

https://dspace.org/

The importance of participatory communication for the voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) project in Alexander township in Gauteng, South Africa

Bhengu, Charity

2017

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/24814

Bhengu, Charity (2017) The importance of participatory communication for the voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) project in Alexander township in Gauteng, South Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <https://hdl.handle.net/10539/24814>

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

ABSTRACT

The research set out to investigate how the Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) programme in South Africa facilitated stakeholder participation in its communication processes to improve the uptake of services in the context of national targets. Studies reviewed have highlighted challenges in the implementation of the participatory model to achieve communication goals. This qualitative study used document analysis, in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) for data collection. The research has revealed other limiting factors including unequal opportunities to influence decisions as a result of varying levels of authority and access to mediated public spheres. While those with power end up being further empowered through participatory approaches in terms of voice and visibility, the representation of the inputs of the lower level stakeholder group is limited to head count. A five-day visit to a VMMC clinic in Alexandra Township attributes marginalisation by exclusion from decision-making processes as one of the reasons for people's inability to translate knowledge into the positive public response. The study was inconclusive about the influence of the model on the actual service uptake because the purpose was to provide a textual description of the participants' experiences and not the impact.

Keywords: participatory communication, development programmes, stakeholder participation, medical male circumcision