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Redefining volunteerism: the rhetoric of community home-based care in (the not so new) South Africa

CITATION

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ABSTRACT

The extent of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa complicates the daunting task of rendering a basic health service to HIV-infected individuals. In light of human resource shortages and financial constraints, but also closely linked to a much politicized notion, the 'community' was called upon to become active in volunteering activities. Since 2002, the South African government, epitomized by the ruling party, the African National Congress, embarked on a mission to recruit volunteers to perform various voluntary activities of which community home-based care is one. This article intends to juxtapose the rhetoric pertaining to this call to volunteerism with the realities of carers, and recipients of this care. This shows that, on the one hand, the rhetoric exploits concepts that bear wide legitimacy. On the other hand, this rhetoric does not take into account the contradictory everyday life realities and the changing nature of the concepts it wields.