

This issue of *Communicare* is concerned with stakeholders, and various strategies employed to ensure and attain stakeholder engagement and participation. While effective stakeholder engagement is often viewed as reliant on a commitment to engage and communicate openly and honestly with stakeholders, this not easily achieved, especially in emergent contexts in which competing worldviews transact to establish meaning, and gain consent for particular outcomes. It has been argued by scholars such as Dutta-Bergman that these points of intersection may easily become sites of struggle for gaining a share of voice, and as such may resist any attempt at marginalisation and silencing. An important characteristic of a participatory approach is that it involves dialogue – the two-way flow of information through which ideas can be shared freely. In this sense stakeholder participation results in the active involvement of individuals in solving problems or meeting needs as they contribute ideas, take initiative and articulate their needs and their problems, while also asserting their autonomy.

In their article, Tiyali and Tomaselli report on a research study that was conducted on a ‘beneficiary’ community’s participation in HIV/AIDS communication through a community radio station. The aim was to understand the community’s presence and access to dialogue on HIV/AIDS, as practiced by their community radio station. The researchers attempted to understand civil voices’ participation in and access to the strategies of HIV/AIDS prevention, care, support and treatment, and conclude that the radio station has provided some avenues to facilitate the process of beneficiary community participation in HIV/AIDS communication.

In her article Burger also engages with the efficacy of HIV / Aids communication, and contends that despite a vast array of HIV/Aids communication initiatives in South Africa, recent research suggests that the general public’s knowledge levels about HIV/Aids has decreased, and that risky behaviour associated with the spread of the virus is on the increase. In search for a new direction, this article maps four forms of HIV/Aids communication in the country and proposes that community-initiated HIV/Aids communication could pose an alternative to project-based campaigns that are initiated ‘from the outside’.

Since it is widely reported in the literature that employees’ image of the organisation has a direct influence on external stakeholders’ image of the organisation, Slabbert attempts to address

the need for an inclusive internal stakeholder approach that facilitates employee engagement. Slabbert proposes a new, generic stakeholder-inclusive conceptual framework that employs AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard (AA1000SES). This framework not only serves as a foundation for future research, but can also serve as a guide for enhancing internal corporate image, and possibly also external corporate image and reputation.

The use of Social Networking Sites is becoming increasingly essential to communicate and establish long-term relationships with both external and internal stakeholders. In order for universities to retain their stakeholders, the effective use of media like Facebook is evident. Mambadja, Conradie and Van der Walt report on research that investigated the Facebook pages of 24 South African to determine how they have structured and populated their Facebook pages with different types of content that could be of relevance to the public relations communication strategies of the universities. The authors conclude that South African universities had not yet capitalised on Facebook to enhance online stakeholder relationships.