Participatory visual methods and the mobilization of community knowledge

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Working towards more equitable research processes
Engaged research

Project: Enhancing capacity and reducing risk through 15 'Best Bets' for transformative adaptation with vulnerable residents on the Cape Flats

Fire

Flooding

Water shortage
Methods and process followed - same for all 3 research settings

How environmental hazards are experienced in households, neighbourhoods and communities

Digital storytelling
Community mapping
Photovoice

Lambert J. 2013
Asian Coalition for Housing Rights 1998
Wang C. and Burris M. 1996
Progressive research enquiry

What could be done before, during and after climate-related events to mitigate their impact?

What can community residents do for themselves and what are they unable to do?

What kind of assistance is available?

Where are the gaps in responsiveness and support?

What increases the risk of flooding

Title: People throwing the rubbish  |  Photographer: Asive Tsholani

In this picture you can see the sewerage and nappies. This problem of dirt and water mixing is caused by the people who are throwing the rubbish and dirty water here. Rainwater also adds to the problem. This lady is adding to the problem. There is no channel for the water to flow away. This is the biggest rubbish heap in SHF.
Collective review of all stories, maps and photos.

Democratic decision-making: which visual materials illustrated the most significant problems and priority solutions.

Triangulation of visual and narrative data.

Formulation of the ‘Best Bets’.

Drawing out potential interventions in more detail.

Participatory analysis
Best Bets to counteract water shortage

1. **Improved infrastructure** by upgrading low quality, fix what is broken and install more water metres, pipes, drains and taps.

2. **Making ‘Jojo’ tanks available** and affordable so that each household can have a small tank.

3. **Better communication from the municipality about water cut-offs** so that people can be better prepared.

4. **Improved engagement by the municipality** with Delft community members to listen and better understand their water challenges.

5. **Household innovations** to save water.

6. **Using public places and spaces to promote knowledge and awareness** about water saving challenges and possibilities e.g where to get help.
## Best Bet 6. Using public places for awareness raising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Bet</th>
<th>What is needed?</th>
<th>Why is this needed?</th>
<th>Who and how?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using public places and spaces to promote knowledge and awareness about water saving challenges</td>
<td>Mobile information centres in public spaces to share water-related information</td>
<td>Education on being waterwise is crucial to prevent water shortages</td>
<td>Who? City of Cape Town in partnership with ward councillors, the Delft Business Forum, NGOs, and community members</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Communal sharing of knowledge and information to change attitudes and behaviours towards water usage</td>
<td>Communal accountability and grassroots level water education aimed at children and adults alike will create solidarity and a water-wise community</td>
<td>How? - The Business Forum can provide each ward councillor with the contact information of qualified plumbers - Workshops to mobilise and train volunteers to run the mobile information centres - Neighbourhood watch groups can encourage behaviors with low water footprints</td>
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<td>Billboards, pamphleteering to spread information about water conscious behaviour</td>
<td>To create awareness on how to be more water conscious</td>
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<td>An open-door policy and 24-hour water &amp; sanitation emergency hotline service</td>
<td>To make water and sanitation information more accessible whilst streamlining the reporting of water-related issues</td>
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<td>A database of qualified plumbers in each ward</td>
<td>Unqualified plumbers are not equipped to fix plumbing sustainably</td>
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Community, researcher and policy engagement

- Community engagement events in the 3 research settings
- Policy engagement event
- Community-led presentations
- Multi-stakeholder round table discussions of Best Bets
- Co-production of knowledge
Challenges

• continuity

• being able to offer meaningful benefits and outcomes

• distress

• disconnect between marginalized citizens and the state
Recommendations for more equitable research

Engaged research practice:

• build lasting relationships in communities
• be present, stay in touch, follow through
• foster participation and ownership through visual methods
• navigate expectations throughout
• allocate time and resources that suit purpose and needs
• *be real about benefits*
Recommendations for more equitable research

Research dissemination: community, research and policy engagement

• community-led

• invest real time and resources in preparation with co-researchers

• work to have the right people in the room together
To find out more...

Water and Fire website: www.waterandfire.info

The Water and Fire Project - YouTube
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