

Hearing *Learner Voice* in health promoting schools through participatory action research

BRENDA SONN

University of the Western Cape

ANNELEEN SANTENS

Belgium

SARAH RAVAU

Belgium

The participation of learners in school life and learner voice is important for learner development and the implementation of school interventions. In this paper we argue that learner participation and learner voice in school-community interventions contribute to learners' development of a critical consciousness and to their understanding of themselves in society. We show how participatory action research methodologies such as reflective writing, metaphor, and photovoice supported 30 secondary school learners from schools in challenging contexts to explore and extend themselves as participants in Health Promoting Schools. The creative design of these participatory action research methods and the discursive spaces which these methods provided gave learners the opportunity for self-expression and deepened their understanding of complex social issues such as diversity, drug abuse, gangsterism and violence, and how they are affected by these issues.

Keywords: participatory action research; participatory methodologies; health promoting schools; learner voice; diversity; substance abuse; violence.

Introduction

This article describes how learners aged 13-18 from three secondary schools in poor, suburban, so-called coloured¹ communities on the Cape Flats in the Western Cape, South Africa, participated in a participatory action research (PAR) project, referred to as *Learner Voice*. The schools are involved in a Health Promoting School (HPS) project and learners and teachers are engaged in various activities of the HPS project, such as learner camps, recycling clubs, peace clubs, TB-and HIV-awareness activities and related interschool health promoting activities.

The *Learner Voice* research study, a component of the broader HPS project, was designed to give voice to the lived experience of learners in an HPS and to enhance learner participation in the HPS project. We explored how the developmental and creative design of participatory action research (PAR) methods, and the discursive spaces which these methods provide, gave learners the opportunity for self-expression and deepened their understanding of complex social issues such as diversity, drug abuse, gangsterism and violence and how they are affected by these issues.

Why learner participation?

Learner participation in school-based research and development programmes is important for the development of these learners as citizens of the school and the community and for the development of school-based interventions (Markham & Aveyard, 2003; Wilson, 2009; Walton, 2011). There are multiple reasons for including learners as participants in school development programmes. Adolescence

1 The apartheid race terminology “coloured”, “so-called coloured” and “African” is used only to clarify the differences between learners in the study.

is a formative period where young people actively shape their identity while facing challenges and opportunities in their environment and their society. It is a critical period for making crucial life-shaping choices. At the same time young people are often a marginalized group, lacking opportunities to have a say, a “voice”, in societal discussions and decisions that deeply affect their lives (McIntyre, 2000; Strack, Magil & McDonagh, 2004; Bray & Moses, 2011).

Youth participation in recent school-based participatory research provided information on and insight into the development of self-esteem in young people (Wilson, 2009); the lived experiences of children (Jorgenson & Sullivan, 2010); the development of “voice” and involvement in decision-making in matters which affect their lives (Dennis, Gaulocher, Carpiano & Brown, 2008); and civic praxis (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007).

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that children should be allowed to express themselves in matters which affect them and that their views be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. Concomitantly, PAR methodologies have been used to increase participation as well as the empowerment of marginalized groups in research processes (Wang & Burris, 1997; Babbi & Mouton, 2001; Booth & Booth, 2003; Shallwani & Mohamed, 2007). Participants are seen as experts and co-researchers into matters which affect their daily lives (McIntyre, 2000) and, through collaboration with researchers as change agents (Babbi & Mouton, 2001), seek to gain insight, voice and solutions to their problems. The use of creative methodologies such as photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) drawing, mapping, diary-keeping and video-recording (Jorgenson & Sullivan, 2010) has maximized participation.¹

Learner Voice: The research study

The HPS project, started in 2008, is an on-going project in three secondary schools with volunteer teachers and learners and an interdisciplinary group of researchers at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). The *Learner Voice* research study took shape between October 2009 and March 2010 and aimed to:

- Give learners a voice.
- Challenge learners and their thinking through creative exercises and experiential learning activities.
- Stimulate learners to improve their schools as HPSs.

The *Learner Voice* research team consisted of the learners as co-researchers and three female adult facilitators: one South African school development facilitator at UWC, and two Belgian master’s students from the University of Ghent. Learners were informed about the nature and purpose of the *Learner Voice* project at an HPS project meeting. Ten learners from each school were invited to volunteer to participate in the project. All the learners were involved in the HPS project at their school. A few were prefects and/or members of the Representative Council of Learners. Approximately 30 learners participated. A core group of 18 learners, 11 girls and seven boys, attended all the activities.

The research focus of the *Learner Voice* project was to explore whether or not the use of creative and responsive methodologies would enhance learner voice and stimulate the learners’ involvement in the HPS project.

Research methodology

Participatory Action Research proponents advocate for full participation in all aspects of the research process from inception to conclusion, while recognizing disparities in power and status as significant ethical and methodological challenges. Research, whether traditional or participatory, consists of a number of aspects, dimensions and responsibilities such as planning and design, methods, data analysis and dissemination. Many researchers are clear that participatory research with young people should not be patronizing, or tokenism or “proxy” accounts by adults, but should recognize differences in power and status in the research team. Thomas and O’Kane (1998) planned and designed their participatory research and involved children in all other aspects. Punch (2002:329) strongly supports participatory methodologies

and argues that “the choice and interpretation of data is in the power of the researcher”. Van Staa, Jedeloo, Latour and Trappenburg (2009) recognize the benefits of participatory research methodologies with young people but argue for negotiated participation and equitable rather than equal participation. Power and status differentials between facilitators and participants are recognized in *Learner Voice*, especially with regard to knowledge and expertise in PAR. Facilitators chose the methodology and overall design of the study. Learners fully participated in the data selection, collection and analysis, and informed the content, direction and outcome of the research.

Proponents of participatory research with children advocate for the maximization of opportunities for children’s input through innovative and engaging methodologies which involve young people as co-researchers (Davis, 1998) and enhance their ability to communicate their perspectives at the important points of data selection, data gathering and interpretation (Thomas & O’Kane, 1998; Jorgenson & Sullivan, 2010). In the *Learner Voice* project the facilitators designed a range of sequential and responsive cognitive and creative methodologies for learners to draw on real life events and to express themselves as fully as possible in a variety of ways. The developmental and experiential processes were carefully chosen to engage learners as co-researchers and active participants in the creation of their own worlds of meaning (Ellsworth, 1989; Darbyshire, 2000; Jasper, 2005), and to build a relationship of trust in the research team where both learners and facilitators could explore complex social processes in the school environment. For the facilitators this required active listening skills, responsiveness to learner views and opinions, and on-going reflection and interrogation of their own assumptions and verification with participants.

A brief overview of the developmental and experiential design

Reflective writing was used as an individual activity to explore, explain or broaden learners’ thoughts about the HPS project and how it influenced their lives. A non-verbal exercise with controversial prompts, in a revised World Café format, was then followed in order to extend and challenge learners’ thoughts in their reflective writing, after which a group discussion was held where learners could express their opinions, values and beliefs. Then learners gave concrete form to their thoughts and consolidated individual insights into group insights through metaphorical drawings. While the metaphors conveyed the learners’ broad understandings of an HPS, their limitation was that they did not give an indication of the complexities of life at school and in the community (Perry & Cooper, 2001).

The photovoice and photo-elicitation methodology was used to collect positive and negative images of their school as an HPS and to triangulate these with the data gained from the reflective writing and metaphors. Learners then visited another HPS and collected additional data about the HPS and compared this with their experiences at their school. To further broaden and deepen the data gathered and knowledge generated, semi-structured peer interviews were held with two learners from each school.

Research ethics

Learners were fully informed of research ethics with regard to anonymity, confidentiality and protection from harm, and were granted informed consent from their parents or guardians to participate in all the research activities, as well as from the school to undertake field trips. They understood that they could withdraw from the research at any time. To protect learners’ identity, facilitators used pseudonyms when reporting on the study.

The facilitators understood the vulnerability of learners in research and the power dynamics between adult researchers and minors. They explained to the participants the importance of protecting themselves by not divulging sensitive and private information about themselves and others and not repeating sensitive information outside of the workshops. In addition, we gave the following specific ethical guidelines to learners concerning taking photographs (Wang, 1999):

- Photographers have the power to give their own interpretations to the images they capture. Be aware of this power and of your interpretations when taking photos. In your discussions with others you might gain more information or perspectives about the same event.

- Obtain signed consent when photographing others. As far as possible, take unidentifiable pictures of people, for example, from the back or of an unrecognizable part of their body. Identifiable photographs with no signatures of consent will be deleted from the study.
- Take care while using the camera. Work in pairs for safety reasons and to remind each other of the ethical guidelines when deciding what photographs to take.

Description of the data-gathering process

Workshop one: Understanding HPS and expressing relevant opinions within a group context

In the first workshop learners answered the following questions through a reflective writing exercise: What makes your school a Health Promoting School? What do you think your Health Promoting School can become? This was followed by a non-verbal exercise where learners gave written responses to a set of controversial statements. The statements were based on learner comments after the reflective writing discussion and intended to spark debate and increase engagement. They were:

- The HPS project does not mean much to our school because ...
- Only rich and good schools can be HPSs.
- We do not have time to speak about health matters because we want to pass the exams.
- HPSs are more for learners than for teachers.
- The HPS project is not necessary at our school because we do enough through the curriculum.

A group discussion followed the non-verbal exercise and learners challenged one another and clarified the claims they had made. Thereafter learners worked in small groups to negotiate individual understandings of the HPS project and drew a group metaphor. The groups presented the metaphors and their underlying meanings in an “art gallery” and answered clarifying questions. At the end of the workshop learners were introduced to photovoice, its ethics, and the use of digital cameras.

Taking photographs

Over the following two weeks five paired groups in each school collected 10 photographs each of what made their school an HPS and what did not. Each photograph and its meaning were recorded using the SHOWeD mnemonic (Shaffer, 1983; Wang, 1999):

- What do we See here?
- What’s really Happening here?
- How does this relate to Our lives?
- Why does this problem, concern or strength exist?
- What can we Do about it?

Workshop two: Choosing photographs and sharing meanings

For the second workshop each pair selected and presented the two most meaningful photographs, using the SHOWeD mnemonic. The presentations ended with a photo-elicitation interview (Jorgenson & Sullivan, 2010) of the most pertinent issues raised by the photographs.

Workshop three: Comparing, contrasting and forming judgments

Learners were taken to an HPS school in another suburb, different to their own: a primary school in an African community. The aim of the exercise was to expand their thoughts and experiences through interactions with another HPS and to use the photovoice methodology to discuss these. During the visit they interacted with learners and teachers and participated in HPS activities. At the end of the visit they connected their reflective writing, metaphorical drawings and photographs of their own school to what they observed and learnt at this primary school.

Peer interviews: Synthesizing and making meaning

Two learners from each school were selected to participate in semi-structured peer interviews. The interviews were conducted by the facilitators to clarify and expand certain concepts and discussions which were raised across the workshops and to draw common themes across the schools.

Presentation of data

At the end of the process participants presented their photographs and experiences on the project to a group of learners, parents and the HPS project team. Each school received a set of photographs to display in the school foyer.

Data analysis

The different data sets were analyzed using a montage metaphor, as described by Beach (2001), by studying the common pieces of information obtained through the different data-gathering processes. According to Beach (*ibid*:317):

portions of pictures (or texts) can be carefully built up piece by piece by cutting and fitting each part with the others to make a story that is actually (then) put together from separate sources made at separate space-time locations, but that are 'clipped together' thematically in a manner that also provides an effect of some kind of continuity. ... [M]ontage concentrates more on one (or two) media at a time (sequentially) in the creation of a story.

The montage was started with the common threads and new insights of learners' perceptions of the broad social, physical and emotional health issues which ran through the different workshop processes. Issues which were controversial and challenging for learners and which affected their lives in the school and in the community were connected to the common threads and new insights, building a layered and multi-dimensional picture. Three main themes emerged. A theme was defined as having emerged from the reflective writing, metaphors, group discussions and school visit, and having at least two photographs and compelling stories per school. The themes were followed up with learners in the peer interviews to check their veracity.

Discussion of findings

The three themes identified were "Diversity and Ubuntu", "Smoking, Authority and Power" and "Violence and Gangsterism". Each theme will be discussed with supporting quotes.

Theme 1: Diversity and Ubuntu

The learners' metaphors portrayed positive images of a diverse school community living in harmony through Ubuntu, e.g. the rainbow nation with the Ubuntu philosophy; a fountain with the words "hope", "happiness", "love", "peace", "joy" and people uniting as different cultures; a school where everybody is treated equally and fairly; a school community with members caring for one another and caring about homeless children, and the importance of standing and working together.

Conversely, data from the school visits and group discussions revealed that diversity and Ubuntu were issues that learners struggled to come to terms with. They live in communities historically and geographically separated by race and even though they were too young to experience apartheid, their experiences and perceptions of the “Other” are based on fear and negative stereotypes. Many learners visited an African township for the first time and they were afraid. Visiting the township school carried with it connotations of severe danger and severe deprivation. One of the learners said during the bus drive:

It was in Die Son [local newspaper] about a man who was stabbed [in this township] and they cut out his heart and private parts. I was scared and I told the others. And they were scared too. (Field notes: Bus discussion)

The bus discussion greatly influenced learners’ anticipation of the experience at the school. Lena and André reflected on the school visit during the peer interviews:

Lena: I thought when I would come out of the bus, they would throw us with tomatoes or something else or that they would shoot and I was scared and I thought they would steal or that they would shoot the wheels of the bus.

André: I thought: “Why must HPS go to a black school, they could have gone to a white school”. ... I think the scariest part was once the bus stood still.

Lena: Jaaaaaaa.

André: Then everyone was like in panic.

Lena: ... I was scared. I sat there and I thought and I criticised the black culture. I didn’t want to come out of the bus, because they are black and I am better than them. When I entered the school and saw there were so many black people, I wanted to cry. I kept myself together and I saw the wonderful things they are doing there. And by blending in with them, I realised they are people like me. Then I started to love them and I saw they even do good things with worms and we laughed and it was nice to be with them.

Once they entered the school and interacted with the learners and joined in the activities, Lena showed a photograph she took to speak about her confrontation with reality:

Lena: As you can see there, our biggest fear was the worms ... Worms in your hand, I don’t like it. It was chilly, but anyway ... [silence] ... I have learnt a lot. Yes ... [silence] My biggest fear was for black people. Coming to the school like that, I’m not going to interact, because I hate black people. But they proved me wrong ... I went to give them hugs. And that is what my biggest fear was. And worms ... But when I was back at home, I wrote down in my diary how wonderful the day was ... The next day, everybody was talking about it at school. (Focus group discussion: School visit)

The same sentiments were expressed in the peer interviews:

André: We were thinking. “How does the school even look? Is it like broken down?”

Lena: That is what we were all thinking. The school will have broken windows.

André: And then we saw that the school looked way better than our school. And we were actually very impressed with how the children were.

Lena: Mmmm ... They opened up a new world to me for blacks.

Facilitator: What did they do to make you change your mind?

Lena: Just the things they do for creatures and for their health; like their garden and for the worms. And stuff I don’t even do like yoga, soul buddies, dancing, singing... I don’t even do that. I thought it was for white people, they do that and I saw no, black people does it as well. Why must I criticise

against them? I only thought they bring xenophobia in the country and that's why I started to hate the black people and not starting to like them. Now I greet every black person that passes me.

She explains her initial feelings towards black people:

Lena: *For me, it was... I listen more what other people were saying, like: "Black people are getting more work and stuff". So I was supporting what other people were saying and I didn't have my own view.*

Their earlier positive expressions of diversity and Ubuntu in the metaphors and group discussions were challenged during the school visit, i.e., they became aware of their racial stereotypes and anxieties. This visit was a confrontation with reality and brought greater awareness of the complexities of living in a diverse society and the need to learn more about one another. At the end of the peer interview Lena was proud that she had the courage to express her prejudices openly. Her reflections and the group discussions helped her to formulate a new point of view which supports closer contact between different race groups:

Races don't have to be separate, they have to work together. Ubuntu ... When we come closer together, Ubuntu will be stronger.

Many school-going young people in South Africa may not have experienced the full meaning of apartheid and are therefore unaware of what is feeding the fear between communities. In these conversations learners expressed their sources of fear and tried to understand them. The active pursuit of this theme in the research started to lift the layers of awareness, for both learners and facilitators, and supported the development of a critical consciousness, i.e., the awareness and recognition of conditions and forces which shape their perceptions and experiences and impede their healthy development.

Theme 2: Smoking, Authority and Power

Another strong theme throughout the study was learners' attempts to understand the relationship between smoking and the power vested in authority figures and school policies. In the metaphors and focus group discussions learners expressed strong views that smoking should not be allowed at an HPS school and assumed the teachers and the anti-smoking policies of the school would support them. Interesting discussions about power and authority were raised when pictures of learners and teachers smoking cigarettes were showed. In the photo-elicitation interviews they expressed frustration and helplessness when confronted with the reality of some learners and teachers smoking inside and outside of the smoking corners on the premises.

Learners who were prefects spoke about their frustration with the prefect system, which was effective most of the time, but their authority, given to them by the teachers, was undermined by teachers and prefects who smoke. In the peer interviews Lena and André discussed their dilemma of wanting to stop smokers but not having the power to do so, because smoking is unofficially allowed by both teachers and learners. They feel even more powerless when those in leadership positions undermine their own authority by not leading by example. Being allowed to take a smoking teacher's photograph in one school evoked the following reaction from Lena during the photo-elicitation interview:

Yes. She can smoke, right. But if she was teacher enough and she cared about the school, she could have just said: "No, XXXX, don't take the photo. How would our school look like?" We must respect the school and care about the image of the school. She definitely didn't care about the image of the school. She allowed taking the picture.

She describes a feeling of frustration: "How can we stop the learners if even teachers cannot be an example?" In the peer interview Lena and André describe an incident where the principal openly smoked in front of the learners:

André: *... Our principal, he smokes on the premises of the school. He walks around with his cigarette.*

Lena: *Yeah, we see it ... we were practising for the Grade 12's thing. And so the principal came in with his cigarette ... So the whole choir was like standing there in the hall, and everybody saw him*

with his cigarette, like, telling people what to do. He's the principal. He must like be an example for us not to smoke in front of us. He must also obey the school's rule.

A picture of a hand holding a dagga (marijuana) joint raised frustration and powerlessness during the photo-elicitation interview. Examples were shared of learners who smoke dagga during breaks and then become disruptive in class, having a negative impact on the learning process. They spoke about their own powerlessness in addressing this type of abuse and also, in a jocular way, how the authority of the principal is undermined by him being offered a joint.

Facilitator: *Do they deal at school?*

Learners (group): *Yes.*

Joseph: *But they tried to sell it to the principal also.*

Learners (group): *[laughter]*

Facilitator: *How does all of this affect you?*

Joseph: *As an HPS member it makes me angry and frustrated because it gives a bad impression of the school.*



Figure 1: A hand holding a dagga (marijuana) joint

Through this debate about smoking and authority learners spoke about their own moral codes and insights on what is “good” and “right” for themselves and the school and their perceptions of the injustices and inconsistencies in human behaviour. They learn about symbolic and real power and authority within the complexities of school life, about the dialectical relationship between theory and action, and developed a critique of what is said and what is done, as well as the requirements for social action. Through this experience learners did not necessarily find the answers to these issues, but developed opportunities to build capacities, especially voice, in order to participate in debates in the public sphere, either at school or in the community.

Theme 3: Violence and Gangsterism

The school as a safe and unsafe place was another strong theme throughout the study. All three schools experienced incidents of violence and security measures were in place to keep learners safe. In two metaphorical drawings learners characterized their school as peaceful and hopeful.

It is a safe place, where violence and drugs are not part of.

In their reflective writing two learners expressed what makes their school unsafe:

Learner: *The fact that learners fight and swear. They smoke. Learners write on the walls.*

Learner: *They make the school [an] unsafe place. They bring weapons to school.*

The photographs of the three schools produced corroborating images of their schools as unsafe places. The connection between drugs, gangsterism and safety was strengthened in the photo-elicitation interview. A picture of a broken pot helped one learner make the connections.

Roslyn: *The pot was broken by outsiders that came in our school. They could not find anything valuable so they did this and they also opened the taps ... Thieves are everywhere and our school's safety is always in danger ... The gates must be closed at all times to prevent this problem from happening again. It exists because people are doing drugs and craving for more. We need to make our school a safer place. (Photo-elicitation interview)*

Another photograph depicting the same connections was of a gang- and drug-free pledge hidden behind a copy machine. Two learners' written description of the same photograph is as follows:

This policy was hidden at the back of a copy masjine [sic]. We think it should be placed in our school hall so that everyone can see it and maybe just maybe [sic] they'll have a change in their lives and stop doing these things at their school. (Learner photo-elicitation notes)

If children see this then they will start respecting their school environment and we ... would feel more protected and safe, because of this pledge. It would possibly also lower the crime in our schools. (Learner photo-elicitation notes)



Figure 2: Drawing depicting a gang- and drug-free pledge

In the photo-elicitation interview learners stated that much more should be done to make the school a safer place. At one of the schools the security was increased after a violent incident. The learners who took the photograph reflected on the incident as follows:

What we can see over here is a security person, Bambanani². What really happens here is that the security person helps to protect the safety of the school. How does this relate to our lives? When a person doesn't feel safe, he is consciously anxious, because you don't know what will happen with your life.

A constant feeling of being unsafe, the presence of security and the searching of bags had an impact on the emotional well-being of the learners. Yet, the reality for many learners living with the reality of violence in township schools is tighter security and less space to move around. Learners from another school wrote about an incident at the school, how it affected their lives and what was done about it:

...this thing has happened at school. People and their friends take weapons with to school and they ran into one of the learners and there was a fight. That is why the Bambanani's are there. Now the learners feel safer. Every morning when we enter the school they search the learners. How does this relate to our school? The learners feel safer at school with the security. (Photo-elicitation notes)

The reality of the influence of gangsterism, violence and substance abuse to learners is that it can either adversely affect them or motivate them to rise above it. In the peer interviews they reflect on how their knowledge of the adverse affects of violence and substance abuse motivated them to make healthy choices:

Aubrey: In my case, I have an older brother who uses tik³. I see every day how it is. That's how come I will never use it. I will never recommend somebody to use tik, because ...

Roslyn: [interrupts] ... It destroys your life ...

Aubrey: I will say you don't have to use your circumstances as an excuse not to do what you have to do. Those circumstances, those challenges, they have to be a reason to do everything within your power to get out of it.

Roslyn: When I look at the people in the community, I want to be better. I don't want to stay in this environment forever.

Joseph (echoing the same sentiment in a different peer interview): ... [I want] to be more successful in life one day and to be a someone or something.

Taking action

The *Learner Voice* process inspired learners to take action in the HPS project:

HPS is not only talking, it's also taking action. (Metaphorical drawing)

Shana and Sophie: Give children more opportunities to prove themselves. (Learner photo-elicitation notes)

During the peer interview Joseph felt inspired to strengthen existing HPS plans:

For example, the soccer tournament. It's an opportunity to have a spokesperson to talk about HPS and what it is all about. Or even an open day where there are volunteers to make people aware of HPS.

2 Bambanani (*stand together/unite*) is designed to unite all people and partners against crime and enhances relations between the police and the communities in crime prevention. <http://www.capecapegateway.gov.za/eng/directories/projects/14973/94688> (19/12/2009)

3 A South African word for methamphetamine.

Learner action, in accordance with the PAR methodology, was taken in a feedback session with parents, learners and teachers. Each school presented their photographs and experiences on the *Learner Voice* project and a short play depicting the challenges that learners are facing at school and in the community. A TB march in the community and an interschool soccer tournament were also held, with the support of the teachers and the HPS project team, UWC.

Summary

In this paper we attempted to show how sequential and responsive use of creative and participatory methodologies can foster a research environment where the participatory rights of children are foregrounded and children's evolving capacities for participation in the school and wider public sphere are supported. We have attempted to show how the participatory methodologies not only encouraged the active participation of young people but also facilitated mutual learning in the research team. Carefully selected creative and participatory methodologies offered learners the opportunity to explore issues and ideas as well as the space to speak about these issues and ideas.

Conclusion

We contend that children's participation in research should be more than their token inclusion and the use of direct quotes as representative of "voice". Acknowledgement of the imbalances of power, status and expertise in the research relationship and the necessity of building relationships of trust and mutual respect should be given as well as ways in which these imbalances and relationships were worked with. A PAR process using creative and responsive methodologies allowed learners in this study to develop a critical consciousness of abstract and complex social issues such as justice, fairness, diversity and unequal power relations, and a language to enter into conversations about these. Learners' involvement in the *Learner Voice* project expanded their understanding of HPSs and their role as agents in creating healthy environments.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge with appreciation the learners and staff at the schools who willingly gave of their time and themselves to make this research possible. We thank the HPS project team at the UWC and staff at the University of Ghent for the financial and professional support provided for this research.

The school workshops were funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), South Africa. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.

References

- Babbi E & Mouton J 2001. *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Beach D 2001. Artistic representation and research writing. *Reflective Practice*, **2(3)**:313-329.
- Booth T & Booth W 2003. In the frame: Photovoice and mothers with learning difficulties. *Disability and Society*, **18(4)**:431-442.
- Bray R & Moses S 2011. Children and participation in South Africa: Exploring the landscape. *Perspectives in Education*, **29(1)**:6-17.
- Darbyshire P 2000. Guest editorial: From research on children to research with children. *Neonatal, Pediatric and Child Health Nursing*, **3(1)**:2-3.
- Davis JM 1998. Understanding the meanings of children: A reflexive process. *Children and Society*, **12**:325-335.
- Dennis SF, Gaulocher S, Carpiano RM & Brown D 2008. Participatory photo mapping (PPM): Exploring an integrated method for health and place research with young people. *Health and Place*, **15**:466-473.

- Ellsworth E 1989. Why doesn't it feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. In: C Luke & J Gore (eds). *Feminism and critical pedagogy*. London: Routledge.
- Ginwright S & Cammarota J 2007. Youth activism in the urban community: Learning critical civic praxis within community organisations. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, **20(6)**:693-710.
- Henderson, P 2011. Theorising creative expression in children's participation. *Perspectives in Education*, **29(1)**:18-27.
- Jasper MA 2005. Using reflective writing within research. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, **10(3)**:247-260.
- Jorgenson J & Sullivan T 2010. Accessing children's perspectives through participatory photo-interviews. *Qualitative Social Research*, **11(1)**. Retrieved on 26 January 2010 from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/viewArticle/447/2890>.
- Markham W & Aveyard P 2003. A new theory of health promoting schools based on human functioning, school organisation and pedagogic practice. *Social Science and Medicine*, **56(6)**:1209-20.
- McIntyre A 2000. Constructing meaning about violence, school and community: Participatory action research with urban youth. *The Urban Review*, **32(2)**:123-154.
- Perry C & Cooper M 2001. Metaphors are good mirrors: Reflecting on change for teacher educators. *Reflective Practice*, **2(1)**:41-52.
- Punch S 2002. Research with children. The same or different from research with adults? *Childhood*, **9(3)**:321-341.
- Ranson S 2000. Recognising the pedagogy of voice in a learning community. *Educational Management and Administration*, **28(3)**:263-279.
- Shaffer R 1983. *Beyond the dispensary*. Nairobi, Kenya: Amref.
- Shallwani S & Mohamed S 2007. *Community-based participatory research. A training manual for community-based researchers*. Retrieved on 10 November 2009 from <http://individual.utoronto.ca/sadaf/resources/cbpr2007.pdf>.
- Strack RW, Magil C & McDonagh K 2004. Engaging youth through photovoice. *Health Promotion Practice*, **5(1)**:49-58.
- Thomas N & O'Kane C 1998. The ethics of participatory research with children. *Children and Society*, **12**:336-348.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. 1989. Retrieved on 23 October 2010 from <http://www.ohchr.org>.
- Van Staa A, Jedeloo S, Latour JM & Trappenburg MJ 2009. Exciting but exhausting: Experiences with participatory research with chronically ill adolescents. *Health Expectations*, **13**:95-107.
- Walton E 2011. "They discuded me": Possibilities and limitations of children's participation in inclusion research in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, **29(1)**:84-93.
- Wang CC 1999. Photovoice: A participatory action research strategy applied to women's health. *Journal of Women's Health*, **8**:185-192.
- Wang CC & Burris MA 1997. Photovoice: Concept, methodology and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education and Behaviour*, **24(3)**:369-387.
- Wilson L 2009. Pupil participation: Comments from a case study. *Health Education*, **109(1)**:86-102.

(Endnotes)

1. For an account of creative methodologies in other forms of participatory research with children, see Henderson (2011) in this issue.