

Creating a Culturally Inclusive Intervention Mechanism for HIV/AIDS Education in South Africa

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ABSTRACT With HIV/AIDS prevalence levels reaching catastrophic levels in South Africa, the need to articulate effective intervention mechanism cannot be over-emphasised. Research has revealed that theatre's intervention in South Africa has achieved very little success in changing people's behaviour towards the pandemic. Scholars have attributed this lack of success to theatre practitioner's failure to centralise culture in the design of the performances. Many theatre groups go into communities with pre-packaged plays which do not incorporate essential aspects of target audiences cultural norms and beliefs. Communication scholars have reiterated that any message delivered outside the cultural norms and values of any given population will achieve very little success at changing the behaviour of such population. This paper examines the results of a three-year research conducted in South Africa which examined the cultural content of HIV/AIDS performances by prominent theatre groups in their campaign against HIV/AIDS. The findings indicate that while the groups made considerable impact on the target audiences, the impact was not enough to achieve the desired behaviour change because, key aspects of the communities cultural norms and beliefs were overlooked in the design of the performances.