports of patrons at a local pub banging bottles upon witnessing a man physically abusing his girlfriend. This is attributable to SC4 as it was role modelled in the drama and has not been used in any other programmes.

More than 1 in 3 respondents talked about domestic violence while SC4 was on air. Exposure to SC4 is associated with interpersonal communication around domestic violence. Men with high exposure to SC4 radio were less likely to never talk about domestic violence (35%) than men with no exposure to SC4 radio (62%, $p \leq 0.05$).

When I was first introduced to *Soul City* it's when I thought no one can tell me how to live my life, but since then I have learned that even if you can be how old you still need advises from other people. I say that because we had experienced family violence in my home, and fortunately for us whenever the story was playing we were together and we got to hear about it from the other actors and that was an ugly thing to hear. Until there was this time when this man and this woman were being advised, like being told that when you have a problem you should sit down and talk about it. And from then on we decided to do that. [Urban male]

SC4 was shown to contribute to bringing sensitive, taboo subjects such as domestic violence out in the open.

We did not know that much about abuse in the community, I mean people are not talking about it. But what *Soul City* has done is to make us to see that abuse is there and we have witnessed it the only problem was that we were ignorant when it came to recognising it. Now we know what to do when a man is abusing his wife, so that has helped to reduce woman abuse. [Urban male]

The second level of community impact was on community leaders, services and organisations. They reported using SC4 as a point of reference when discussing community issues, providing a more caring service, being more open in their communication and using the messages in their work. People in these leadership roles or support positions were influenced by SC4 and they actively used SC4 messages in their community involvement. SC4 messages are actively "amplified" through community-based structures, ser-

vices and through larger community forums. As a point of reference, SC4 serves a support function in face-to-face health and development communication.

Like one time I had to go and address people about domestic violence, I used the illustration of something I saw on *Soul City*—that of people going to help that woman who is being abused by her husband. I liked that because you show them that if there is someone abusing another person, they don't have to take the law unto their hands all what they can do is to come together and create noise. So that the person doing that can see that he is being detected in what he is doing. Instead of sitting and doing nothing. So you see with *Soul City*, I get lots of material from it. [Urban Police Captain]

When we taught our clients we used to refer them to *Soul City* because we knew that there are many things they will get there. [Urban nurses]

Evidence suggests that SC4 facilitated awareness and better understanding of issues, and a more caring attitude on the part of service providers.

I can say to me personally it [*Soul City*] encouraged me more to be aware of the situation women are living under. And to be firm when I act against women abuse.... You know—before I could watch *Soul City*, when the woman came to report a case about the husband abusing her, it's easy to say 'no, no, no—go back and discuss with the family, with the husband, because we know you're going to withdraw this case'. Some of the women used to leave the station unhappy because we are negative. But after we had watched *Soul City*, then we could understand how serious it was. Then it changed my attitude towards it. [Rural Police Commander]

Police reported that SC4 impacted on their work in the area of Domestic Violence; using it as a point of reference in briefing staff and preparing them for interaction with the community.

Well with me, I think from time to time I have referred to *Soul City*. Like if there is a briefing and the subject is about an issue that was covered in *Soul City*, I tell the staff members about what they are going to encounter when they go to the community. ... When addressing members when you are preparing them for work, if you have to talk about domestic violence you always refer back to the episode of domestic violence that you saw. Like before they go out you caution them that when they go out on call, they should do this and that using the format that you have seen in *Soul City*. One can always use *Soul City* as a reference. [Urban Police Captain]

Police also reported that SC4 made their interaction with the community easier.

Impact on individuals

Table 5 summarises key findings related to individual behaviour change associated with SC4 media exposure.

Knowledge

There is an association between exposure to SC4 media and increased knowledge of where to find support. Eight months after it had been established, 41% of respondents nationally had heard of the Helpline. This is entirely attributed to the SC4/NNVAW intervention as the line was established specifically for this purpose. 16% of people with no exposure to SC4 compared to 61% of respondents with exposure to 3 SC4 media knew about the Helpline ($p \leq 0.05$). Men and women with high exposure to SC4 print media were more likely to know of organisations working in the area of VAW in their communities than people with low exposure.

Attitude

Attitudinal change across a number of items is associated with exposure to SC4 media (see Table 5). Fifty-six percent of respondents pre-intervention disagreed that domestic violence is a private affair compared to 66% post-intervention. 60% of those exposed to three types of SC4 and 77% of those not exposed felt that domestic violence is a private affair ($p \leq 0.05$).

A positive attitudinal shift was found on the item “As head of the household, a man has the right to beat a woman” but it was not statistically significant. In the evaluation survey positive attitudes on this item were associated with exposure to SC4 media, suggesting that SC may be associated with maintaining positive attitudes in this regard. No improvement was observed on the item “It is culturally acceptable for a man to beat his wife”. However, in the evaluation survey positive attitudes on this item seem to be associated with exposure to SC4 media—suggesting that SC4 is associated with maintaining positive attitudes.

Thematic analysis of qualitative data suggests that SC4 played a role in enabling women to more effectively make decisions around their health and well-being, improving self-efficacy. SC4 seems to have sensitised women to their rights, facilitated access to services, and raised knowledge and awareness (for both men and women) around issues related to gender equality. Women interviewed report that SC4 encouraged them

to act on this (new) awareness of their rights, and enabled them to stand up for their rights in oppressive or abusive contexts. The qualitative data suggests that exposure to SC4 impacted positively on women’s awareness of their self-worth and sense of identity. It raised their awareness around options regarding their (financial) independence and access to services and support, and empowered them to negotiate relationships and (safer) sex.

It [Soul City] made me aware about things I never took notice of. It made me to know where I stand as an individual. It was able to show me what is wrong and what is right, and it made me able to determine where my life is going and what path am I choosing for myself.... It has taught me that I should not depend on a man, I should learn to stand on my own, and that I should think for myself, and again I should respect other people... I have rights. [Urban female]

Behaviours

In the post-intervention survey, 8% of respondents reported experience of domestic violence in response to the item “have you or anyone close to you been abused physically or emotionally by their husband or boyfriend”. SC4 exposure is associated with support-seeking behaviour around domestic violence—with regards to contacting a support organisation, and using the Helpline: none of the respondents with no exposure to SC4 contacted a support organisation, 5% of respondents with exposure to three sources of SC4, respectively, made contact with a support organisation over the broadcast period ($p \leq 0.05$) (see Table 5).

Connecting people affected by violence against women to services: The Helpline connected women to help. It was limited by availability of resources and the fact that (initially) demand far outweighed the system’s capacity to deliver (Christofides, 2001). However, it increased access to crisis counseling and referrals. Approximately 180,000 calls were answered on four lines over five months. Approximately 23,000 calls (13% of the total number of calls answered) lasted longer than 1 min, allowing for meaningful counseling. More than 1 in 5 calls answered were from non-urban areas. The intervention raised awareness of, and increased contact with local VAW services.

The association between SC4 and behaviour change in the area of domestic violence remains unanswered since the number of responses was too small to investigate the association between SC4 and specific domestic violence behaviour. It was found however that in rural areas, 9% of respondents with no exposure to SC4 television reported that they did something to stop domestic violence over the broadcast period, whereas 17% of

respondents with high exposure to SC4 television reported that they did something to stop domestic violence during this period ($p \leq 0.05$). The detail of what they did was not investigated.

Discussion

In a thorough literature review, no available evaluations of local or international interventions of this magnitude were found to serve as a yardstick for assessing the comparative success of the SC4 intervention.

The study shows a consistent association between SC4 and positive change.

The use of cross-sectional surveys of different samples (i.e. the absence of longitudinal data on the same respondents) limits the ability to argue causality since other factors may account for changes observed between baseline and evaluation surveys. However, analysis of the respondents' exposure made it possible to test statistically the effect of the intervention by controlling for certain factors. Associations observed based on regression analysis of the evaluation survey, consistency of results across items measured, as well as dose responses observed (see Table 5) increased confidence for inferring causality, although it does not provide it.

With regards to measuring the impact of the intervention on domestic violence related behaviour change, cell sizes were too small to reliably investigate shifts from baseline to evaluation, thus leaving the association between SC4 and behaviour change with reference to domestic violence unanswered.

The relatively short evaluation period needs to be taken into account when interpreting the findings—8/9 months elapsed between pre-intervention and post-intervention data collection—and is sometimes used as a possible explanation for not observing impact. However, the converse must also be kept in mind, that people had forgotten the intervention. Additional research to investigate the longer term impact of Soul City, or the sustainability or durability of Soul City impact over a longer period of time would be useful.

Given the limited success of traditional models of behaviour change focussing on individuals alone, Soul City broadened its approach to behaviour change to include ecological models that factor in multiple levels of influence ranging from the individual, community and socio-political as well as the complex interplay between these levels. The effectiveness of this approach has been recognised in other contexts: according to Levinson “the presence of kin or neighbours who will intervene in violent or potentially violent situations is a characteristic of societies with low rates of wife beating” (Levinson, 1989). The evaluation shows positive results across all levels of intended impact—the individual, community

and socio-political context. At an individual level, there was a consistent association between the intervention and desired shifts in knowledge, attitudes and social norms around domestic violence, as well as help seeking behaviours such as contacting supportive organisations and the helpline. Approximately 80% of abused women want help (Jewkes et al., 1999). This was illustrated by the huge number of calls to the helpline and the 3% of the respondents contacting services. The evaluation period spanned only six months and the opportunity may not yet have arisen for some women, thus the total number may be greater.

The intervention seemed to impact on certain attitudes, such as the belief that domestic violence is a private affair (76% with high exposure to SC4 disagreeing vs. 60% with no or low exposure to SC4 media); the existence of this attitude in the general community seems to be a critical predictor of domestic violence risk/prevalence (Levinson, 1989). The intervention has impacted less on cultural beliefs with no significant shift from baseline to evaluation measurement. 84% disagree (85% baseline) that it is culturally acceptable for a man to beat his wife. This statistic is very similar to the 80–91% range on the same issue that Jewkes et al. found in their three provinces study. It seems that in South Africa there is already a relatively positive attitude that domestic violence is not culturally condoned. The lack of SC4 impact may also be that the deep-seated, fundamental role of culture in defining people's attitudes and belief systems as well as the fact that cultural norms are part of larger power structures within society, with entrenched interest groups, make it more complex and harder to influence than other kinds of attitudinal shifts. It stands to reason that this would take more interventions and longer periods to manifest in change.

At community level, an ability to stimulate interpersonal dialogue is associated with exposure to the intervention. Furthermore, community leaders and relevant services were influenced, and evidence of increased collective efficacy was documented—all essential to creating an enabling environment for the abused woman to seek help thereby breaking the cycle of violence (Boehm & Itzhaky, 2004).

Although there was limited evidence that the intervention influenced provincial government, it was shown to impact at a socio-political level through placing domestic violence on the national government agenda and having a direct influence on the speedy implementation of the DVA. This may be due to more effort being placed on national level advocacy, as well as the short period of the evaluation itself. The National Government was the key target as only this level of government could enforce the implementation of the Act. Further work has to be done at Provincial level in terms of training and monitoring of the implementation.

The evaluation did not show an association between SC4 and domestic violence behaviour. This was in part due to insufficient sample size, and thus the small number of responses reporting direct experience of domestic violence which precluded appropriate analysis on very specific behavioural items. Nevertheless, SC4 exposure was associated with the positive behaviour of “doing something to stop domestic violence”.

One of the limitations of the evaluation is the fact that incidence or prevalence of domestic violence was not measured. Measuring the impact of a communication intervention by primarily or exclusively measuring incidence or prevalence of domestic violence is not advisable since behaviour is a complex process, with many personal and collective indicators of social and behaviour change. Thus it is important to understand and to track change in all the underlying influences on domestic violence. Against this background, a factor to consider in assessing the intervention’s impact, is the incremental nature of social and behaviour change which often takes place gradually over time, in response to a range of interventions which result in a “tipping point” (Gladwell, 2000), and are observable in a range of intermediate indicators. Change in knowledge, awareness, attitudes, subjective social norms, self and collective efficacy, support-seeking and support-giving behaviour become important indicators of success in this context.

The key factors that contributed to the success of SC4 were the extensive formative research undertaken by the organisation, resulting in the ability of the mass media material to resonate with audiences as well as the theoretical model with its broad approach to behaviour change.

While the observed strength of the intervention was the combination of a popular mass media vehicle, with the social muscle of a national coalition, and inter-connecting support structures, this was also one of its key challenges. Orchestrating a project of this magnitude involved bringing together on-the-ground role players with mass media and marrying their different agendas and needs to get coherent action. Funding for the new helpline had to be secured in time to ensure its inclusion in the production of the mass media material, and thereafter getting it operational before the intervention went on air was also essential. There was also some risk involved in integrating the existence of the DVA into the drama when the outcome of the advocacy campaign was still in question. To deal with this uncertainty, all SC4 material indicated the DVA would be operational in the immediate future. This in turn created additional pressure on government to implement the DVA urgently. However, it was necessary to work closely with government to negotiate this arrangement in order not to appear irresponsible. An additional challenge was ensuring the social mobi-

lisation on the part of the NNVAW coincided with the broadcast of the electronic media and the distribution of the print material to ensure maximum impact.

Despite the demonstration of many positive results, it is unrealistic to expect a six month intervention to bring about major, lasting transformations in society on issues as complex as domestic violence. The intervention is therefore viewed by Soul City as part of an ongoing process. In order to sustain gains made and to generate further impact, Soul City has continued to deal with the issue in subsequent series with an ongoing challenge to societal and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality and violence. This includes foci on partner rape as well as tackling issues of “patriarchy and masculinity”. Additionally, the helpline has been taken over by Lifeline South Africa and continues as a national resource beyond the SC4 intervention. Soul City has adapted the mass media material into training packages focusing on gender violence and the DVA which is used to train the police, judiciary, health services and community-based organisations.

Conclusion

The SC4 evaluation pointed to the value of a partnership model combining the social mobilising capabilities of organisations on the ground with the clout of large scale mass media interventions. This, together with the success of the advocacy campaign resulted in the formalisation of partner social mobilisation and advocacy strategies into the organisation’s work. The strategy of edutainment was also shown to be an important mechanism for social change.

Despite its limitations, the evaluation demonstrated that the intervention successfully impacted on social change at three levels—individual, community and socio-political, pointing to the value of an ecological approach when planning social change interventions.

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