

**Social Capital from Informal Networks Can be a Fertile  
Niche to Mitigate HIV/AIDS and Poverty:  
Examples from South Africa and Botswana**

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**ABSTRACT** The aim and objective of this paper is to prompt an educational discourse and debate on how countries can use the social capital embedded in informal groupings (and their interactions) as a platform to mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS such as facing off stigma; and poverty in Southern African countries of Botswana and South Africa. This is because most of the strategies governments have put in place are apparently inadequate or their implementation pace moves at a snail's pace. The paper has used secondary and eclectic data sources. Findings indicate that informal groupings' potent social capital can constitute strong platforms for HIV/AIDS information dissemination, lobbying and advocacy; as well as form invaluable forums that can facilitate and act as poverty alleviation and mitigation tools. The paper has theoretically and eclectically been premised on strengths and empowerment perspective as well as social network theory.