

Reflections on Doing a Participatory Action Research: Case Study of Three Rural Communities in KwaZulu-Natal

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ABSTRACT This paper presents reflections and written notes of two researchers about their experiences in conducting a participatory action research (PAR), using an ethnographic approach, in three rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal. The study sought to understand the complex relationship between rurality and education within the context of rural poverty. This paper highlights some crucial methodological issues with which the researchers grappled, as the research unfolded. The issues include those of power, patriarchy, and ethics in research. The results indicate that patriarchal issues still dominated and influenced the direction of the research. It also influenced the extent to which women participated in the research. Expectations of the community of the benefits of their participation also influenced the relationship between them and the researchers. It also emerged that conventional ethical considerations may not be acceptable to the people who have been subjected to marginalization of various kinds. Implications for employing PAR for community development are highlighted.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is a narrative, reflective account of two researchers' experiences of conducting an ethnographic participatory action research (PAR) that was conducted in three rural communities of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The study was conducted between April 2007 and January 2010. The three communities were Nyamazane at Nongoma, Mqayi at Empangeni and Nyambose at Eshowe. The names of towns are real but the names of communities are *pseudonyms*. The study on which this paper is based, sought to understand the lives of the learners, teachers and the community, particularly in relation to education provision within the context of rural poverty. It was therefore essential to understand and experience these rural communities from their own perspectives. To do this, a PAR approach was adopted which was rooted in ethnographic methods.

Insider concept implies that ethnographers do not position themselves as neutral but instead they view themselves as participants in the research process (Genzuk 2003). They tend to embed themselves in the context and acquire the habits of those being studied from an insider's perspective (Genzuk 2003). There has been a tendency whereby researchers conduct their studies in rural communities and pay less attention to issues of community participation in re-

search, with less focus on empowerment and community mobilization. This study is significant in the sense that it addresses all three issues mentioned above. In the South African context, rural schools experience peculiar challenges compared to their urban or township counterparts. These relate to issues of poverty, limited availability of basic infrastructure and services such as the supply of clean piped water, electricity, transport and roads (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005). The researchers' reflections touch on their experiences of methodological intricacies and dilemmas they faced in the process of conducting the research. The study used an ethnographic approach due to its inherent strengths in trying to understand communities, particularly in rural areas. These include the focus on community rather than individuals (Schensul and LeCompte 2013) and its ability to be used as a means for tapping the local point of view, and for allowing both bottom-up insights as well as perspectives of powerful policymakers in interactive engagements (Genzuk 2003).

Different scholars have described ethnography differently. For instance, Nieuwenhuis (2007) regards it as a study focusing on describing a group of people or community, mainly with a view to establishing hidden inferences that may for example, distinguish a wink from a nod from its cultural perspectives. Genzuk (2003) describes it as a social science research method that relies on personal experiences and possible participation, not just observations by research-

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ers trained in the art of ethnography. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) describe ethnography as means that the researcher sets out to understand and describe a setting with which he or she is unfamiliar. LeCompte and Schensul (2010) describe it as an approach to understanding social and cultural life of communities. These scholars emphasize that it is scientific, uses scholars as primary instruments to generate data, rigorously uses multiple data generation techniques as a means to reduce biases and emphasizes, and builds on the perspectives of the people in the research setting (LeCompte and Schensul 2010). Researchers spend considerable time staying in the field without disturbing the natural setting (Nieuwenhuis 2007; Cohen et al. 2011; Bertram and Christiansen 2014).

The researchers acknowledge that as people who did not reside in these communities, they were outsiders. Therefore, through the methodological approach that was used, the researchers attempted to get inside their lives. More discussion on this aspect is provided in the methodology section.

Two research questions underpinned the study as follows.

- ♦ What are experiences of people living in rural and poor communities with regards to education?
- ♦ What is the relationship between education and rural poverty?

It needs to be clarified at the outset that for the purposes of this paper, the focus is not on how the abovementioned questions were addressed but on how the researchers experienced the process of addressing them. The researchers do this being aware that sometimes, the boundaries between the content and methods in research become blurred.

More specifically, they were interested in understanding how the voices of these communities were articulated in the research process, and also the extent to which their lives were improved during and/or after the research has ended (Gaventa and Cornwell 2008).

Participatory Action Research (PAR) Framework

Community participation in the research process has, in the past few decades, received attention (Gaventa and Cornwell 2008). Similarly, the advent of democracy in South Africa has

had impetus for values such as citizen participation in issues that affect their lives. The importance of this concept lies in its focus on both “having a voice and being listened to” (Bartholdsson 2003: 128). This view contributed to the two researchers’ choice of PAR and also to their consciousness as they prepared for access to these rural communities and implement their research. Therefore, PAR was adopted as a framework to underpin this study, and this paper focuses on how the two researchers experienced using PAR as a framework for conducting research. PAR research can be described broadly as an approach that endeavors to produce knowledge in collaborative partnership with those being researched, and who are affected by that knowledge (Rahman 2008). The knowledge that is produced is meant to be used by the same underprivileged people to improve their social, educational and material conditions (Aragonès and Sánchez-Pagés 2009).

Participatory action research emphasizes active participation of the researched in the research process (Kemmis 2008). The PAR approach to researching rural communities is underpinned by the principles of promoting community dialogue and power, multiple voices, avoidance of easy answers, non-deficit model, new conversations, action and reflections, challenge, flexibility, openness, and the principle that relationships count (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005). These principles undergirded the researchers’ approach and activities throughout the study. The researchers made efforts to create a platform where the local community could actively participate in the research, particularly through the use of community-based researchers, youth researcher teams, community reference groups, and community indabas. A detailed description of these techniques is made in the methodology section.

The concept ‘Action’ in PAR can refer to research-for-action and is characterized by a focus on action that has to be taken after completing the research process (Huizer 1997). Action can also refer to research-through-action, and this is characterized by emphasis on activities of emancipatory and social transformation (Kemmis 2008) nature in the research field. Such activities can be used by concerned groups to change their situation for the better (Huizer 1997). It also emphasizes on how to effect change in the most effective ways through group forma-

tions and common action on their own behalf (Huizer 1997). In the context of this study, using the abovementioned techniques, the researchers had anticipated that these communities would, at the end of the research, be able to think about and actually begin some activities, which could have the potential to change their lives for the better.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative research approach within an emancipatory research framing. Emancipatory research is embedded in the notion and belief that the participants must be empowered (Aragonès and Sánchez-Pagés 2009). This approach shares certain characteristics with Action Research (AR) with its emphasis on conducting research with the participants' actively involved in its processes (Kane and Chimwayange 2014). The communities where the study was conducted were purposively selected using a variety of criteria such as previous research that was conducted in the area, community being under traditional authority as defined in Traditional Leadership Governance Framework Act of 2003 and Traditional Leadership and Governance Act of 2005 (Republic of South Africa 2003; KwaZulu-Natal Legislature 2005). Purposive selection is a qualitative research method, which entails the researcher deciding on people who display a certain set of characteristics (Cohen et al. 2011), and may be appropriate where the researcher wants to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis 2007).

Permission to conduct the study was negotiated first with the Department of Education at provincial level with school principals at the school level and with *Amakhosi* (Chiefs) at the community level around the schools. After the DoE had granted permission, the two researchers went to the schools accompanied by officials from the Department of Education. They then requested the school principals to introduce them to the traditional leadership structures. It is a norm that access to local communities in rural areas under *Amakhosi* (Chiefs) in KwaZulu-Natal is gained through negotiations with the traditional leadership structures. The next step entailed setting up a structure called the Community Reference Group (CRG). This structure was composed of people in influential

positions in each community such as principals, School Governing Bodies (SGBs), Municipal Councilors and *Izinduna*, who formed a part of traditional leadership and occupied a lower level just below the Chiefs. The CRG provided leadership, general guidance and advice about how the research could be done in order to ensure that the research process could succeed. This is one way in which the community participated in the research process, and not just as the researched.

Coming back to the research process, there was a research team, which consisted of three layers. The first layer consisted of outside research specialists (the researchers of this paper). The second layer consisted of six Community Researchers (CRs), two from each of the three communities. The CRs were appointed from the youth who had completed the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination and therefore had a reasonable understanding of English as well as basic reading and writing skills, and they also stayed in the community and were unemployed. Their appointment to the research project followed a formal and transparent selection process after the research project had been introduced to the leadership structures in each community. They performed various research activities that were assigned to them. The third layer consisted of the youth volunteers who were also unemployed but had completed NSC, and they were called the Youth Researcher Team (YRT). Unlike the CRs, the YRT was not formally appointed and did not receive a stipend. On average, there were five to six members in the YRT in each community.

A variety of methods were used to generate data and these included focus group discussions (FGD), semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, learner essays, photo voice and shadowing of selected participants. Focus group discussions were held with women, men, teachers and Grade Six learners. Each session of FGDs lasted for between one hour and one and half hours. Generally, group sizes ranged from 8 to 10 participants. The FGD size was deemed appropriate in terms of the norm (Cheng 2007; Cooper and Hall 2014). Focus Group Discussions are credited for enabling researchers to engage participants in deeper conversations about their social realities within their specific contexts (Cooper and Hall 2014). Semi-structured interviews were held with out-of-school youths, par-

ents or guardians of these youths, and also with senior citizens. Both the FGD and the semi-structured interviews elicited data about these participants' experiences of education. FGD and semi-structured interviews are efficacious for their flexibility and for enabling the participants to express themselves freely (Cohen et al. 2011).

Researchers also conducted classroom observations with Grade 6 learners and their teachers in each of the three participating schools. In addition, Grade 6 learners were also asked to write essays in which they expressed their experiences of schooling. The shadowing technique was also used with the teachers and Grade 6 learners in order to capture what was called 'Day-in-the-life-of' these participants. With the exception of semi-structured interviews and photo voices, narrative recording was used for classroom observations and the 'Day-in-the life of' techniques. These entail the researcher making descriptions of interactions in his or her own words (Kumar 2011). Photo voice is another method that was used to elicit visual data about facilities and infrastructure that existed in the three communities, and the meaning they attached to such facilities. The overarching purpose of using these methods was to obtain a comprehensive picture about the experiences of education of different categories of community members in the context of rural poverty. Trustworthiness of the findings arrived at through the methods mentioned above was ensured through the use of various techniques such as triangulation of the sources and that of the methods or techniques, member-checking during the discussions, as well as confirmability. To enhance rigor and trustworthiness, the researchers shared their respective notes and reflected on what had been observed in the communities. Further, reflections were held with the whole research team comprising the two researchers and the community researchers (Schensul and LeCompte 2013).

RESULTS

The results are presented in two phases, with the first focusing on how research questions were addressed and the second focusing on issues directly relating to the researchers' experiences of conducting the study. These are presented under six themes that were delineated from the analysis, and these are, (a) Experiences

of education by the rural poor communities, (b) Relationship between education and poverty, (c) 'Unfulfilled' community expectations, (d) Power dynamics and research process, (e) Ethical dilemmas in qualitative research, and (f) Participatory Action Research, Community mobilization and Giving voice to the voiceless.

DISCUSSION

Experiences of Education by the Rural Poor Communities

"The future of the children lies in the provision of good quality education", exclaimed one parent in the focus group discussion (FGD). This sentiment was shared by all parents in the FGD. Contrary to popular beliefs regarding the use of indigenous languages in schools, women, men and the youth that were interviewed, all emphasized the acquisition of English speaking and writing skills as the benchmark of quality education that was provided. Their conception of good quality education was characterized by the learners' ability to speak fluent English, which they believed enabled them to find employment and changed their situation for the better. In the same vein, according to the parents, good teachers are those that enable learners to speak fluent English. However, the perceptions among these parents were that the teachers in these schools were unable to speak English fluently, and therefore, could not enable the learners to do so either. Therefore, their situation was not improving to match their township counterparts or those who lived in towns and cities whom they viewed as having an advantage when competing for job opportunities.

Parents and the schools were not communicating as well as they should, and consequently, an imaginary barrier had developed that separated schools from communities in which they were located (Bhengu 2007). Accusations and counter accusations have continued between teachers and parents regarding the existence and cause of this barrier. Teachers accused parents of apathy, saying that they *"don't care about the education of their children"* because they do not attend the parents' meetings. Parents on the other hand, accused the teachers for making schools hostile environments. They said that *"schools are no-go areas"* for the parents, and they felt *"unwelcome due to teachers' attitudes"*

towards them”, argued one parent. This view is supported by literature as follows, “...the reality is that many parents do not set foot on the school premises” (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005: 119). The chasm between the parents and the schools on one hand, and the schools and communities within which they are located has been widely written about in South Africa (See Bhengu 2007; Hands 2010; Naicker 2012; Myende 2013; Myende and Chikoko 2014). This persists despite empirical evidence pointing to the benefits of the schools and communities working collaboratively (Hlalele 2012; Loots et al. 2012; Myende and Chikoko 2014).

The Relationship between Education and Poverty

The connection between education and poverty was visible and interwoven. The poorer the family, the less the opportunities are for the learner to finalize schooling due to high prevalence of the dropout phenomenon, which is caused by various factors including unsupportive teachers. Many out-of-school youth narrated horrifying stories about what caused them to drop out of school. Many of these youths highlighted that they were subjected to corporal punishment for late coming and also for not wearing full school uniform. Many of these learners walked long distances to and from schools and also could not afford to buy shoes due to the poverty situation. In winter, going to school is a tall order if one combines long distances to be travelled and without shoes. It is worse if one has to be beaten for not putting on shoes.

Education provided in the three communities was limited to primary and up to Grade 10, which is what can be called lower secondary schools. To study for the National Senior Certificate, children had to leave their respective communities and stay in far-flung areas where Grade 12 classes are available. Various participants in the FGD raised concerns saying that, under conditions of poverty, education beyond secondary school is unlikely for the majority of youth. One woman in the FGD exclaimed, “*And even those with good NSC passes and higher education qualifications are not likely to find employment if they remain in these villages.*” This is indicative of the enormity of the challenges they faced in these communities as obtaining NSC certificate or even junior degrees were no guarantees for employment, especially if they remained in their respective villages.

‘Unfulfilled’ Community Expectations

Conversations with adult members of these communities suggested that they expected the researchers to bring some tangible benefits in relation to education and development. Members of these communities saw the arrival of researchers as the opportunity for them to receive community development benefits. Such expectations were fuelled by a number of factors including the fact that the two researchers drove decent but hired cars. To make the situation worse, each time the researchers visited these communities they used a different car. To people who do not understand how the car hire sector operates, the conduct of the researchers constituted opulence. Therefore, their presence in the communities could easily be understood as being about bringing tangible benefits for them. This is despite the fact that when the research project was introduced to these communities, no promises were made about financial rewards or any similar benefits.

The local traditional leader articulated their expectations during the big community meetings called ‘*Community Indaba*’ when he implored the community to express their needs, saying that if they do not talk, they would not receive anything from the researchers. This is what he said:

This is the opportunity for you to tell them [read researchers] everything you need because if you don’t, they won’t know what exactly you need (Prince Mthethwa).

Similar views had been expressed at other research sites as well, which indicated that the researchers’ presence in their respective communities was seen as providing space for them to express their development wishes to the wider society. Such expectations occur particularly in situations where the vulnerable and the poor, from rural communities are involved (Bennett and Roberts 2005). However, in the context of this study, it is evident that the researchers’ denial that they could bring development to the communities was tantamount to unfulfilled expectations.

Power Dynamics and the Research Process

Power dynamics in research usually focus on the researcher-researched relations, particularly in qualitative research mainly due to its naturalistic (Cohen et al. 2011) character. Scholar-

ship in qualitative research suggests that power keeps on shifting throughout the process from the researcher to the researched and *vice versa* in terms of pace, agenda, and nature of overall participation (Henning et al. 2004). However, the dynamics discussed here relate mainly to the dominant social position that men hold over women in these rural communities, and this potentially can obfuscate the true reality.

The dominant position of men in the social strata in these communities impacted women participation in the study. For instance, patriarchy that existed in the past decades and centuries seemed to persist. The manifestations of male dominance could be evidenced by women having to obtain approval for participation in the study from their husbands who, in many instances, were at their places of employment in the cities. In addition, while women were able to articulate their own contributions to community development during FGD, they had difficulties in talking openly about their achievements in the presence of men during *Community Indaba*, which served as report back sessions. *Community Indaba* is a term that was used to describe the phase in the research process where a platform was created for the initial findings to be presented to the whole community for them to comment, add or correct the researchers' interpretations of what was emerging from the analysis. What struck the researchers is that during focus group discussions, tremendous women's leadership prowess had emerged but these women withdrew from the limelight when big public gatherings were held and men took the front seat.

During the same *Community Indabas*, the youth demonstrated their insightful understanding of their parents' attitudes towards education and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Because they understood the conservative and hierarchical nature of their community, which did not allow young people to speak out their minds to the adults, they crafted creative ways of expressing their views. They composed songs that were sung and staged plays that were demonstrated during the *Community Indaba*. The main theme of the songs and stage plays was on promoting awareness about HIV/AIDS, as well as challenging questionable adult practices regarding HIV/AIDS and how to prevent its spread. To talk about sex and/or safe sex in public by the youth was still a taboo in these rural communities.

However, through the PAR research project and the songs and stage plays, the youth felt empowered to share their message with the community on these critical issues. Such creativity is reminiscent of what Stein (1999) refers to as "saying the un-sayable" (Stein 1999: 36-37). A similar view is expressed by Karlsson (2001) in her study on the learners' spaces in the post-apartheid era, where working with learners, taking photos depicting their spaces, unveiled spaces researchers could not ordinarily gain access to.

Ethical Dilemmas in Qualitative Research

In carrying out research, there are conventional ethical procedures that are followed such as the principle of confidentiality (Houghton et al. 2010) and anonymity, which are used to comply with the non-maleficence principle. To avoid being identified and thus prevent possible harm, it is a common practice in research to conceal the identities of the participants (Cohen et al. 2011). However, ethical considerations are not unproblematic as they entail each researcher making choices about what he or she believes is right (McBurney and White 2004). The convention of hiding the participants' identities has in the past few decades received criticism from researchers for its failure to accommodate different perspectives, particularly from the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalized sections of society (Griffiths 1998). Their criticisms are largely based on inherent assumptions of this conventional practice that the participants do not like their identities revealed.

However, alternative perspectives suggest that some participants want their identities known, especially those who hold the view that they have remained faceless for a long time (Malcolm et al. 2004). To them, hiding their identities perpetuates the notion that ideas and knowledge are privileged over identity of people possessing that knowledge (Malcolm et al. 2004). Similarly, a contractual approach to ethics such as signing consent forms is culturally strange and the notion of anonymity is insulting (Malcolm et al. 2004). Therefore, different positions advanced in this regard invite all qualitative researchers to treat anonymity issues with extreme care and flexibility to ensure that the principle of non-maleficence is observed in a comprehensive and context sensitive manner.

In this study, the participants disliked the notion that when the report is written, their identities would be protected. To them, it sounded like a perpetuation of the marginalization they have suffered for a long time and therefore their situation would never be addressed. In fact, to these communities, being known by the outside world was considered to be very important, and this can be evidenced by what the traditional leader said during *Community Indaba* when he said:

We are grateful that the research team chose our area as their target community... Outsiders coming to our rural communities could mean taking communities to the outside world (Prince Mthethwa).

One of the ethical issues was the notion of informed consent (Henning et al. 2004). The assumption here is that each individual agrees to participate with a clear understanding of all the implications of the research project. However, as noted elsewhere in this paper, it is not clear whether or not all participants fully understood what the project sought to achieve. This is despite the fact that the researchers had informed them about the research aims. The more the researchers explained the research purposes to them, the more they seemed to expect the opposite. This aspect is directly linked to the 'unfulfilled' community expectations theme that was discussed earlier.

The third ethical issue that has been much debated on in the West is the question of ploughbacks to the researched communities (Bridges 2002; Bennett and Roberts 2005). To respond to this demand the Department of Education in England has made a ruling that a certain amount of money should be paid by researchers back to the researched communities. The two researchers' view is that such practices may be counterproductive in that it makes research more expensive. Also, it seems that such a move could only address short-term needs for cash but may ignore long-term benefits such as skills transfer and empowerment through, for instance, reflective practices that may be learned during the research. In the context of the PAR study that was conducted in the three communities, the youth was empowered in various ways. These included short-term income needs that were addressed through stipends to the CRs, and also the medium to long-term needs through the re-

search and writing skills that were taught as part of the research.

Participatory Action Research, Community Mobilization and Giving the Voice to the Voiceless

The researchers have highlighted in this paper the fact that this research was framed within the PAR methodology and had ethnographic elements in the manner in which it was designed and conducted. They have also mentioned that the communities, in which the study was conducted, were conservative and as such, young people and adults did not typically share any platform whatsoever. However, during the research process, certain unplanned for activities occurred, which had indications of community mobilization. While it may be argued that some of these benefits were part of the research project design, most of the benefits were serendipitous, as they did not form part of the research objectives. For instance, the youth and adult people started working together in community development projects.

The other serendipitous benefit related to community mobilization started when the community and the Ward Councilor began to jointly envision community development projects. For instance, Ward Councilors and other community structures that had not previously pooled their resources and collaboratively conceptualized community development projects began to do so. This is the essence of what Huizer (1997) refers to as 'research-through-action' as opposed to 'research-for-action'. This study was not meant to be research-for-action, but in all three communities, development action occurred during the course of the study. To support his point, a parent from Nyambose community had this to say:

Before the research there was no community development committee in my area. After the Community Researchers interviewed the Ward Councilor and found out that the Ward Councilor couldn't bring development without a development committee...hence a Community Development Committee was established...the impact is a big change.

The other serendipitous benefit related to the importance of stakeholders putting aside their personal differences and working together for the benefit of the community. One of them was a

Ward Councilor while the other was an *Induna* (traditional leader below the Chief). Because of this research project, they had to share a public platform during the course of the study and share their respective visions for the community. This did not go unnoticed by members in the community. What follows is one reflective journal entry made by the Community Researcher:

I have never seen a Ward Councillor sitting together with Induna but during indaba they were even eating together. Before the project started the youth had never been invited to participate in community matters, but during the workshop that changed (Nyamazane Community Researcher).

In the context of South Africa, a strange phenomenon had developed whereby, the two structures, that is, local municipalities and traditional leaders do not relate to each other, although they serve the same community. However, the above extract indicates that the two structures can work collaboratively for the benefit of the community.

Linked to mobilization of the community is the notion of giving voices to the voiceless. This sub-theme is directly linked to the methodology used, which according to the community members gave them the voice to speak and also to be known outside their respective communities. During the FGD with men and with women, it emerged that there had been a few survey research projects that they had participated in. The participants said that researchers came into the community, administered the questionnaires and then left for good. These members felt that they were being used by those researchers, left un-empowered, undervalued and not given proper recognition. It is against this backdrop that the community viewed the researchers' stay in their respective communities as recognizing them, loving them, and valuing them as people. In this regard a community leader at Nyamazane community said:

We now know that there are people out there who know that we exist...here are people who love us, care about our situation.

The researchers' experiences in these communities convinced them that the communities were given a voice to be heard by people who stayed far away in cities such as Durban. In addition, certain marginalized groupings such as the youth, women and out-of-school youth, got the opportunity to articulate their situation and publicly share their plight. Community Indabas

were used to bring together different voices as a culmination of long and protracted conversations covering a wide range of issues pertaining to the community, its life and its interactions with it. PAR approach used was a bottom-up and an interactive process rather than a one-off event.

CONCLUSION

The first conclusion that can be drawn from the findings is that all three communities had negative experiences with education whose quality was perceived to be poor. Linked to this conclusion is that despite such experiences, through the research project, there exists a potential for these communities to be empowered and do things for themselves. They had already expressed feelings of recognition, love and empowerment. The research had provided a platform for them to reflect on various issues affecting them. These included recognizing the assets that they possessed and that community mobilization was a reality that could help alleviate social ills that negatively affected them. The third conclusion is that issues of ethics in research are more complex than current literature suggests. Research literature seems to focus on the researchers' actions and what they want to achieve, and invariably, they tend to ignore what the researched communities want. Another finding is that irrespective of the communities feeling happy for being recognized, loved and empowered, they also expected researchers in the research projects to do certain things for them such as physical development assistance. This occurred despite the fact that the researchers assured them about what they came to do in these communities. Finally, the reflections of the two researchers indicate that using PAR approaches, particularly in previously marginalized communities, has potential benefits for both the communities studied and knowledge generation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the conclusions made above, there is a need to genuinely involve the researched communities in the research and PAR approaches remain one of the platforms that can ensure active and genuine community participation in research process. Conclusions also indicate that the issue of anonymity as part of

research ethics requires careful reconsideration. Added to this, it is recommended that PAR researchers should think carefully about how they appear in the communities being studied. Perhaps, the notion of going native, which is critical in ethnographic studies needs to be given more consideration as it has a bearing on the expectations of the researched.

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