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Challenges of Communicating Nuclear / Radiation Information: The Case of Zimbabwe

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Communication is paramount in all human activities and appears to be a very easy subject. But in actual fact it is a complicated process with a capacity to change perceptions from being negative to positive or vice versa. The issue of communication becomes even more challenging when it involves issues or topics which are generally perceived as complex in various societies. A case in point involves the communication challenges faced in communicating radiation/nuclear issues especially to third world country audiences where the concept is still in its infancy and therefore not well understood by the public. Increasing awareness to the public on issues to do with nuclear/radiation is critical especially in terms of developing and building future competencies which are currently skewed towards males in Zimbabwe. The ratio of female citizens engaged in nuclear/radiation fields is still very low in Zimbabwe. There is therefore need to start communicating nuclear/radiation issues from an early age with a focus on changing women's perceptions over such issues. The Radiation Protection Authority of Zimbabwe's Corporate Communications Department presents a study based on the experiences of the Corporate Communications Officer over a period of four years in that capacity. This study provides reasons why third world country publics, especially in Zimbabwe are showing little interest in nuclear/radiation issues. Experiences are also shared on how the Corporate Communications Officer has managed to increase awareness of /nuclear issues from two percent to five percent over the last four years. The different methods of communication used are also detailed together with the accompanying challenges.

Country or International Organization

Zimbabwe

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