

MTV Shuga: Down South

By MTV Staying Alive Foundation

Winner for
Best Use of Communication Channels



DEMAND CREATION CHALLENGE

CHAMPIONING INNOVATION IN
HIV PREVENTION COMMUNICATION



Known as a reference point for young people to understand and make their own decisions around SRH behaviour, MTV Shuga also drives knowledge, awareness, and acceptability of services and products, such as oral PrEP in its messaging. The show refers to real HIV health care providers on-screen and uses social media as a platform to increase HIV prevention knowledge among young people.

Down South Key Messages

- ✓ Promote HIV testing and correct and consistent use of condoms
- ✓ Inform audiences about PrEP
- ✓ Encourage safe and responsible sexual practice among young people
- ✓ Positive role model of an adolescent girl
- ✓ Destigmatize same-sex relationships
- ✓ Explain family planning options
- ✓ Highlight the challenges of teen pregnancy and discourage the use of backstreet abortions
- ✓ Discourage intergenerational relationships

MTV Shuga: Down South is the 5th installment of the popular African TV drama series. Its messages and reach address the substantial need for sexual and reproductive health (SRH) behavioural change communication among young people. This season was set in South Africa, which is home to 7.1 million people living with HIV, among whom almost a million do not know their status. Although the country has the world's largest HIV epidemic, only 5 percent of South African schools were providing comprehensive sexuality education to young people in 2016.

MTV Shuga uses behaviour change communication to educate on HIV prevention measures, HIV testing, and SRH by fusing sexual health messages with gripping storylines. Each series of MTV Shuga consists of 10 – 12 episodes that are entertaining and immersive, but also succinct enough to keep the attention of youth at 22 minutes per episode. Not only is MTV Shuga the Demand Creation Challenge winner, the show is acclaimed globally with other awards. It also boasts renowned performers, including Academy Award winning actress, Lupita Nyong'o, who starred in MTV Shuga's Series 1 and 2.





While Series 5 impact data are currently being analyzed, numerous channels have evaluated impact of previous installments of MTV Shuga. Among 5,000 young people in Nigeria who participated in an evaluation led by The World Bank, 35 percent of those who watched the show were more likely to report getting tested for HIV in the last six months. Those who did not watch the show were half as likely to get tested in the last six months. STI ripple effects were also observed as chlamydia prevalence was 58 percent lower among those who watched the show.

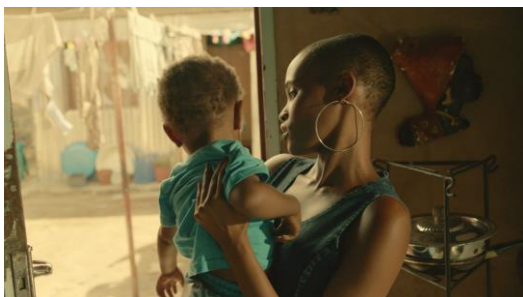
Down South Reach

72 Countries

179 Broadcasters

Up to **2.8 million** viewers weekly on a single South African broadcaster

Before investing in the show, the developers conducted formative research in the form of focus groups with young people, to generate messaging and storylines that would immerse the target audience into the content, and ultimately help to shift beliefs and feelings that drive behaviour. To continuously improve its engagement of young people, MTV Shuga regularly asks its audience about the storyline and messaging while airing each episode. The audience can text answers using a USSD platform or through the MTV Shuga website. For Series 5 Down South, MTV Shuga received more than 252,000 answers to 25 questions about messaging and storyline from 43,823 users.



Down South's reach spanned 96 percent of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Media output was diversified through a 12-episode TV series, a 15-episode radio drama series, two graphic novels, social and digital media platforms, and a peer education guide. With more than just TV engagement, MTV Shuga reaches underserved audiences. Disseminating its content is also an important part of the communications approach. The content through its past campaign is freely available to third-party broadcasters, NGOs, and on the website in perpetuity.



MTV Shuga's future is promising. Series 6, which is set in Nigeria, is currently broadcasting, and funding is secured for Series 7. The next installment will have a broader focus on family planning along with its focus on HIV messaging. The MTV Staying Alive Foundation partnership is also planning on sharing knowledge across continents. While it plans to return to sub-Saharan Africa for future series, the Foundation is also considering a campaign in India.

Notes: Developed and distributed by MTV Staying Alive Foundation (SAF), MTV Shuga: Down South's content was spearheaded by MTV SAF and MTV. Other organizations which supported the development of MTV Shuga include the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), Marie Stopes International (MSI), the Department of Basic Education (South Africa), Positive Action, USAID and PEPFAR.

Links:

[MTV Shuga Down South](#)
[MTV Shuga Impact](#)



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