

Attitude of Midlands State University students towards male circumcision as a way of reducing HIV transmission

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Abstract

There is overwhelming evidence that male circumcision reduces the transmission of HIV in heterosexual males. This study assesses the attitude of university students towards male circumcision (MC). The study targeted both the male and female students at Midlands State University. A random sampling technique was used to select the participants. Six hundred and sixteen students (408 males and 208 females) from all the university faculties participated in the study. The study established that in principle the students have a generally more positive attitude towards MC as evidenced by 84% of the participants who were in favour of it. However of all the male participants who took part in the study only 20% were circumcised. Half of the remaining 80% were prepared to get circumcised. One quarter of the remainder needed time to think about it and the other quarter were against it. One hundred percent of the participants cited fear of pain as the most probable hindrance to MC. Eighty percent cited reduction in sexual pleasure as another problem to MC. The overall conclusion drawn from this study was that circumcision could be the way forward in the reduction of HIV transmission in heterosexual partners despite the negative issues that are associated with it. This study also established that as long as MC is correlated with HIV/AIDS it will take long to gain the ground since people still have the fear and stigma associated with HIV testing. However this study recommends that male circumcision be tackled as an independent entity without being associated with HIV/AIDS and that testing for HIV should not be a precondition for circumcision.

Keywords: Male circumcision, HIV, university students, attitude, heterosexual

2013, IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), Vol. 16(1), pp. 45-49.

A comparative study on the effectiveness of career guidance and counselling services offered to students before and after enrolling at universities in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study aimed at assessing the effectiveness of career guidance offered to students in Zimbabwe. The study drew the participants from two universities in Zimbabwe's state universities. Stratified random sampling was used to come up with the sample. Two hundred questionnaires were hand delivered to the students in the faculties of Social Sciences at Midlands State University (MSU) and Great Zimbabwe University (GZU). The questionnaire was composed of both closed and open ended questions. This allowed the researcher to gather specific and general information. The study revealed that career guidance offered at high schools was fairly effective although students indicated that they had negative attitude towards career guidance and counselling. The study also established that universities did not have clearly defined career policies and career centres which made it difficult for students to receive career guidance. The study recommended that career teachers at high schools should not be given other subjects to teach so that they attend to individual problems. Universities were encouraged to come up with clearly defined career policies and career centres to enable students to get quality career guidance.

Keywords: Career guidance, effectiveness, high schools, universities, counselling services

2013, Researchjournali's Journal of Education, Vol. 1(1), pp. 1-11.

Livelihood Resilient Strategies through Beekeeping in Chitanga Village, Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study sought to establish the contribution of beekeeping in rural livelihoods sustainability. Chitanga village had experienced low agricultural productivity due to poor and infertile soils and this has led to food insecurity which had driven them into beekeeping. This opportunity has been driven by the existence of tall trees and wild plants that develop flowers in the village which attracted bees. However, the utility of beekeeping enterprise as a livelihood activity has not been fully realised. This study was carried out in the context of a sustainable rural livelihoods framework. This framework states that at any given time, every community or society falls under a vulnerability context as a result of both natural and human made disasters. In light of the vulnerability, a community mobilises the various forms of its assets at its disposal to earn a living. Applying this framework, the study analysed the strategies the community employed to enhance its livelihoods through the sharing of benefits. The research used questionnaires, structured interviews and observations as sources of gathering data. The study established the benefits which accrued from beekeeping that included honey as food, income in the form of cash, medicines, scenery creation for tourism and income generating projects through making of hives, growing of flowers and citrus fruits which attract bees. A backward and forward linkage of enterprises emerged. Employment creation and increasing in the number of livelihood activities in the area has been witnessed due to beekeeping. This culminated in diversification of livelihood options leading to rural transformation through utilization of local available resources. The study recommends that the sustainability of beekeeping enterprise should be reinforced by backward and forward linkages. The government partnered by NGOs should take the lead and compliment the efforts of beekeepers by providing clear policy and planning.

2013, Sustainable Agriculture Research, Vol. 2(1), pp. 124-132.

Community gardens and food security in rural livelihood development: the case of entrepreneurial and market gardens in Mberengwa, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This paper seeks to assess the contribution of community gardens on food security in rural livelihoods development in Mberengwa ward 27. Despite the introduction of community gardens in ward 27, poverty persisted amongst the vulnerable groups in the district. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in collection of data through questionnaires, interviews and focused group discussions (FGDs). Analysis was done using descriptive statistics and content analysis. This study revealed that the vulnerable people of Mberengwa derived income, basic horticultural skills, enriching their garden soils and food commodities from the Imbahuru community garden. Factors like all year-round production of crops, intensiveness of the activity, monitoring and evaluation by extension workers, field days in all seasons and demand of the crop varieties grown influence food security in the district. However challenges persisted due to their seclusion of these gardeners from credit facilities, lack of irrigation equipment, unstable power relations among leaders and the project was associated with the weak in society. The research concludes that the gardening project should be done not in isolation with the Zimbabwe's agrarian reform programme which would provide all forms of capital which capacitated the vulnerable rural dwellers.

Keywords: Community gardens; Vulnerability; Livelihoods; Food security; Sustainable rural development.

2013, Russian Journal of Agriculture and Socio-economic Sciences, Vol. 1(13), pp. 8-17.

Reducing urban poverty through fuel wood business in Masvingo city, Zimbabwe: a myth or reality

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Abstract

This paper argues a case for reducing urban poverty through fuel wood business in view of the plight of load shading in Zimbabwe. Although the use of firewood is not a welcomed source of power in urban areas, it emerged to be wide spreading fuel for domestic use. Electricity shortages have made Zimbabweans opting for firewood for heating, cooking and other domestic chores to cushion the times when electricity is off. Since the start of this sell of firewood, the viability of the enterprise in poverty reduction has not been tested. Firewood harvesting has caused untold environmental degradation in Masvingo urban and the surroundings. Although this affected the ecology, it has created sound opportunities for urban poor who are in transport business, hired to fetch firewood from the bush. The undeveloped commercial stands are being turned into firewood wholesales. This has created entrepreneurial activities for urbanites that had nothing to do. However, fuel wood trading would sustain urban livelihoods if it meets the strong sustainability criteria of enhancing all the five capitals. Livelihood sustenance is linked to the resilience or sensitivity of livelihood assets to change in socio-economic and political conditions rather than asset per se. For, some assets are more resilient or less sensitive than others. Therefore enhanced livelihood security should be assessed on the basis of the resilience of various livelihood assets and improvements therein.

2013, Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology, Vol. 10(1), pp. 59-70.

Challenging the challenge: An analysis of the initiatives taken by women in Mushandike Resettlement Scheme to participate in development

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Abstract

Despite numerous initiatives being taken by governments, non-governmental and quasi governmental organisations and even the private sector to try and mainstream women in development, there is still a lot to be done in terms of increasing the number of women participating in development. Some scholars have blamed women themselves for not taking initiatives to participate in development. Some are putting the blame on the methodological problems associated with the interventions and some are saying the substantive issues of the initiatives do not have women issues of development. The study sought to find out how women are taking advantage of these initiatives to participate in development. The study utilised both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, where in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were the main qualitative instruments and questionnaire was the main quantitative method of collecting data. The study identified some initiatives being taken by women to try and participate in development and most notable improvement was seen in economic integration. There was also some progress in improving their educational qualifications, but very minimal improvement in political participation. There is need however to come up with interventions that support these initiatives so that women's livelihoods are supported and sustainable development is enhanced. There is also need to come up with a holistic approach where these initiative start at grassroots trying to start with programmes that benefit the girl-child so that they develop this entrepreneurship culture which can help them participate in development. Special programmes need to be tailored so that they benefit rural women.

Keywords: Women empowerment, rural development, sustainable development

2013, International Journal of Research in Education and Methodology, Vol. 4(4.1), pp. 1-18

Exploring the politics of local participation in rural development projects: A case of CARE Zimbabwe's small dams rehabilitation project in Mushagashe, Masvingo District, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of community participation in rural development projects in Zimbabwe testing the credibility of the popularized supposition that almost all contemporary development efforts characteristically embrace local participation. Public participation is widely assumed to be an essential ingredient for the fruition of rural development efforts. The research made use of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in which unstructured interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires were used as data gathering instruments. The analysis of data was enabled by the use of People-Centered Development (PCD) as a conceptual framework. Findings revealed that the level of community participation in the district is not only minimal, but it is also top down. This has much to do with the negative perceptions by facilitating agents viewing local people as passive recipients of externally crafted models of development and other factors such as the power dynamics within and between the community and other stakeholders. The research also found preferential treatment of other tribal groups by the facilitating agent, intra group conflicts and bureaucratic and political influence as obstacles militating against effective participation. Based on these findings, and consistent with the wider literature, recommendation are that the nature of community engagement should be based on the principle of equal partnership among all stakeholders as this would encourage full cooperation and thus effective participation.

2013, Russian Journal of Agricultural and Socio-Economic Sciences, Vol. 2(14), pp. 74-88.