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Decision-making in the department of public works and supplies and its impact on development communication: An examination of the greening Limpopo campaign

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Abstract

This research examines how government constructs a public message for rural, marginalised people and the communicating gaps that may arise in a diverse environment. Since government has a constitutional mandate to communicate to South Africans, especially the rural communities, the research also examines the extent to which government is fulfilling this role.

The Limpopo Greening Campaign in which the Limpopo provincial government is implementing a greening project to plant five million trees between 2010 and 2014 is used to illustrate this point. The campaign seeks to encourage people and other role players in Limpopo to plant trees to halt desertification and create employment.

The research draws upon participatory, bureaucratic and new institutionalism approaches to reflect on how government's desire for people to participate in development can be adulterated by its bureaucratic structure, including its policies and rules.

The findings reveal that government communication needs to be streamlined to meet the diverse information needs of the people. The approach to development communication should change to ensure government serves all the language groups in society which is the goal of development communication.

There is an apparent contradiction between the way government decisions are made to communicate with the people and what communication policies say. Some ethnic groups are marginalised in government communication even when structures are available for government to communicate with everyone. The findings also shed light on what shapes government communication.

Declaration

I, Lowani Mtonga, declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Signed on this …… day of ……. ……

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