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Assessing the Efficacy of Needs Assessment in HIV/AIDS Campaigns in South Africa

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ABSTRACT This paper aims to examine the efficacy of needs assessment and its relevance to HIV/AIDS communication by theatre in South Africa. Given the high prevalence levels of HIV/AIDS in the country and the failure to communicate HIV/AIDS messages, it has become necessary to redesign theatre's campaign strategies in order to achieve greater success in changing high risk sexual behaviour among communities ravaged by the pandemic. Using a qualitative research methodology, as well as a non-participant observation strategy, this paper seeks to evaluate the efficacy of needs assessment by a comparative analysis of the results of two major theatre interventions by a theatre group in the Western Cape and another group in the Eastern Cape Province. The findings indicate that greater success was achieved by the theatre group in the Eastern Cape who utilized the needs assessment strategy in their campaign. Based on the findings, the researcher argues that theatre stands to achieve greater success in HIV/AIDS campaigns if more attention is paid to needs assessment.