

From ABC to SRHR and selfies: a way to teach SRHR to Gen Zs in South Africa.

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Since 2016, Drama for Life (DFL) has led the KNOWLEDGE UNZIPPED project in collaboration with the Charlize Theron Africa Outreach Project (CTAOP), which has held the primary focus to 'create excellent SRHR interventions for school-going and university-based youth'. From identifying the specific gaps in knowledge around consent and gender expectation among S.A. youth and coupling this with considerations of contemporary sexual health curriculum content for schools, the KNOWLEDGE UNZIPPED project has developed effective applied theatre methods that centre a blend of S.A.'s embodied theatre traditions within a Boalian T.O. and T.I.E. informed application frame. The result is a highly energized, colloquially adapting, participant-led applied theatre technique that generates effective learning opportunities among SA youth, that critically enables a bridging between the more equitable SRHR information and the strong socio-cultural colloquial beliefs, language and gestures that typically frame youths' pre-existing knowledge on consent and gender roles.

This paper presentation will unpack the praxis-approach that shapes the KNOWLEDGE UNZIPPED method of SRHR education, and how this integrating of various applied theatre methods (Boal's T.O. work and T.I.E) when integrated with specific South Africa cultural expressions and social constructs effectively bridges the existing gaps between sexual health education and the contemporary practices around relationships and intimacy. The reference to the ABC (Abstain, Be Faith and Condomise) and SRHR (Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights) acronyms, highlight the era specific and mainstreamed HIV or 'sex education' content, and forms the point of departure from which this paper presentation and subsequent project work of KNOWLEDGE UNZIPPED draws from.

BIOGRAPHY:

Hamish Mabala Neill is a lecturer of Applied Drama and Theatre, and director of the DFL Knowledge Unzipped Project, an SRHR applied-theatre programme that creates and delivers SRHR education to youth within the Southern African context, that connects existing SRHR information with the particular and diverse colloquial expressions present and commonplace.