



Introduction

This website/handbook is the result of lessons learnt and lessons taught at a series of workshops held at different venues in South Africa.

The first workshop assessed what the school-going and the adult general public audiences enjoyed at selected biomedically-focussed workshops and exhibits which had been previously presented at science centres and science festivals.

The next three workshops brought together science centre facilitators, biomedical scientists and others involved in science communication to share the knowledge gained, discuss the “rules of engagement” and generate new ideas, especially about biomedical science communication in South Africa. (*This website has additional information that is not included in the handbook.*)

The aim of the workshops was to catalyse the formation of new partnerships between scientists and science centres which will enrich engagement with the public.

The handbook gives practical tips and suggestions stemming from these workshops that aim to help science centres and scientists interested in sharpening their communication skills and developing biomedically-focussed activities and exhibits. Although the emphasis is on biomedical topics which engage mainly school-age audiences in South Africa and on lessons learnt during the workshops, much of the content is applicable to other topics and to audiences of all ages, worldwide.

The activities assessed at the first workshop, held at the Cape Town Science Centre, were:

Workshops:

- The DNA Detective: what's in your genes?
- HIV comes to the Party
- The Trouble with TB

Exhibits:

- The Skin you're in
- The Trouble with TB

The next three workshops used knowledge gained, established best practice and new inputs to catalyse partnerships at the Cape Town Science Centre (Western Cape Province), UNIZUL (Kwa Zulu Natal) and SciBono (Gauteng). Scientists, science centre facilitators and other communicators from these centres, other science centres and research institutions in the broad geographical areas attended these workshops.

The sections below are a synthesis of an assessment of these activities by different audiences (school learners, educators, science centre facilitators, scientists, independent assessors, and the general public) and of established best practice principles and their application in South Africa.

Detailed protocols for running the following workshops are given in the handbook (freely downloadable from this site).

The DNA Detective: what's in your genes?
HIV comes to the party
TIK's TRICKS (methamphetamine and substance abuse)

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