EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Educational Research for Social Change

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Editorial

Anyway, what difference does this make? Arts-based methodologies in addressing HIV&AIDS

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As academics we are fond of saying, "This study raises more questions than it can answer." Indeed, the more we do, the more we realise just how many new questions emerge, and so it is with the impact of arts-based methodologies in addressing HIV&AIDS. We start with the questions posed by *Make art stop AIDS*, an art installation that has travelled the world, including South Africa, raising awareness about the AIDS pandemic through the visual arts such as photography, sculptures, paintings, video with sound, dresses made of condoms, digital photographs, interactive computer media, and beadwork. The two main questions the installation raises are: "How can art be a tool of education and information sharing?" and "Can art save lives?" (Not alone—An international project of Make Art/Stop AIDS, 2009). These questions very much reflect the wide-spread use of visual and other arts-based research worldwide as can be seen in the work of many international scholars such as Wang (1999); Pink (2001); Banks (2001), Cole and Knowles (2008); and Margolis and Pauwels (2011). Applied specifically to addressing HIV&AIDS, there is a growing use of the visual and arts-based methodologies—something that is evident at the biennial International AIDS conferences where installations of condom dresses and other fashions, AIDS memorial quilts, photo exhibitions and other artistic endeavours are displayed. This work on the visual and other arts-based methods has been taken up by a number of researchers and practitioners in South Africa, including the ground-breaking work on the uses of performance and theatre in addressing HIV and AIDS of the late Lynn Dalrymple (2006) to whom we dedicate this issue of *Educational Research for Social Change*.

In our research, we, the editors, have been engaging, for close to a decade, in the study and use of visual methods as applied to gender and HIV and AIDS, and using approaches such as photovoice, participatory video and drawing. Much of this work has been done collaboratively with other colleagues, including Jean Stuart, Kathleen Pithouse, Linda van Laren, Lesley Wood, Myra Taylor, Tilla Olivier and others. In this visual work, often in rural contexts, we have tested out various innovations in the area of participatory video, adapting, for example, storyboarding to serve as a visual tool in and of itself rather than just one step in the

process of participatory video-making (Mitchell, De Lange, Moletsane, 2011; Labacher, Mitchell, De Lange, Moletsane & Geldenhuys, 2012). We have also designed and developed a new tool—the No Editing Required (NER) approach to participatory video—that enables even those in rural areas with limited access to electricity the opportunity to make, screen, and view a video in a day (see Mitchell & De Lange, 2011). Following from this work we have conceptualised and refined the production of the composite video, a term we coined to describe the 'video of videos', video productions that include contextual scenes of a particular video-making project as well as the compilation of the videos produced by the participants as a way to contribute to sustainability (see Mitchell, 2011; De Lange & Mitchell, 2012). As part of this work on participatory video we have begun to test out the use of cellphones in film-making (see Mitchell, De Lange & Moletsane, 2012) in a context in which almost everyone has access to a cellphone (but not a video camera). Cutting across our work with drawings, photos, and videos, we have been experimenting with the participatory analysis of visual data through digital archiving as a way to both 'give life' to data and to democratise the research process (De Lange, Mnisi, Mitchell & Park, 2010; De Lange and Mitchell, 2012). But these innovations are not ever for their own sake—they are concerned with whether or not they make a significant difference to the conditions—physical, psychological, social, educational and so on—under which participants live. But how does this work link to overall well-being?

The questions posed by the *Make art stop AIDS* installation, and in the innovations noted above are central to the articles in this issue of *Educational Research for Social Change*. They are ones that we have begun to take up in a variety of contexts. For example, we convened an invitational conference *What difference does this make? The arts, youth and HIV&AIDS*, at Salt Rock, in KwaZulu-Natal, on December 4-5, 2011. Our purpose in doing so was to explore questions such as: "How can we know what difference arts-based research makes in the context of HIV and AIDS?" and "What kind of evidence do we need to show that it makes a difference?

Another event at which this issue of "What difference does it make?" was posed was in September 2010, at a national discussion, *Can art stop AIDS? Exploring the impact of visual and arts-based participatory methodologies.* The event, hosted by the Research Chair in HIV&AIDS Education at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, aimed to explore what researchers using arts-based methodologies in the field of HIV and AIDS were doing to determine what difference their research-as-intervention makes. One of the critical aspects of the national discussion was getting the researchers and practitioners to think about their work in the broad field of visual and arts-based research and to think about ways of categorisation, which might be useful in conceptualising the field. Three categories emerged: (1) Hand-made work, (2) Digital Media, and (3) Performance-based work. Each group's responses to questions regarding what methodologies they use, why they use these, what their experiences of using the methods were, and what thinking underpinned their research, was useful to showing the range of arts-based work the participants engaged in as well as the challenges they experienced around studying the impact of this work.

The *Hand-made* work group highlighted the use of drawings (simple, metaphorical), print-making (paper prayers), story-boarding (drawings to document role play), video, collage, hero books, memory boxes, body mapping, photo albums, murals, installations, graffiti, embroidery, crafts, quilting/memory, beading, and so on. There were many reasons offered for using these approaches: the level of participation (fun, therapeutic process, agency, skill development); the possibility of exploring with and observing participants; the impact of the process; the impact of the production; and the impact of dissemination. Participants noted that the visual impact was immediate and powerful and that it made room for the expression of emotion and perceptions across languages.

The *Digital Media* group made use of such tools and approaches as photovoice, digital storytelling, participatory video, digital archiving, blogging, social media and cell phones. Their reasons for using digital media included the following: it has social impact; it makes critical information more accessible to youth (often their target audience in HIV and AIDS work); it promotes engagement; it makes voices/ideas/

paradigms heard; it allows engagement in the process through reflection and decision-making, it provides a powerful message; and documents the lived experiences of the participants.

The *Performance* group drew on the use of music, dance, theatre-in-education, forum theatre, image theatre, role-play and the use of performance as a springboard for discussion, and then on performance as an end in itself. Their reasons for using performance included the following: research and education purposes; the facilitation of reflection; and the notion that the anecdotal has value (narrative storytelling).

All three arts-based research groupings considered questions such as the following: "Does arts-based research achieve its purposes?"; "What are the intended and unintended effects?"; "What are the consequences of the research as intervention?"; and "What transformational value does it have?" While the participants in these three groups were from different disciplines such as education, drama, art, dance, cultural studies, media studies, and language, there were common questions and issues which worked across the disciplines: "What kind of 'studies' or projects are we engaged in (Transformative studies? Social change studies? Participatory studies? Participatory engagement Studies? Arts-based evaluation?)"

Clearly the three categories of arts-based research identified at the national discussion are by no means exhaustive, and as a group we recognised that literary genres, for example, might fall under one or more categories, or may represent a separate category. However, what was evident is that the focus of arts-based research is more than research: it is centered around a social change agenda. Coming together to reflect on visual and arts-based work, particularly the evaluation thereof, as a new knowledge field, provided the community of visual and arts-based researchers with the opportunity to shift the knowledge generation paradigm towards research which is not only creative, or participatory (participant co-creation), but which has a transformative/social change agenda. This type of research is crucial in the African and South African context, and particularly in the age of AIDS, and has the potential to shift the discourses of research.

In trying to think about what draws the work together in the field of HIV and AIDS, the participants in the *Can art stop AIDS* discussion concluded that there is an urgency to determine what difference our research makes and that a way forward would be to establish an agenda organised around a set of common questions:

- How might visual and arts-based research contribute to the health and well-being of participants?

- Does the work have the potential to be transformative? How do we study its transformative potential?

- To what extent does the work contribute to social change and social justice?

- What is the value of the creative processes and the use of imagination in HIV and AIDS research as intervention for and with the community?

- In what ways is the research democratising?

- Does the research have long term impact and how do we study this?

- How easily/quickly does the research get to the community with whom the research is done in order to bring about change? How does the work get to change policy?

- How is participatory analysis engaging the community in analysing the meaning and what does this do for the community?

- What would longitudinal studies in arts-based research look like?

- Whose voices can be heard that have not been heard before?

- How does the work influence the paradigms and discourses of research?

- How do researchers and communities engage in productive dialogue?

The questions continue: About the articles in this issue of ERSC

The contributions to this issue of ERSC go some way, we think, in shedding new light on the questions raised at the Invitational Conference, *What difference does this make?* and at the National Discussion *Can art stop AIDS?* As noted above, we dedicate this issue of ESRC to the memory of Lynn Dalrymple, the pioneer of theatre and AIDS Education in South Africa who died earlier this year. Here we re-publish a tribute *AIDS theatre's maestro dies*, written by Emma Durden (2012) which appeared in the Health Supplement of the *Mail & Guardian*.

This tribute is followed by six peer reviewed articles that address in one form or another the question, "What difference does this make?". Fittingly, the first article, '*Even today they call him Induna': Theatre, empowerment, and making a difference,* also written by Emma Durden, offers an example of performance in arts-based research. The article draws on her theatre work in the "Man-to-Man" drama project conducted in the Umdoni district on the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) South Coast, exploring current thinking about the notion of participation in applied theatre projects and what difference it makes. Informed by the theoretical underpinnings of Paulo Freire's pedagogy, Durden examines the significance of participation in applied theatre projects. The article concludes that participation in the project had a profound impact on the participants, and that such projects can have an empowering effect on those involved in them. But Durden is concerned with the taken-for-granted notions of participation in research and interventions as 'good' and 'empowering' for individuals and communities who are involved in them. In this regard, the article responds to such questions as: "What is participation?"; "How and when do we know when it is achieved?"; and "In what ways (if any) does it benefit the participants?"

Through work that falls under the Digital Media category, in the second article titled, Social networking practices and youth advocacy efforts in HIV awareness and prevention: What does methodology have to do with it? Claudia Mitchell and John Murray explore social networking practices in relation to sexual health among youth. To do this, they take the example of YAHAnet.org, a global social networking platform that promotes the arts as a critical tool for youth in the AIDS response. Extending the debate from participation to engagement, their article explores the ways in which a variety of online and offline tools and procedures might be applied to studying youth engagement in relation to HIV advocacy and prevention. It focuses specifically on methodological issues, particularly the use of digital media and social networking spaces for engaging youth in informing policy and interventions targeting HIV prevention internationally. In particular, this exploration considers how through social networking tools and the data produced through online discussions within a youth-as-protagonist framework, young people themselves might inform such policies and interventions.

In the third article '*Having a say': Urban adolescent girls narrating their visions of future through photovoice,* Lisa Vaughn, Vicky Stieha, Melissa Muchmore, Stephanie Thompson, Jessica Lang and Maria Lang, write about using photovoice with urban adolescent immigrant and minority girls in the Midwest United States. The methodology, also part of Digital Media, enabled the authors to explore the tensions

between the girls' visions of their futures and their struggles to attain these, but also to recognise their need for a safe space to engage in dealing with such tensions, an issue that the arts-based approach opened up. Acknowledging the complex terrain in which girls in general, and girls from immigrant and other minority groups in the country have to develop and perform their identities, and the consequent intricacies involved in interventions and programmes that target them in schools and communities, reporting on a participatory arts-based study, the article analyses how the use of such strategies as photovoice can enable girls to construct and communicate their future visions for themselves, their school and their world. Categorising the girls' productions into picturing themselves, and picturing their school and their communities, the authors argue that such photo-narratives highlight the need for a safe and enabling space for girls to communicate their concerns about issues they face, what they envision for their futures and the barriers they come across in schools and communities in their journeys to such futures.

Similarly, in the fourth article, Kim Berman and Shoshana Zeldner, in An arts-based collaborative intervention to promote medical male circumcision as a South African HIV and AIDS prevention strategy, interrogate the value of arts-based methods as a catalysing and enabling strategy for social communication in advocacy campaigns targeting, among other issues, HIV prevention. In particular, the article addresses the extent to and ways in which an arts-based learning intervention can be regarded as transformative specifically with regard to student understandings and uptake of Medical Male Circumcision (MMC) as an HIV prevention strategy. The intervention, a collaborative project between Artist Proof Studio, a community art centre, and Sonke Gender Justice, a gender advocacy organisation, involved art students in activities aimed at developing a communication strategy for the promotion of MMC. The article analyses the extent to and ways in which the intervention enabled students to shift their understandings of MMC as an HIV prevention strategy, but also to use such understandings, and through the visual arts, develop an appropriate communication strategy for the promotion of the uptake of MMC among young people in educational institutions and communities in South Africa. Premised on the notion of youth in general and students in particular as change agents, the article concludes that the use of the visual arts not only functioned as a catalyst in shifting the students' understandings and views on MMC, but also as an enabling strategy for social communication in the context of HIV and AIDS in South Africa.

Nokukhanya Ngcobo, in the fifth article titled, Yesterday as a study for tomorrow: on the use of film texts in addressing gender and HIV and AIDS with secondary school youth in KwaZulu-Natal, reports on a study exploring Grade 11 learners' responses to gender representations in the context of HIV and AIDS, in the 2004 South African film, Yesterday. The film depicts a woman's lived experiences in relation to being infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, describing her fears and hopes for her daughter. Informed by feminist and critical literacy frameworks, and using Yesterday as an entry point, Ngcobo explores how a group of Grade 11 learners responded to gender representations in the film in the reading and comprehension activities she engaged them in. The article concludes that film analysis, particularly when it is informed by feminist theories and theories of critical literacy, has the potential to develop intellectual and critical thinking skills among learners as tools for navigating the complex terrain of gender and HIV and AIDS in South Africa.

The sixth and final article, *This thing called the future*: *Intergenerationality and HIV and AIDS,* by Barbara Hunting, explores the idea of intergenerationality in addressing youth and HIV and AIDS. Drawing on an analysis of a literary text, *This Thing Called the Future*, a young adult novel written by Stephanie Powers (2011), Hunting examines some of the ways in which a critical reading of literary texts may contribute to deepening our understanding of HIV and AIDS and the ways in which it affects different generations in families and communities in sub-Saharan Africa. Using an interpretative framework as used in the novel itself, the author highlights the complex ways in which generational opportunities to education, employment, and social change overlap to produce and reproduce power imbalances in the context of gendered and intergenerational relationships in families and communities faced with the challenges of HIV and AIDS.

Tabitha Mukeredzi's conference report on the invitational symposium, *What difference does this make? The arts, youth and HIV&AIDS*, held in 2011, complements the debates raised in the six visual and arts-based articles in this issue. The six themes of the conference (Fire and Hope, Participatory Visual Methodologies, Performance Art, Digital Media in the Age of AIDS, Arts-based Methods and What Difference does this make?) also point to the breadth of visual and arts-based work in South Africa. Attended by both researchers and youth as knowledge producers and participants of the various research projects and interventions, this event marked the 10th anniversary of the beginning of the sponsoring research group's involvement in the use of participatory visual methodologies in addressing HIV and AIDS.

Rounding off the issue is Christa Beyers' review of the recently published: *Picturing research, Drawing as visual methodology*, edited by Linda Theron, Claudia Mitchell, Ann Smith and Jean Stuart (2011). Drawing, as noted earlier, forms part of *Hand-made wor*k in our inventory of categories of arts-based practice. This book aptly explores and explains drawing as research methodology and is an extremely useful and welcome addition to the visual and arts-based researcher's toolkit.

This ERSC issue on art-based research is not a definitive offering of visual and other arts-based research, but does open up the discussion for visual and arts-based research making a difference and contributing to social change in the age of HIV and AIDS.

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Aids theatre's maestro dies[1]

Lynn Dalrymple pioneered the use of drama in education, writes **Emma Durden**[2]

Lynn Dalrymple (1941 – 2012)

Inspirational thinkers, doers, and leaders are the lifeblood of change and social development in South Africa. Two weeks ago, we lost the inspirational Professor Lynn Dalrymple, a pioneer in the field of theatre and Aids communication, who made a significant contribution to HIV and Aids education. She died on Saturday April 14 after a battle with kidney failure.

Dalrymple was born and schooled in Durban, and started her career as a teacher of English and Drama in the late 1960s in Empangeni. She was later appointed as lecturer in the English Department at the University of Zululand. During this period she challenged the accepted practice of using only Western texts and teaching methods at the University and fought for contextual and cultural relevance – a central theme throughout her later work.

Dalrymple was passionate about the theatre and went on to establish the Drama Department at University, where she was Professor and department head between 1988 and 1996. During this time she pioneered the use of drama in education and drama for development, ensuring that a generation of students was exposed to a way of thinking that linked academia to the surrounding community through meaningful intervention.

In 1992, as the health department began to realise that HIV and Aids posed a real threat to the South African population, Dalrymple was approached by the late Dr Allan Jaffe to create an educational programme to inform young people about preventing sexually transmitted infection. Using innovative drama workshops and performance, Dalrymple initiated the DramAidE (Drama in Aids Education) project, which has since won numerous contracts, awards and funding grants from local and international donors.

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[1] *This article, which appeared in Mail & Guardian Health, 26 April – 3 May 2012, is republished with the permission of Mail & Guardian*

[2] *Dr Emma Durden is a theatre and development practitioner and research associate of culture, communication and media studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Some of the information in this article is drawn from the paper "Theory Meets Theatre Practice: Making a Difference to Public Health Programmes in Southern Africa – Professor Lynn Dalrymple: South African Scholar, Activist, Educator", written by Durden and Keyan Tomaselli and published in Curriculum Enquiry 2012.*

Twenty years on, the DramAidE project continues to encourage young people to participate in HIV prevention through its work in schools and Universities around the country. DramAidE is one of the most studied projects in the field of health communication in Southern Africa and has set a standard of excellence with regard to participatory HIV and Aids communication. Lynn Dalrymple made this possible through her great personal commitment to the project.

Dalrymple had an enormous impact on the work of DramAidE as a youth-centred, dynamic and creative approach to Aid education. Many students who studied under Dalrymple have gone on to be leaders in the field of theatre and Aids education.

Dalrymple shared the success of the DramAidE methodology at many local and international conferences and worked alongside the United Nations Children's fund, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/Aids and Johns Hopkins Health and education in South Africa.

Her work has been widely published in magazines and academic journals and she authored works that have guided numerous other HIV and Aids-education programmes. In 2000, Dalrymple was appointed adjunct professor at the Centre for Communication and Media Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, a position she retained until her retirement in 2010.

Dalrymple chaired the HIV and Aids Committee of Council and Senate for the University of Zululand. She as a member of numerous government task teams, including the Education Department's National Arts and ulture Curriculum Committee, the Health Department's National Life Skills Committee and National Communication Forum, the health Department's Beyond Awareness Campaign and the Peer Education Committee for the South African Universities Vice Chancellors' Association.

She is also recognised for her pioneering work with the Southern African Association for Drama and Youth Theatre, her work on curriculum development for drama in schools, her fresh approach to teacher training, her encouragement of deeper and more critical research in the field and her tireless advocacy of drama and theatre as a medium of learning.

In 2009, an award was created in Dalrymple's name for outstanding research in the field of applied drama and theatre at the University of the Witwatersrand's Drama for Life programme. It is a fitting tribute to a remarkable scholar, who gave her last public address at the same conference to a standing ovation. Her presentation told the story of how a young farmer's wife grew to understand the complexity of the country she lived in and was called to engage with it on many different levels.

Looking back at her work, it is apparent that this journey was possible because Dalrymple had a great talent for listening, for openness and for compassion. She approached her work with energy and humour and with the utmost respect for others.

Dalrymple celebrated her 70th birthday in April last year with a wonderful party at the KwaZulu-Natal Society of Arts, which brought together her love of indigenous plants, the arts and people. She leaves behind her husband, Sandy, her four children and six grandchildren, as well as other family and a host of friends and colleagues.

She also leaves a legacy to be proud of in the form of DramAidE. As a past student, a colleague and a friend, I can attest to how Dalrymple, as an example of a thoughtful, generous and ethical practitioner of theatre and education, has touched not only our academic and professional lives, but also our personal lives.

She has been known as "gogo" by a generation of students and scholars in recognition of her wisdom and influence. Since news of her death, tributes have poured in from University Drama Departments around South Africa, from the director of the National Arts Festival and the heads of many other organisations. She was an inspiration to all of us.

"Even today they call him *Induna*": Theatre, empowerment, and making a difference

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Abstract

Theatre and drama approaches are a popular way to draw young people into HIV and AIDS awareness programmes. These approaches have been used in South Africa since the beginning of the response to the epidemic in the 1990s, but how do they work? Previous studies suggest that for this theatre to be effective, it must be aesthetically appealing, dramatic, popular, and culturally appropriate. It should also incorporate the voices of those who represent its audiences; and theatre-makers and health programme developers must find ways for communities to participate if the theatre is to be made meaningful. The theoretical underpinnings of such participatory projects include the pedagogy of Paulo Freire (2002) and call for an understanding of development communication issues. The article looks in particular at the example of the UVHAA "Man-to-Man" drama project conducted in the Umdoni district on the KZN South Coast. The article outlines current thinking about the notion of participation in applied theatre projects. Through interviews with project managers and project participants, it explores how participation happened in the project, and how it had an impact on the individuals who were part of it. The article concludes that participation in the project had a profound impact on the participants, and that such projects can have an empowering effect on those involved in them.

Keywords: Theatre; HIV and AIDS; participation; young people; impact.

Innovative approaches to HIV and AIDS

Communicating about HIV and AIDS raises a specific set of contradictions and challenges. As a health-related issue, it is one that needs to be dealt with by providing specific and potentially life-saving bio-medical information. However, it also needs to address some of the complex social factors that exacerbate HIV prevalence. If messages about HIV and AIDS are simply generated by 'experts' from outside of the target community they may not be seen as relevant and accessible by the audience.

The recognised key to reducing HIV prevalence is to provide information about HIV and AIDS and to encourage people to adopt behaviours that put them at less risk from infection. According to Mitchell, Nakamanya, Kamali and Whitworth (2001) behaviour change interventions offer the best chance of preventing the further spread of HIV and AIDS in developing countries. The primary focus of these behaviour change interventions should be to ensure that the audience has the necessary information, motivation and access to resources to change their sexual behaviour and thus reduce the likelihood of HIV transmission.

However, broad awareness campaigns that provide information alone are not sufficient to reduce the risk of HIV infection, since access to information does not necessarily bring about a change in behaviour (Francis & Rimensberger, 2005). This may be because a range of social and cultural factors that feed the epidemic and give rise to behaviours and practices that place people at risk of HIV infection are not directly addressed in these campaigns.

Decisions about sexual behaviour are intensely personal and often not rational. Because HIV is predominantly spread through sexual contact, which is both intimate and emotional, the reasons for a person adopting or ignoring HIV prevention messages are going to be less rational than when he or she is considering other health threats. Decisions regarding sexual behaviour are driven by factors including gender relations, sexual identity, desire, pleasure, preference and self-expression (Gumede & Durden, 2010). This means that campaigns dealing with HIV and AIDS should not centre solely on questions of health, but should take a more holistic approach and include issues of gender and sexuality. The reasons why individuals adopt safer sex behaviours or change behaviour are also mediated by the society in which they find themselves. Health messages must therefore take into account how HIV and AIDS are framed and discussed in the local context and must engage with "the broader structures of social conduct within which meaning is articulated, circulated and appropriated" (Kunda, 2010, p. 1).

This article argues that theatre is a useful and effective vehicle for communicating about HIV and AIDS, in that well-designed theatre interventions allow for a more holistic, cultural approach to talking about the epidemic, which takes the local context into account in message-making and understandings.

Current thinking recognises that including local voices in health-related message creation makes for more effective messaging, and promotes ownership by a community of the messages that could bring about change (Tufte, 2005). It is argued by Collins Airhihenbuwa and Rafael Obregon (2000), amongst others, that participation in HIV and AIDS communication in particular, is an important factor in ensuring that messages are locally appropriate and effective. Theatre as a live and immediate medium that is popular and encourages participation has a particular appeal and can provide a powerful vehicle for this participation.

Theatre and drama dealing with HIV and AIDS

Since 1990, there has been a growth in the popularity of theatre and drama-based methodologies for HIV and AIDS awareness in schools, prisons, community groups, workplaces and a range of other settings (Marlin-Curiel, 2004; Dalrymple, 2006). As a communal activity that brings people together, theatre provides a place for them to engage with complex issues in a ritualised and removed way (Schechner, 2002). Theatre can be seen as an opportunity for a community to engage non-directly with issues of importance that are otherwise seen as threatening or intimidating, such as HIV and AIDS.

Further to this, theatre can provide a space in which the unspeakable is spoken. Fraser McNeill (2009) argues that cultural conventions in South Africa dictate that death and the causes of death cannot be spoken about. He suggests that complex social processes are employed to "create and maintain the avoidance of open conversation around HIV/AIDS" and that these are rooted in these conventions (2009, p. 353). This consensus for silence means that innovative and non-threatening ways must be found to address HIV and AIDS issues.

The fact that many HIV and AIDS plays use humour as a way to address these complex and serious issues results in a high enjoyment level by audiences. Using humour as an approach to deal with difficult issues is a recognised approach in both cognitive and social psychology. The use of humour encourages the audience to process information on an intellectual level as well as on an emotional level, and can encourage a feeling of well-being (Martin, 2007). Previous research into how audiences rated an HIV and AIDS play reveals that respondents found that theatre is enjoyed as a means of communication, and that this enjoyment enhances learning (Durden & Nduhura, 2007; Piotrow, Kinkaid, Rimon & Rinehart, 1997).

Theatre can play an important role in highlighting people's susceptibility to the disease by showing characters on stage with whom the audience can identify, and from whom they can learn through watching the consequences of their actions. Watching characters in a drama who are able to confront and overcome challenges (such as an HIV positive diagnosis, or other health challenges) may increase audience members' belief in their own ability to do the same. Participation in creating a drama may heighten this belief, which Albert Bandura terms 'self-efficacy'; the belief that a person has to succeed in a given situation, which affects how they think, behave, and feel (Bandura, 1995).

Previous research suggests that over 30% of adult South Africans have a fatalist view about HIV and AIDS, and that they report a low level of self-efficacy to effect change (Meyer-Weitz, 2005). While this fatalism may have developed in the period before antiretroviral (ARV) treatment was readily available in South Africa, Mark Heywood (2010) argues that this 'disease fatalism' is still prevalent. This sense of fatalism may discourage people from seeking help, or from changing their behaviour. Building their confidence about their ability to manage HIV, then, is an important part of communication interventions that deal with HIV and AIDS. The research expanded on in this article explores how self-efficacy is developed through participation in a theatre-based HIV and AIDS project.

Theatre is essentially a social event where the practice of constituting meaning becomes a communal act in the shared space of the theatre experience. In the context of HIV and AIDS communication, theatre can create a space for the interaction, dialogue, and the negotiation of meaning that Parker, Hajiyiannis and Makhubele (2007) argue are important to increase a shared understanding of HIV and AIDS. This shared understanding can have an impact on the social system, which is vital since social support for individual behaviour change is an important factor in ensuring that the behaviour change is sustained, However, it is crucial that the target community participates in processes other than simply watching the theatre if real benefits at both the personal and the community levels are to be realised.

The notion of who participates in such programmes, and to what extent, is debated by a number of scholars. While Freireian principles of participation have guided most theatre for development experiences in Africa, there remains the challenge of putting these principles into action and avoiding conforming to the dominant (usually government) ideology. David Kerr (1995) suggests that theatre has often been used under the guise of development simply to justify existing power structures. This is a problem related to the catalyst groups that engage with a community.

Defining the relationship between conscientisation (the role of the catalyst) and participation (the role of the community) is an ongoing challenge for theatre for development scholars and practitioners. Zakes Mda (1993) suggests that understanding the concepts of homophily and heterophily are key issues in ensuring workable theatre for development. The principle of homophily is that like-minded people from similar backgrounds will gravitate towards each other, and that this guarantees more effective communication. In the case of theatre for development projects, the catalysts are usually outside agents from different class, social, or educational backgrounds, and are therefore likely to be heterophilous (different from) the proposed audience of the rural community. Communication between these two groups who share different world views and experiences may therefore be less effective than communication that occurs within a closed group.

This concept of homophily relates to theories of peer education; members of a particular group work to educate and develop other members of the same group in order to effect change. The case study discussed in this article makes use of this principle: the production is embedded in the community and the performers are insiders, facing the same daily challenges as the audience does. The recognition of similarities between the audience and the actors can encourage a "me too" inclusionary response, or can exclude audiences who are markedly different from what is viewed on stage, and become the 'other' (Hall, 1997). Identifying who is inside and who is outside the group may have an impact on the reception of Entertainment Education and theatre for development performances.

Based on the homophily principle, it is likely that people will listen to messages that come from people who are most like themselves. Alex Mavrocordatos (2003), on the one hand, suggests that individuals or communities with a strong sense of identity and which are bound by homogenous traditional beliefs are most ideally placed to be able to use theatre to analyse and change their situation. On the other hand, Mda (1993) argues that a certain amount of difference between the two groups is necessary for there to be any desire to act as a catalyst and encourage change, and that outside intervention is always necessary. He suggests that the key functions of intervention in theatre for development projects are threefold: to keep order and coherence in the play; to facilitate a deeper analysis; and to contribute technical expertise on the medium itself, and on the content.

At face value, Mda's arguments for intervention read as counter to participatory development ideals. Mda, however, recognises that more intervention by the outside catalyst results in less community participation and less conscientisation (1993). He argues for a case of optimal intervention, described as "the best compromise between the opposing tendencies of participation and intervention" (1993, p. 173). Mda suggests that this optimal intervention is attained when participants are able to go through the processes of naming problems, reflecting critically on these, and considering action (Freire's points of problem-solving, critical consciousness, and praxis). He cautions that the catalyst should withdraw at this optimal point, before imposing its views and values. This point of optimal intervention varies depending on the proficiency of the catalyst, and the level of critical awareness of both the catalyst and the community. Mda argues that only a catalyst with levels of social consciousness and critical awareness higher than that of the target community can function effectively to develop this in the target group. Mda concludes that the community should retain ownership of the project, and that genuine conscientisation can only occur when "the community itself assumes the function of catalysts" (1993, p. 174).

The discussion of the case study below seeks to explore this notion of optimal intervention. It questions whether the involvement of outside 'experts' in a community-based theatre project still allows for the development of critical consciousness amongst participants, as well as encouraging peer education and recognition between actors and audience. It also questions how participation happens, and how it can build a sense of self-efficacy for the participants.

Case Study: The UVHAA Man-To-Man Project

The Man-to-Man Project is a project of the Umdoni and Vulamehlo HIV and AIDS Association (UVHAA) that is based in the rural area of Amandawe on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast. The organisation exists to support people who are infected or affected by HIV and AIDS, to raise awareness, and to encourage and support behaviour change (UVHAA, 2008). The organisation has a range of different projects dealing with orphans and vulnerable children and home-based care, and working specifically with men and boys. Working in a rural area with high levels of unemployment and poverty, UVHAA is based in a community with a high rate of HIV infection, AIDS deaths that have a resounding impact on the local community, and a number of child-headed households.

The Man-to-Man Project encourages men to explore their cultural practices and the behaviours that may put themselves and others at risk of contracting HIV. The project predominantly involves men in lectures and workshops that are facilitated by other men from the same community, who have been trained by UVHAA. As such, this is an example of a peer education project. The particular areas that this project addresses are the role of men in the community, patriarchy, gender issues, relationships, HIV and AIDS, and the role of men in prevention, care and support initiatives (UVHAA, 2008).

An award for innovation in 2008 gave a financial grant to the organisation that allowed UVHAA to expand the project and to introduce the element of theatre into the programme. This involved bringing together a group of adult men and a group of younger males to work in a performance project. These distinct groups are referred to as 'the men' and 'the boys' by the project managers and in the discussion that follows.

As a member of the Problem-Solving Theatre (PST) Project partnership, I was invited together with three of my Zulu-speaking male colleagues to work with UVHAA to develop this project. This involved my writing, as an experienced theatre-maker, a script for a play that was based on the content and issues contained in the Man-to-Man workshop programme. My male colleagues then took this script and translated it into Zulu, and worked with the two separate groups of the men and the boys, to adapt and rehearse this script for performance in their own community and surrounding areas. This process of adaptation allowed the participating men and boys to interpret the script and make changes to ensure that the language and gesture of the performance was local, with appropriately recognisable conventions and colloquialisms.

The script for this project was written around the interactions of five male characters: a traditional, older man who refuses to change with the times; the local induna (chief) who knows that change is needed and that people are counting on him for leadership; a promiscuous taxi driver; a bright and ambitious young school-boy; and his best friend who has lost both his parents to AIDS. These are almost stock characters in the community—types of people that audience members will definitely recognise.

Through these five characters, the play is able to explore a number of issues concerning gender stereotypes, leadership, relationships and support in the context of HIV and AIDS. Since 2009, the play has been performed a number of times to other men in the community, as well as to mixed groups of men and women on health days and other events in the group's local community and in surrounding areas. Although the men's group no longer exists, the programme managers hope that the boys' group will continue to perform at appropriate events during weekends and school holidays.

Research methodology

The choice of the case study method for the investigation of the UVHAA project allows for a "detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships" (Zainal, 2007, p. 2). The UVHAA research forms part of a multiple-case design conducted in 2009 and 2010 as a way to explore and explain how participation in HIV and AIDS-related theatre projects is envisaged, and how it has an impact on the participants and their communities (Durden, 2011).

The UVHAA case study included an interview with three of the project management team in 2010, and a focus group discussion involving two of the project participants and a temporarily appointed guardian. The project management team consisted of three adult females, who were the core team driving the project. The initial project participant population was a group of six men and six boys. The focus group participants were a self-selected sample of the six boys who remained involved with the project after it had ended its active cycle.

Although a number of meetings and workshops were held with both the project management team and the participant group throughout the process of the project in 2009 and 2010, the data for this research is drawn from a single interview with the project management team and a single focus group discussion held with the project participants, as well as a follow-up interview with one of the project facilitators. The questions for these interviews were derived from a detailed literature review regarding notions of health communication, participation and empowerment. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and notes were taken during the interviews. In addition to these interviews, one of the theatre performances of the project was recorded for analysis.

The project management team was interviewed regarding the specific goals that had been set for the project, and whether they felt that these had been achieved. They were asked about the experience of participation in the project, and whether they had received any direct feedback from participants in the project. They were also questioned about their opinion of the final performance product that was created, and any feedback they had received from audiences. The team was asked to imagine what they thought might have been different had there been more or less participation from the local men and boys in the project.

The participants were asked to talk about why they chose to get involved in the project, and what their expectations and their experience of participating in the project had been. Probing questions were asked to ascertain the levels of their participation, responsibility and decision-making in the project. They were asked whether participating in the project had made them feel differently about HIV and AIDS, and whether they had learnt any new skills and knowledge. They were also asked to imagine what could have made the project better for them, and whether they had felt that participating had in any way given them a sense of control or strength in their own lives.

For ethical reasons, a nurse who was familiar with the boys was asked to sit in on the interview with the project participants since they were minors. Her presence added assurance that if any issues raised in the discussion were upsetting, she would be on hand to deal with this and to support the participants if needed. Given the rural setting, a Zulu-speaking translator also sat in on this session to clarify when needed any of the questions or the responses. The interview with one of the project facilitators was added to better understand the process of creating and rehearsing the play, and the transformation that the participants went through over this period.

The collected data was arranged and coded to ensure a more effective thematic analysis. Thematic analysis allows the researcher to identify a limited number of themes which link to the identified research questions (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). These themes were drawn from communication and development theory, and were identified as participation, reception, empowerment, the organisational and personal benefits as experienced by the project management and participants respectively. A broader theme of the potential for community development was developed based on an analysis of the collected data.

One of the limitations of this research was that it did not include a reception analysis of the play performances, which means that there is no direct data on the response of the community audience. However, discussion with the programme managers and participants, as well as analysis of a recorded performance gives some insight into this response.

The UVHAA findings

The Man-to-Man drama project was the first instance in which UVHAA had used theatre in an intervention. The primary rationale to make use of drama was to harness a different and potentially exciting new methodology, and specifically to draw men and boys into the performances. Interviews with the project

managers reflected that they found drama an excellent vehicle for raising issues of HIV and AIDS since many members of their target community are not functionally literate. In addition to this, they felt that theatre might bring about a more immediate response on the part of the audience to the problems posed in the play.

Participation in the project

The organisation itself (UVHAA) determines the goals for the projects as well as the content and message, the prior research, and the medium for the projects. Since UVHAA is a community-based organisation, these processes are more participatory than in cases in which the organisation is an outside catalyst for change.

The project works with specific in-groups (the selected men and boys) to pass predetermined information to the community. The participants are selected by UVHAA in conjunction with local gate-keepers, making this project participatory at the level of selection. The gatekeepers are local nurses who work closely with UVHAA, and who are familiar with all the participants from their attendance at the local clinic and other community events. Being a small rural community, the participants were also known to most of the rest of the community. This ensures that they are recognisable peer educators.

When the participants themselves were asked why they had got involved in the project, they responded that "It was to tell other people to know about HIV and AIDS," and "We were trying to teach them right and wrong" (Participants 1 and 2, FGD, 2010). These responses suggest that they chose to participate because of altruistic educational motives. However, when questioned further, both boys agreed that the only reason they joined the project was "because it was a play" (Participant 2, focus group discussion, 2010).

The participants in the Man-to-Man project are not seen as partners in the project, but are merely performers for a particular period of time. The Man-to-Man project employed a group to perform in the scripted play. The older men were paid a stipend for their work, but the school-going boys were not. Interestingly, the group of older men fell apart, but the boy's group continued until the end of the project. One project manager suggests that the reason for this failure to retain the men in the project was financial because their families expected them to earn a living rather than survive off stipends for involvement in community projects (Interview, 2010). This is not a reflection of their lack of interest in the project, but rather of the imperative to earn a more sustainable income. This provides an example participation not being entirely voluntary. Expectations regarding stipends and payment that these participants have of the project can colour the way in which they participate. This may be a common problem that has arisen through expectations generated by a history of donor-funded projects, rather than projects initiated from within the target community.

The project made use of outside experts (in this case, myself and colleagues from the PST Project) for training project participants and for the scripting of the play for performance. The organisation was grounded in the local community and had a good understanding of the complexities of the epidemic, and appropriate messages, but felt that they required expert advice on using theatre as an unfamiliar medium for communicating about issues that they are otherwise conversant with. The content for the play and the broad issues covered were decided on by UVHAA, based on their Man-to-Man workshop programme and other work in the community. This partnership is a good example of striving for optimal intervention: local needs are met by local solutions, but with input from skilled outsiders.

This use of outside experts should mean that the plays have the potential to be of a high artistic standard and therefore more engaging for the audiences, depending on the performers. The interviewed project managers reported that for them "a good play" was more important than who participated in the project (Interview 2, 2010). However, later comments during the interview contradict this, and they explained that it was important for them to draw men and boys into the project. However, they expressed delight at the

standard of the play. They felt that the different groups of the men and the boys had interpreted the script differently, and both had done a good job with their performance. However, most of the project managers felt that the boys' performance was better, suggesting that, "The boys did a better job to be honest, because they were less polished, things didn't always go quite right, which the audience could appreciate" (Project Manager 1, Interview 2, 2010).

Although the boys had been trained and the script was written by an 'expert', the performance itself was appreciated more because it was flawed and not professional. This may be particularly because the boys were recognised as living within the community from which the audience came. This recognition of the boys and their efforts is part of the 'me too' identification phenomenon described by Hall (1997), which gives peer education its power.

The interviewed project facilitator noted that the process, although only over the period of three weeks, had a visible impact on the group of boys with whom he worked. He comments that, "When you first meet, there are barriers, people are shy. But once you start, the mind shifts and the communication starts" (Project Facilitator, Interview, 2012). It was apparent to the facilitator that the process of playing drama-related games and activities, rehearsing the script, and simply talking about the project brought the group together, almost as a family. He comments:

> I didn't know at the beginning that most of them were affected by AIDS or were positive, but as time went on they started to talk about it. We started to talk about ARVs. We were more like fathers to them, and they started to be free and talk about it.

The facilitator felt that it was the process of being involved in the drama that was liberating for these boys, as well as the sense of camaraderie that was developed through working together. His reflection on the process suggests that a number of processes were at work that encouraged the boys to start talking about their personal experiences regarding HIV and AIDS. One factor in this is the guidance relationship that they had with the boys, and another is the relationship of trust that developed amongst the boys themselves.

The reception of performances

The interviewed boys who had performed in the plays thought they had done a good job, and that they were successful in passing on a message to their communities. They felt responsible for this success, and, typical of young boys who have been recognised for any achievement, they were extremely confident that they had delivered a good performance.

The project managers felt that the audiences received the plays very well. Video footage of one of the performances at a local community health day shows the audience being very vocal, applauding, shouting and laughing both during and at the end of the performance. When asked if they had received any later feedback from the community, one project manager responded, "They used to say 'oh this was good,' in passing" (Project Manager 2, Interview, 2010).

Although there was no formal feedback from audiences, the UVHAA project managers live in the community and reported that this kind of casual positive feedback was regularly received. The reasons given by the project managers for this positive feedback are twofold. One reason is that the medium was novel and exciting for an audience that may be bored by the conventional approach to HIV and AIDS awareness programmes. A further reason for this positive acceptance is the fact that the performers were recognisable to the audience. One project manger commented, "I just think there was a better relationship because the boys were from around here" (Project Manager 1, Interview, 2010).

However, the group of boys also performed in more distant communities where they have no links with the local people, and the project managers reported that these performances were also well-received by those audiences.   One of the project managers felt that the information contained in the play had a greater impact because it had not been heard by certain audiences before. While the information contained in the play may have been new to the audiences, the fact that it was presented by people from their own community, and that these were boys (as opposed to adults) was significant. The use of young people speaking out on a topic that is often seen as an adult issue was unusual, and had a particular impact on the audience. One of the project managers commented:

> *There were some things that the boys were saying on the topic, and the play on its own was in categories, so that as a child you would understand and as an adult you would also understand what all of these people go through in life.*

This suggests that the use of boys as performers gave the theatre performance an added dimension, providing a point of view accessible to both adults and children. One of the project managers felt that:

> *It was also because of the information that they were giving out. There was something that parents don't think, so it was easier for parents to talk to their children after seeing the play.*

In a culture where sex and sexuality are taboo subjects, and not often discussed between parents and children, this is a significant result of this project. This unexpected result of the Man-to-Man Project points to the importance of selection of participants for any theatre project that deals with HIV and AIDS. A performance of the same script by the older men's group would not have had the same impact. Choosing participants who might have been marginalised or were otherwise less vocal within the community can have an enormous impact on the participants and on the community itself, allowing audience members to hear another point of view.

The boys who were part of the focus group discussion said that the positive response that they received from the audiences made them feel good. They had received no negative feedback from their involvement, and although their guardian commented that she had heard talk in the community that "sometimes these boys are too young" (Guardian, FGD, 2010). One boy commented that his parents were "proud" (Participant 1, FGD, 2010).

However, the boys reported that they were nervous about the audience reception at the start of the project; one participant voicing, "I was scared that they would laugh at me" (Respondent 2, FGD 2, 2010). Another participant voiced that he had been afraid that there would be some stigma attached to performing in a play about HIV and AIDS: "We were scared for other people. Other things about what we were saying that we are not supposed to talk about HIV and AIDS," (Participant 1, FGD, 2010).

The boys recognised that there were some people in the community who said, "it's not for us, not right" but that there were others who "said it was a good thing" (Participant 2, FGD, 2010). They reported that the negative comments were passed on before people had seen the play, and that after the performances, they did not receive any negative reaction from their audiences. Both respondents reported that they were often approached and called by people from their community who asked them how they knew that information and who had taught them. It seemed that there was a genuine interest from the community in the process of participation and how these boys had come to have the information that they had about HIV and AIDS.

The level of participation and the potential for empowerment amongst participants

The boys were questioned about what they felt they had learnt through participating in the project, and the project managers were also asked whether they had perceived any change in the participants. While the project managers felt that the plays had allowed adults insight into the views of children on HIV and AIDS, the children who participated felt that they had learnt about the views of adults.

The boys felt that they had learnt a lot about "the older generation" (Participant 1, FGD, 2010). This was perhaps because the play included two adult male characters, and allowed them insight into their way of thinking. This is a unique aspect of theatre and drama techniques that allows participants in such projects to develop empathy with the characters that they portray. When asked what in particular they had learnt about this generation, their responses included that "old people" (adults) had a different way of life, that they did not talk about HIV and AIDS, and that they were afraid of both the disease, and of getting tested for HIV.

These responses suggest that the play allowed the participants to understand some of the complexities and challenges that adults face in relation to communicating about HIV and AIDS. This may make them more confident to open up dialogue on this issue with adults.

The boys also reported that they had learnt "about testing and condoms and saying no" (Participant 1, FGD, 2010), as well as "about living and ARVs" (Participant 2, FGD, 2010). This suggests that they have taken away useful factual information from their involvement in the project. Asked whether they had learnt anything personal about themselves or if the project had had an impact on them in other ways, one of the boys responded that participation in the play had taught him *wahlomeka*, which the interpreter and the boys together translated as "not to be involved in the wrong things" (Participant 2, FGD, 2010). This shows that the participant felt that being a part of the project had taught him a greater respect for himself and others. He had learnt "not to get into the wrong things when other people tell you to do it" (Interpreter, FGD, 2010). It would appear that participation in the play allowed him to develop a stronger sense of self, which made him more resistant to peer pressure. This is a remarkable result—evidence of significant personal empowerment for this individual.

Both the respondents commented that they thought that being in the play had made them stronger. They also reported a sense of camaraderie amongst their fellow participants, saying that they regularly talk about "remember this, remember when this happened" (Participant 2, FGD, 2010), and that they laugh together at the reminiscences of their performances. This is evidence that participation can build a sense of group and community amongst the participants.

When asked whether they thought the boys could create their own plays and therefore continue with this project without expert help, the project managers, doubtful of this, reported that "they might give off the wrong information" and that "there were things in the script the boys could never have dreamt of ... we would never have achieved that" (Project Manager 2, Interview 2, 2010). This suggests that there is still a reliance on outside experts for both the content and the form of the performance. While the content for a new play, including accurate medical information, could come from UVHAA itself, the project managers felt that the performance techniques that the boys learnt during the training and rehearsal phase of this project might not be able to be replicated if they worked alone.

The project managers commented on the growth of confidence amongst the boys, particularly in their ability to talk about HIV and AIDS. They have subsequently made use of some of the boys in another of their projects, known as the Talking Book, in which the boys make house visits in the local community to talk with others about HIV prevention. One project manager reports that it was because of their

involvement in the play that they realised that these boys were capable of talking confidently about HIV and AIDS:

> *Well, it gave us the confidence to use them otherwise we wouldn't have used them, to be honest. So it did give them skills in speaking in public. It's actually a very difficult thing to talk about HIV. To knock on somebody's door and say—and this is a school-boy —to say "Can I come in and talk about HIV?" I mean you can imagine the grannies saying "what do you know"?*

The project managers also talked about the impact that participating in the project had had on the men and boys personally. With reference to one participant, one of the project managers notes:

> *One of the boys I used to communicate mostly with, I was just asking him as to how he felt when he was doing the plays. There was this particular speech that he does at the end of the play, and it was very touching because I knew his life, and sometimes you talk about your status. It's never easy in public and if you haven't disclosed it, and he said it was one of the best things that he did because he never used to talk about it in public, but now he can see that by what he was saying made him able to understand that he was really affected. He used to just say "I am sick" but being in the drama made him understand that "I need to accept that I'm not well".*

Further expansion on this comment revealed that the boy in question had accepted his HIV positive status, and disclosed that he was HIV positive subsequent to performing in the play. The strength to do this was a direct result of performing in the play since this was "because the play made him know" (Project Manager 2, Interview 2, 2010). This provides evidence that a level of self-efficacy was built amongst the participants: they felt that knowledge had allowed them to build confidence in their own abilities to make changes in their lives. It was apparent that this process of change had started for this participant through the initial phases of the project, as the Project Facilitator notes:

> *I didn't know that the small one's parents passed away, until there was this one time where we were all seated under a tree and we were talking. There was this guy that was older and we were talking about ARVS. Slowly the small one joined the conversation and started to talk. When you looked at his face, he was talking, he was not sad, he was just talking.*

The Facilitator noted that the boy started to speak about being orphaned, his parents having died of AIDS. He also told the others that he was HIV positive. This candid confession was accepted well by the other boys because the relationship of trust had been established amongst the group over the rehearsal process.

Rather than being exposed to information in any other format, being intimately connected with this information and learning lines for a performance allowed this participant to take this new information and apply it to his own life. In the focus group discussion with participants, it became apparent that the same boy had gone from previously being very shy in the community to being very confident on stage. He had played the character of the *Induna,* a local chief, in the play. This enactment of a person in a position of power, and the energy that this boy had brought to the performance, was remarked on by the community health nurse who was part of the discussion: "It was a surprise for them (the audience) and even today in the community they call him *Induna*" (Guardian, FGD 2, 2010).

Further discussion with the nurses from UVHAA revealed that this child was orphaned, having lost both his parents to AIDS. This transformation from the stigmatised orphan to the popular child referred to as *Induna* may have enormous effects both on his self-esteem and the status that he enjoys in the community.

While this is a specific and remarkable case, it does point to the potential for participation to raise the status of participants, so that they are able to enjoy more power in their own communities.

Potential for development and empowerment for the broader community

One of the factors that affect the impact of TFA projects is that of sustainability. If the group is able to sustain their own participation in a project and to continue to open up channels from dialogue about HIV and AIDS issues, this may result in further empowerment for themselves and possibly for others in the community. While the boys from the focus group discussion reported that they would definitely participate in other plays again if they were given the opportunity, they said that they might not initiate this on their own, but would wait from the nurses from UVHAA to give them direction.

The project managers discussed the possibility of the local nurses themselves doing the performances, but concluded that it would be less effective because "They (the nurses) are used to telling them (community members) what they should do and shouldn't do" (Project Manager, 1, Interview, 2010). The project managers felt that the didactic approach from the nurses would be taken too seriously, while the boys were able to make the audience laugh. This suggests that in this case, people with less power within the community had a greater role to play than those identified within the community as 'experts' on HIV and AIDS. It also points to the fact that using theatre allowed unusual sources and those previously less visible to have a more powerful voice.

The UVHAA project managers felt that the balance that had been developed for this project, with the technical information coming from them as nurses, the script and performance direction coming from the PST Project, and the performers coming from the community was "a very good balance" (Project Manager, 1, Interview, 2010). The Man-To-Man Project provides a positive experience of a participatory project with benefits for the catalyst organisation, the participants, and for the rest of the community.

Conclusions and a way forward for theatre interventions

The case study provides an example of the involvement of outside 'experts' in a community-based theatre project that has a strong focus on local input and peer education. Through the project processes, the outside intervention allowed for the development of skills and the introduction of a new and exciting element into an already existing peer education project. While audiences reportedly recognised and enjoyed the messages contained in the play, which had a positive response, the question remains as to whether the project played a consciousness-raising and empowering role for both the participants and the broader community.

Empowerment, as defined by Sadan (1997), relates not only to the actual, but also to the perceived ability to make changes and take control over a situation. Participants who are involved in inclusive participatory theatre projects are likely to feel a sense of empowerment (this perceived ability) through their involvement, and there is evidence of a sense of personal empowerment for all the participants in the Man-to-Man project. This sense of empowerment creates agency and increased self-efficacy for these participants, who are then able to bring about changes in their own lives.

However, if practitioners wish to escalate the effects of their projects from bringing about individual change to encouraging a re-examination of power structures and to bringing about societal change, then participatory theatre projects need to encourage participation at other levels, to build a greater critical consciousness. This can only be built when participants start to question their lived existence —in this case examining the causes of the AIDS epidemic, and the social structures and practices that give rise to and feed the epidemic. The UVHAA project raised some of these issues in the scripted play, but did not involve

people directly in questioning this reality. The men and boys were personally changed through participation in the project, but the lack of the element of deeper exploration may limit the project's potential to have longer-lasting effects on a broader societal level.

Freire calls for liberatory education to involve an investigation into the root causes of oppression. In the case of HIV and AIDS, this would mean investigating how the epidemic affects the target community in question, and how to overcome the associated problems. A deeper understanding of the AIDS epidemic should explore the patterns that explain how and why HIV is transmitted as it is currently within the target community, and why AIDS has such a devastating effect on development in South Africa.

At present, there is evidence that theatre projects clearly have an impact at the micro-level of individuals and those with whom they come into contact. For greater impact at the macro-level, such projects may need to engage more directly with policy makers and those in structures of power, or more actively to encourage project participants to take on this role of engagement, for self-directed change. However, we must recognise that major change sometimes comes about through small processes. The small changes in the lives of a handful of individuals participating in just one theatre project may develop a groundswell that, in time, changes the future course of the AIDS epidemic.

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Social networking practices and youth advocacy efforts in HIV awareness and prevention: What does methodology have to do with it?

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Abstract

This article focuses on social networking practices of young people between the ages of 15 and 29 in relation to their sexual health. In so doing, the authors work with one key question: What methodologies are appropriate for exploring these practices? The article takes the example of YAHAnet.org, a social networking platform that promotes the arts as a critical tool for youth in the AIDS response. Beginning with a discussion of theoretical perspectives, the article goes on to analyze YAHAnet's successes and failures in leveraging Twitter, Facebook, and other social media in relation to the online practices of youth. The interplay of online and offline practices of young people are then explored. The article concludes with a consideration of how the tools and methods applied to the global YAHAnet platform might also be applied to the online practices of young people in South Africa.

Keywords: Social networking; sexual health; online and offline practices; YAHAnet; youth.

Introduction

As global and national studies highlight, the sexual health of young people remains a critical concern. Globally, young people aged 15 to 24 make up 42% of new HIV infections in people aged 15 and older, with the majority of these infections in 2010 occurring among young people in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2012). There is a growing consensus among those involved in social programming that unless young people are given a more significant voice in participating in dialogue about their own sexual health, the current sexual health programs aimed at promoting safe sexual practices among youth are doomed to fail (Ford, Odallo, & Chorlton, 2003). One key component of youth voice is social media, with more and more young people around the world using social media services, mobile apps, and other digital communication technologies to produce, share, and comment on videos, photos, podcasts, and text-based resources in order to effect change in a collaborative community capacity. This has been well documented by such researchers as Buckingham (2007), Carrington and Robinson (2009), De Castell and Jenson (2003), Jenkins (2006), Livingstone (2009), Mallan (2009) and Poletti (2008). Recent crowdmapping resources are aiding such interaction and collaboration among individuals and groups (Heinzelman, Brown, & Meier, 2011). Even

youth who do not have direct access to the Internet have a growing number of ways of receiving reliable sexual health information (Levine, 2011) and sharing information and interacting with their peers—for example, through text messaging (Faulkner & Culwin, 2005). Specifically, youth are harnessing social networking and social media tools for developing sexual health promotion campaigns (Boyar, Levine, & Zensius, 2011; Lim, Hocking, Hellard, & Aitken, 2008) and promoting activist movements that are becoming increasingly popular through crowdfunding platforms such as Kickstarter and global tools such as Youthmovements.org.

Social media trends and the sheer volume of data produced by youth-driven online activity are compelling reasons for researchers to tap into what young people are saying, or are willing to say, about their own health and well-being through social media. In this article, we consider ways of studying the social networking practices of young people between the ages of 15 and 29 in relation to their sexual health, and in so doing, we work with one key question: What methodologies are appropriate for exploring these practices? Responding to this question by looking at the example of an arts-based advocacy platform, *Youth, the Arts, HIV & AIDS Network* (YAHAnet), we examine how this online platform is being accessed and used, how it generates youth engagement, how its online and on-site activities link up, and what implications exist for deepening an understanding of methodologies that can help to shed light on how youth can be meaningfully engaged in policy dialogue through social media and in relation to sexual health. In the next section we consider some of the theoretical perspectives and key questions that could drive health-based social media research. We then go on to assess tools and methods for analyzing the YAHAnet platform's reach and engagement, and discuss the early stages of a textual analysis of YAHAnet's online and offline work. We conclude the article with a reflection on the overall process of conducting the study and draw attention to some of the implications for working with youth in South Africa. Overall, the article provides an 'inventory of methods' in social media studies.

Theoretical perspectives

While our overarching concern is with youth voice and policy dialogue in relation to sexual health, and how this can lead to more inclusive policy dialogue, we start with a very straightforward concern for what can be learned about youth, social networking, and sexual health by looking at youth participation in social media campaigns and initiatives related to HIV and AIDS, and, specifically, what methods will advance such a study. In response, we offer an analysis of components of YAHanet's use of social networking and social media services and how these interact with its 'on the ground' activities. The fieldwork[1] for studying YAHAnet is framed within separate yet overlapping bodies of work: (1) M-health and the use of digital portable communication devices such as mobile phones and other digital technologies and applications to influence current outcomes of health research, facilitate better health care delivery, and improve client participation (Broens, van Halteren, van Sinderen, & Wac, 2007; Istepanian, Laxminarayan, & Pattichis, 2006); (2) Youth reproductive health discourse that incorporates the significance of youth voice as an impetus for reforming current public health care delivery (Allen, 2005, 2008, 2011; Boyar et al., 2011; Flicker et al., 2009; Gilbert, 2007); (3) Online practices and appropriate research methods (Boyd, 2008; Daniel, 2011; Gauntlett, 2006, 2011; Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2002; Mitchell, Reid-Walsh & Pithouse, 2004); (4) Youth engagement studies that focus on the significance of 'youth as knowledge producers', a term first used by Lankshear and Knobel (2003) to refer to the ways in which young people can simultaneously play a key role as protagonists in the production of knowledge about their everyday lives and act as resources and agents of change through the presentation of that knowledge to other youth (see also Percy-Smith & Thomas, 2010); and (5) Grassroots policy-making research that studies measures that can effect policy change 'from the ground up' (Barry, 2005; Kapoor & Choudry, 2010; Wang, Burris, & Ping, 1996; Wang, Yi,

Tao, & Carovano, 1998). These separate and overlapping bodies of work offer a fascinating lens through which to study HIV and AIDS and the social media practices of young people.

Studying YAHAnet

Framing methodology

As an entry point to the study, we want to declare our own involvement with YAHAnet and to make clear that an important component of the study is a reflexive 'starting with ourselves' (Van Manen, 1990) or insider approach. Claudia is a co-founder of YAHAnet and the Project Leader while John is the Project Coordinator. We are both invested in deepening an understanding of ways of looking at how YAHAnet is currently functioning, and at the same time, studying its potential for influencing the study of youth and arts-based approaches to addressing HIV and AIDS. Thus this work is far from being a study conducted at arm's length through the eyes of an external evaluator. Indeed, in taking a 'starting with ourselves' orientation, we are testing out the ways in which autobiographical methods such as auto-ethnography are, in and of themselves, a critical area of study. (See for example Ellis, 2004; 2009; Muncey, 2010). Methodologically, we test out both quantitative and qualitative methods. For example, in relation to quantitative measures, we rely heavily on what Stephen Riggins (1994) would describe as denotative data. In the denotative aspects of the study, we draw on quantitative measures for studying virtual communities (see, for example, Daniel, 2011) as well as historical data (i.e., archival documents such as reports, proposals, previous articles, and indeed the YAHAnet site itself as a repository of information. The various documents serve as aides-memoire. We also explore approaches to studying YAHAnet that are more qualitative in nature and that draw on what Riggins terms the connotative in relation to meaning-making. This connotative data relies on a consideration of various interview and artefactual texts.

A brief history of YAHAnet

YAHAnet.org [2] is a virtual collaborative platform for text-, image-, and video-based discussion and advocacy on sexual health and HIV by and for young people. Going live in its current form in January 2009, its creation stemmed from a 2006 UNESCO study of arts-based youth initiatives in addressing HIV and AIDS that identified the need for a global online discussion platform and gallery space. As described by MacEntee and Murray (2012), YAHAnet is dedicated to a participatory action framework focusing on how the arts and arts-based methods can give a voice to youth. As they go on to note:

> *To support youth expression and engagement, the webtool offers how-to guides on a wide range of art forms, including collage art, drawing, photovoice, murals, painting, comic strips, magazines, newsletters, narrative writing, fiction and non-fiction writing, poetry, forum theatre, street theatre, puppetry dance, hip hop, music, radio drama and documentary, television, video-making, storytelling, and websites. An integral part of YAHAnet is the online gallery space, which houses photos, videos, audio files, and written art created and uploaded by members. The webtool also features a user-controlled resource database and fact guides on such topics as gender, stigma, sexual behavior, and myths surrounding HIV and AIDS. The 'workgroup' function on the webtool gives youth the opportunity to network and initiate projects with other like-minded peer activists and artists on both a local and global level. (p. 184)*

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[2] *This brief history draws on a number of published articles (Mitchell, Low, & Hoechsmann, 2008; MacEntee, Labacher, & Murray, 2011; and MacEntee & Murray, 2012); and reports such as Mitchell, Low, and Hoechsmann's [2006] Developing a Web-All on Arts-Based and Other Participatory Approaches to HIV Prevention and Education; and an online report , Youth, the Arts, HIV & AIDS Network 2011 Annual Report compiled by John Murray).* In this study, these documents were used more as aides-memoires and as such are not at the centre of the research design.

Figure 1

Screenshot of YAHAnet's homepage

YAHAnet also has an 'on the ground' profile through McGill University and through a variety of school and community workshops and exhibitions hosted in South Africa. YAHAnet's main offline presence has been at the 2008, 2010, and 2012 International AIDS Conferences, where team members have conducted collage and photovoice activities. The web platform and its offline activities are managed by a rotating team of student interns led by Project Leader Claudia Mitchell and Project Coordinator John Murray. YAHAnet draws together the work of research units at two Canadian universities—McGill University's Participatory Cultures Lab and the University of Toronto's Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention (GAAP) project—and at two South African universities—the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's Visual Methodologies for Social Change Unit.

Because what is popular in the world of social media is constantly changing, the YAHAnet team continually assesses how the online platform can use social networking/new media tools to understand the mindsets of their users and thereby fashion and re-fashion itself into something that young people are willing to adopt and call their own. In August 2010, following the XVIII International AIDS Conference in Vienna, the YAHAnet team started using Facebook and Twitter actively for promotion and education, and, over the past two years, the website has received sustained web traffic from over 40 countries per week, increasing to more than 1,000 visits a week during competitions and events/conferences. In 2011, YAHAnet's member base grew by almost 38%. However, YAHAnet has yet to attract a core Forum community or group of Gallery content uploaders to really propel the importance of the arts in countering cultural taboos, correcting misinformed sexual behaviours, and challenging restrictive policies to a larger and larger youth audience. And although an encouraging 37% of YAHAnet's members are part of Working Groups for arts-based community action, there are no real plans for a forum in which groups of young people can collaborate to explore future arts-based projects.

Tools for studying YAHAnet

In this section, we map out the tools that YAHAnet has used to study social media services that reach out to young people and youth organisations. We also use this 'map' in a strategic way in order to look at where YAHAnet needs to expand and/or alter its social media approach in order to stay relevant and continue to build a strong intercultural youth voice in HIV advocacy.

Google rankings and site usage

In order to determine how YAHAnet can both go and stay viral, it is necessary to track YAHAnet's ranking in basic HIV&AIDS Google searches and identify the main types of content that draw people to the platform, all while monitoring visit length. Google.com page rankings for "youth + hiv" keyword searches list the YAHAnet homepage as the 13th result[3]. YAHAnet fact guides appear within the first two pages of results for searches on myths about HIV, masculinity and HIV, and voluntary counseling and testing. To collect visitor statistics, the YAHAnet team has relied on HiStats, a free comprehensive website analytics service. Analysis of the data confirms that fact guides are a regular point of entry to YAHAnet from week to week. YAHAnet's radio drama and collaborative video how-to guides are also popular entry points to the website. (It is important to note that these two guides have high Google search rankings without "HIV" added as a keyword, so even people without any explicit desire for activism or advocacy are being drawn to YAHAnet.) Flashy adverts and campaign images from well-known organizations like Durex and AIDES, which are posted in the YAHAnet forums by the YAHAnet team, continue to bring visitors to the platform for more than six months after they have been posted[4]. YAHAnet webpages linked from its Twitter account round out the main traffic-generating content. As for site usage, visitors to YAHAnet explore an average of two pages per visit[5].

This all shows that YAHAnet has created a significant online presence, but it does not provide answers for how to significantly lower its 'new visitor' to 'returning visitor' ratio which rarely dropped below 80% in 2011. Until young people feel excited about interacting on YAHAnet and not just using it as a news or research site, YAHAnet will not be able to realise its aim of extending its arts-based social media approach from awareness and behaviour change to youth influence in policy making at local and national levels. It is important to look at YAHAnet's presence on Twitter and Facebook to see how these social media services are serving and can better serve YAHAnet's mission.

Twitter

During its first full year on Twitter in 2011, YAHAnet's account gained much recognition and support from organisations working with and for young people around the world—from tweets like Ubuntu Africa's "You all are reaching so many with your #advocacy & #creativity. Keep it up! #art #artispower" to shout-outs and retweets from Internet Sexuality Information Services (ISIS, Inc.), host of the innovative SEX:TECH conferences. YAHAnet's Twitter account has been followed by well-known youth-supportive organisations with low following ratios, such as UNAIDS, UNICEF, Designers Against AIDS, MTV Shuga, Dance4Life International, TakingITGlobal, The Body, Stephen Lewis Foundation, Plan, and Conversations for a Better World. Currently, YAHAnet has a PeerIndex rank[6] of 49 placing it just below UNAIDS' CrowdOutAIDS project's rank of 52 in terms of its 'social and reputational capital on the web' (see http://www.peerindex.com/help/scores). To add a further comparison dimension, popular youth sexual education portal Scarleteen has a rank of 55.

Continuing with a strong Twitter presence will, we hope, help YAHAnet initiate the formation of partnerships with university groups, youth organisations, and popular youth-oriented media edutainment campaigns run by organisations such as MTV and (RED). As Tammy Tibbetts (founder and president of *She's the First*, a not-for-profit organisation focused on girls' education in the developing world) highlighted in

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3 All Google page rankings were taken in early August 2012.

4 HiStats analytics, August 2012

5 Twitter Grader (http://tweet.grader.com) is a free tool that rates Twitter performance based on six algorithm factors: http://graderblog.grader.com/twitter-grader-api/bid/19046/How-Does-Twitter-Grader-Calculate-Twitter-Rankings

6 PeerIndex (www.peerindex.com) is a free social media analytics tool that rates the online influence of organisations and individuals on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Quora. It has scored over 45 million Twitter accounts on Authority, Audience, and Activity.

the live stream of the 11th Youth Assembly at the United Nations in August 2012, the best collaborators do not necessarily turn out to be your friends but can be the people you meet through Twitter (United Nations Webcast, 2012). Through such partnerships, the potential of YAHAnet as a platform for discussion and real change may be elevated in the minds of individual youth as they hear about the platform from organisations or companies that they respect and know are popular. The fact that YAHAnet has reached over 1,400 Twitter followers in two years and has a Twitter Grader rank of 94/100[7] should help YAHAnet secure strong partnerships moving forward. The YAHAnet team can also concentrate more on getting the attention of individual youth on Twitter by offering them congratulations on awareness initiatives and continuing to give them ways to promote their work on YAHAnet. Regular monitoring of YAHAnet's TweetLevel ranking will help evaluate whether YAHAnet's engagement score of "OK" can reach its influence score of "superstar"[8].[9]

Facebook

YAHAnet upgraded to a Facebook page from a Facebook group in October 2011 to coincide with its global student podcast competition, which set out to reach as many young people as possible. The use of Facebook has been a contested topic for the YAHAnet team since there have been worries that 'likes' and discussion on Facebook will take away from commenting and interaction on the YAHAnet platform. This worry is not unfounded. For example, during the Vienna Declaration campaign launched prior to the 2010 International AIDS Conference, it was discovered that the campaign's Facebook page actually became the clearing house for information related to the campaign—no one was leaving Facebook and visiting the campaign website (Montaner, 2012). However, despite the YAHAnet team's concerns, we realise that it is still beneficial for YAHAnet to have a Facebook presence in order to regularly 'like' and highlight the work of new youth-led organisations that do not have a Twitter presence. More concrete Facebook affiliations with celebrated youth organisations and movements that have a strong youth following will also elevate YAHAnet's place in online activism. For instance, a single post about YAHAnet Coordinator John Murray's involvement with the CrowdOutAIDS Drafting Committee led to 49 views, engagement by 7 people, and a virality of 6.12%[10]. This post received more interaction than posts promoting YAHAnet content and activities. Another benefit of Facebook is that Insight statistics give YAHAnet a way to regularly monitor whether it is reaching its target audience of 15- to 29-year-olds.

An area to explore with Facebook and virality is the use of polls and questionnaires. It would be beneficial for YAHAnet to solicit responses from young people on whether they would consider getting involved in Working Groups and Forums on YAHAnet. And as YAHAnet's new research arm embarks on a study of how youth social networking and social media practices can be harnessed to inform health policy in Canada, polls and surveys disseminated through Facebook can provide data on advocacy and policy engagement. However, it is important to realise that such polls and surveys should be supplemented by private emails for maximum engagement and that there can be an intimidation factor in individuals approaching organisations as evidenced by recent work done by the National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition (NBGMAC) with young Black gay men in the United States (Jones, 2012).

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[7] *Twitter Grader (http://tweet.grader.com) is a free tool that rates Twitter performance based on six algorithm factors: http://graderblog.grader.com/twitter-grader-api/bid/19046/How-Does-Twitter-Grader-Calculate-Twitter-Rankings*

[8] *TweetLevel (http://tweetlevel.edelman.com) is a free Twitter measurement tool.*

[9] *TweetLevel (*http://tweetlevel.edelman.com*) is a free Twitter measurement tool.*

[10] *The virality of a Facebook post is defined as "the number of people who have created a story from [the] post as a percentage of the number of people who have seen it" (http://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=279981958693502).*

Other social media tools

Tumblr,[11] Instagram,[12] and Pinterest[13] would be interesting tools for YAHAnet to explore in the near future. One solution to the lack of comments on photos in YAHAnet's Gallery would be to use Tumblr to reblog HIV and AIDS-related images to gain a following and then start posting links to images from the YAHAnet Gallery and asking for comments outside of Tumblr. The creation of 'what-is-your-best-caption' contests on Tumblr could help YAHAnet go and stay viral. Themed Instagram photo challenges could also be tested out. Pinterest has a growing number of artistic adverts and infographics related to HIV and AIDS, so it would make sense to promote YAHAnet's mission and reach by pinning them and adding its own contributions from its growing Gallery.

When thinking of what it means to go viral, YouTube may be the first thing that comes to mind. While YAHAnet's Video Gallery could be considered a small-scale YouTube devoted to creative HIV awareness and prevention videos, the YAHAnet team believes that it would be worth launching a YouTube account to gain a wider audience for its interactive condom banner, button awareness, and red ribbon stop motion videos, which have only been released through YAHAnet.org. And since 500 tweets a minute contain video links (O'Neill, 2012), YAHAnet's YouTube account could boost its Twitter presence. In addition, running a global youth competition on webisode creation through the YouTube account would provide more content for YAHAnet's Gallery, and keeping in mind that over 100 million people take social action on videos every week, such a competition could help participating youth-led organisations go viral with their advocacy and health policy messages, attracting the interest of decision makers.

Information vs. Action

As a team, we are still striving to find the balance between providing information (e.g., fact guides, articles, reports, and creative male and female condom 'how-to' videos) and sparking arts-based action on a community and global level. In this regard, it is important to consider the strong engagement on a mobile youth portal like Praekelt Foundation's Young Africa Live (YAL)[14]. In just one and a half years up until May 2011, the YAL portal had received over 36,000,000 page views, over 1,000,000 comments, and over 357,000 unique visitors (Hettige, 2012). Unlike YAHAnet, the portal provides helpline numbers and linkages to VCT centres and live chats with doctors and relationship experts, but like YAHAnet, it encourages guest bloggers and features the latest news stories. The next step for YAHAnet as a platform will be to foster similar online engagement but related to the arts and social media and health policy change. This could be through letter-writing policy campaigns promoted on Twitter (Montaner, 2012), polls and surveys on Facebook on effective arts-based advocacy or strategies for youth inclusion in Ministry of Health decision making, image-based advocacy and political cartooning on Tumblr, or video messages to policy makers through YouTube—to name just a few youth-led actions. Google+ Hangouts could be tested by YAHAnet for hosting free virtual student-led sessions by region that would consist of collage, photovoice, or storyboarding activities on a health policy theme followed by discussions on community action. These video Hangouts could provide the more personal, face-to-face environment lacking in YAHAnet's current online outreach. UNAIDS' CrowdOutAIDS crowdmap[15] of youth activists and organisations, which is expanding every day, is an important network to tap into for these sessions and for helping to turn YAHAnet into a platform for action.

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[11] *Tumblr (www.tumblr.com) is a micro-blogging platform that offers both free and pay designs. There were 68 million Tumblr accounts as of August 2012.*

[12] *Instagram (http://instagram.com) is a free photo-sharing program, social network, and app that allows users to choose a photo filter to enhance their images and is compatible with Facebook, Flickr, and Twitter.*

[13] *Pinterest (http://pinterest.com) is a free virtual pinboard for organising and sharing content on the web.*

[14] *This South African portal was launched on December 1, 2009. See* http://www.praekeltfoundation.org/young-africa-live.html

[15] http://www.crowdoutaids.org/wordpress/map/

Interplay between online and offline actions

One of the challenges of this work is seeking a balance in the 'online' and 'on the ground' engagement of young people. While it is beyond the scope of this article to offer an argument as to whether an online presence or a community presence would have a greater influence in relation to youth HIV advocacy and prevention, there is some work, at least, that points to the significance of offline engagement in youth activism (see, for example, Banaji and Buckingham, forthcoming). As is also argued elsewhere in relation to cell phones and their use in engaging young people in disclosing their HIV status or getting tested, there is still clearly a place for face-to-face communication (see, for example, Labacher & Mitchell, 2012; Labacher & Mitchell, in press). Being a virtual space for creative expression and learning is only one of YAHAnet's functions. Its offline actions are also vital. A good example of this can be seen in YAHAnet's presence at the International AIDS Conferences in Mexico City, Vienna, and Washington, where members of the team facilitated arts-based workshops (in Mexico City and Vienna) and set up and led interactive 'Wall of Hands' photovoice activities in the Global Village of the Vienna and Washington conferences (see also MacEntee, Labacher, & Murray, 2011). Moreover, the various YAHAnet contests that are promoted through online actions but that require offline engagement are key, involving both university interns who volunteer to work with YAHAnet to design the contests (and gain firsthand knowledge of youth, the arts, and HIV and AIDS) and the youth who participate in the contests. To date, these contests have explored visual, performance, and literary art.

Figure 2

YAHAnet's booth and 'Wall of Hands' exhibit in the 2012 Global Village at the XIX International AIDS Conference in Washington, D.C. in July, 2012

Textual analysis

We have also begun to embark on studying the influence of the various 'on the ground' YAHAnet activities such as contests and workshops. These initiatives translate into online action in that the contest submissions and 'Wall of Hands' images have been uploaded to the YAHAnet platform and continue to be exhibited. While we have not carried out systematic interviews with participants of contests and workshops, we have at the time of carrying out 'on the ground' activities conducted some interviews. For example, following the collage workshop at the Vienna conference, we conducted video interviews with various participants (see http://yahanet.org/category/tags/yahanet-video-interviews). These interviews offer some indication of the processes and benefits of creating textual production in relation to HIV and

AIDS. As Melina from Bosnia and Herzegovina observed: "*It was one of the sessions that I really liked . . . it was interactive . . . it was a new way how to show something. I didn't have a lot of chances to do something creative like that—or maybe it was because of my job . . . I work in office*." Luigi from Colombia commented: "*Maybe in my country I want to take this [technique] . . . because it's an easy way to say to people you can make a message for the people . . . you can . . . widen your message.*" Their comments give some indication of the ways in which artistic engagement can be seen as inviting.

We have also begun to collect textual narratives related to youth engagement from the McGill-based interns who are involved in designing contests and in participating in 'on the ground' university activities related to fund raising, awareness, and so on. These interns are typically between the ages of 19 and 23 and as such are also critical to a youth strategy. As argued elsewhere (Mitchell, Weber, & Yoshida, 2008; Mitchell, 2009), university students have a critical role to play in the policy-making process. Speaking about the 2011 podcast contest, which she helped to set up, one of YAHAnet's McGill-based interns noted the following:

> *I had the pleasure to be a part of organizing the most recent YAHAnet contest in the fall of 2011. This contest utilized the podcast medium for the first time, and in that sense, represents the organization's own progress and innovative capacity. Youth from around the world were encouraged to participate, with the main criteria solely being that participants were between the ages of 15 and 24. Podcasts were to be a maximum of three minutes, with a clear message that related to the theme 'turning the tide together to reach zero', a compilation of the theme for the 2012 International AIDS Conference and the 2011 World AIDS Day theme. In addition, we provided a comprehensive tutorial on how to make a podcast to ensure that as many people as possible could participate, and that they may continue on with the medium. This contest illustrates the use of participatory media for social change as students were encouraged to become media content creators on a social justice theme. . . . It definitely helped to increase the organization's presence in the HIV and AIDS youth activist community and without a doubt promoted the use of participatory media among student groups. Moreover, the reach of the contest was truly impressive. Submissions came from a variety of regions— from Gambia to Brunei, to the United States and Canada. The majority of the submissions came from student HIV and AIDS activist groups who were involved in a variety of awareness and fundraising activities. YAHAnet's promotion of participatory media within these groups, and their reception to it, demonstrates the potential of podcasting for social change. Furthermore, the podcasts were aired on CKUT, a non-profit campus community radio station that serves the McGill University and greater Montreal community. Community collaboration of this kind is another example of participatory media's bottom-up orientation. (Personal communication, 2012)*

Another way of studying aspects of influence is to consider the artistic productions created by young people as visual or audio texts. This approach includes analysis of primary texts (e.g., videos, photos from events/workshops, campaign Public Service Announcements (PSAs), short introspective films, or interviews with activists) produced by youth. For example, following the first Wall of Hands initiative at the Vienna conference on the theme of 'Rights to expression around sexuality and HIV and AIDS', an analysis was carried out of the images produced by one subset of the almost 240 participants—girls and young women. As MacEntee, Labacher, and Murray (2011) highlight in their analysis, which draws on the work of Rose (2001), the messages are rich and varied:

The messages written on these young women's and girls' photos range from addressing rights related to harm reduction and treatment to the role of religion in addressing HIV, with many references to peace, love and the future. Human rights are directly referenced four times. Messages about the rights of women are found in five photos and messages about the rights of youth in two. Four messages refer to "protecting yourself", presumably against HIV and AIDS, but this is not always clearly stated. The importance of support for people living with HIV and/or AIDS is also a common theme among the messages on the photos (mentioned four times). However, working together to bring about change is the most commonly cited theme (with twelve mentions). The exclamation marks, prominent in eleven photos, highlight the urgency of the messages and the desire for others to read them. (159)

The prompt for the 'Wall of Hands' at the Washington conference—'Taking the lead to get to zero'—similarly invited various thematic analyses of the more than 300 hand images and the messages written on them[16]. Noting the success of the various 'on the ground' exhibitions of the 'Wall of Hands' in 2010, MacEntee, & Murray (2012) nonetheless conclude that the photos continue to reach their widest audience as part of an interactive virtual gallery on YAHAnet, which has also been promoted on other sites such as TakingITGlobal, MTVAct, and CITIZENShift. The Washington virtual exhibit has reached even further with promotion on Osocio and Positive Life.

Beyond these approaches to working with the productions, however, the concept of the virtual exhibition has opened up new spaces to think about the ways in which young people might be engaged in posting their own exhibitions. These exhibitions might be read as windows into the ways that young people use textual display to represent their views.

Figure 3

Photo message created by a 27-year-old woman from London, UK, during the 'Wall of Hands' activity on 'Taking the lead to get to zero' at YAHAnet's Global Village booth at AIDS 2012 in Washington, D.C.

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[16] *See for example a preliminary analysis of this data to be found at: http://popplet.com/app/#/407223*

Discussion

Throughout our consideration above of the various methodologies for studying YAHAnet as a social networking site dedicated to addressing youth, the arts, and HIV prevention and awareness, we have highlighted the ways that we have tested out different measures and have offered reflections related to studying how YAHAnet is being used. In so doing, we have drawn attention to some of the ways in which social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter simultaneously increase online use and provide ways of studying online action. The process of engaging in this work has been valuable in that it has helped us to think of other ways of engaging young people in arts-based initiatives through social media. In this respect, the process of working with the various data sources has been one that is grounded in reflexivity-in action. Thus we are seeing how the setting up of a YouTube channel would allow for organisation of arts-based advocacy videos by theme and region through playlists. We have also seen that the types of gallery components that we as managers of the site have been developing could be re-imagined within a digital curation framework. This is something that has been explored on the Girl Museum site (www.girlmuseum.org). As noted above, the various group contests and on-site workshops which have been set up in collaboration with conferences and symposia would lend themselves to promoting digital curation by youth groups who would themselves organise the online exhibitions. What this has also pointed out is the need for ongoing links between online and offline activity.

Given our concern for deepening an understanding of methodologies that are appropriate for studying how social networking practices might be linked to HIV prevention and awareness strategies, the next step in this process is to develop targeted strategies for studying the actual content of social messaging and networking, and then to consider the ways in which policy makers can be more effectively drawn into this work. Our concern is with policy making that might be described as originating 'from the ground up'. What types of HIV-related policies might these be, and how could close readings and analyses of the online artistic productions of young people further this policy development agenda?

Finally, we continue to be interested in the ways in which contests and other types of specifically targeted events contribute to increasing the number of young people who visit the YAHAnet platform. Elsewhere, we have recognised the gap between going viral (i.e., when visitors decide to share and link to YAHAnet content widely) and staying viral (continuing to offer a creative and original platform and being constantly aware of and learning from viral success stories)[17]. Much of the literature on youth-centred HIV interventions has highlighted the need to go beyond 'business as usual' and that some ideas linked to being 'sick of AIDS' (Mitchell & Smith, 2003) or suffering from AIDS fatigue are part of the reality of this work. While our methods, to date, have not revealed a way of countering the 'sick of AIDS' phenomenon, we do acknowledge the challenges of working within a participatory culture from which users can easily move on. How best to stay viral then, is an ongoing concern.

Conclusions and Implications

In this article, we have mapped out some of the ways in which a variety of online and offline tools and procedures might be applied to studying youth engagement in relation to HIV advocacy and prevention. As noted in the Introduction, these various tools and procedures might be read as a type of 'inventory' which can, we hope, serve to guide our own next steps, but also the work of other researchers. What we have highlighted in our testing out of methodology is that much of the potential richness of the online presence of young people is lost to policy discussions in the absence of appropriate tools and methods for mining this data. In order to explore questions of influence and the idea of 'what difference does this make?' we need appropriate tools. It is worth noting again the significance of major organisations such as UNAIDS using crowdsourcing, for example, as a policy-generating tool for accessing the voices of young people. As we

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[17] *For more on virality, see this Sparkplug Digital blog post: http://www.sparkplugdigital.com/blog/going-viral-part-2-do-your-research/*

noted in the Introduction, social media trends and the sheer volume of data produced by youth-driven online initiatives and activities are compelling reasons for researchers to tap into what young people are saying through their online practices and ultimately to consider how communities of young people might themselves shape policies and practices that are of importance to their lives. This is an area that is critical at the global level where the idea of youth as protagonist has been central to policy making, at least in principle, since the late 1990s.

One of the key implications of the work highlighted here in relation to HIV prevention and advocacy is the need to extend the reach of this type of research and analysis. Given the readership and the mandate of *Educational Research and Social Change*, one promising extension would be to study the social media practices of young people attending Higher Education Institutions in South Africa, particularly in the context of the work of the [Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme (HEAIDS)](#) and its focus on ensuring that HIV and AIDS programming is integrated into curricular and co-curricular activities (HEAIDS, 2010). At one level, one might ask what relationships exist between South African young people's use of Facebook, Twitter, and other online services on the one hand, and HIV awareness, advocacy, and prevention on the other. Alongside this, one might consider the ways in which social media sites such as YAHAnet could offer outlets for, and support of, cultural production in relation to HIV and AIDS. But the online practices of secondary schools in South Africa are also 'sites' for study. In a recent project with a group of rural primary and secondary teachers that involved the production of cellphilms (short videos shot on cell phones), an observation made by the teachers was that many of the learners have cell phones and would have access to online technology (Mitchell, De Lange, & Moletsane, 2012).

To date, however, the online practices of learners, especially in rural contexts, have received little attention, although as Mitchell, Pascarella, De Lange, and Stuart (2010) observed in their work with rural youth and blogging in relation to HIV&AIDS awareness, it is the rural context that makes this work so promising in relation to local and global resources. In a series of articles on digitisation and education in South Africa that appeared in the *Mail & Guardian* between June and August 2012 (see http://mg.co.za/tag/ict-in-classroom), Michael Rice highlighted the rich possibilities for young learners. In the fourth article, 'Schools can't ignore technology', Rice starts off by emphasising how youth are "technologically switched on" because their world is dominated by smartphones, iPads, iPods, Google, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. As Rice comments, in relation to children and young people, "It is their reality" (p. 37). In a country hard hit by HIV and AIDS and in a context where the participation of young people is key, getting the methodology right for deepening an understanding of their social media practices (and potential) is vital.

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"Having a say": Urban adolescent girls narrating their visions of future through photovoice

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Abstract

Navigating adolescence could be a challenge in its own right, but it is uniquely difficult for urban minority and immigrant girls who are affected by a confluence of external circumstances. This article describes a participatory arts-based study conducted by a women's research team with ten urban adolescent girls in the Midwest of the United States. The purpose of the study was to illuminate the girls' visions of their future and their struggles to achieve these visions. The participants were African-American, Latino, and African immigrant girls from one school. The study used photovoice and other arts-based activities to construct photo-narratives depicting their visions of the future. Results are categorized into picturing themselves, and picturing their school and their communities. The findings highlight the need for a safe space for the girls to talk and share their thoughts and concerns about issues they face and what they envision for their futures. The study also points to the need for further collaborative partnerships to challenge the obstacles that immigrant and minority girls face, not only in the American educational system, but also in the larger ecologies in which these girls interact. Photovoice and arts-based research provide opportunities to engage in an empowerment discourse not often channeled in other methods.

Keywords: Photovoice; Adolescent girls; Urban school; Arts-based research.

Introduction

I want to be an artist. My Dad says I can't because they don't make enough money. He wants me to be a pediatrician. Carolina, age 14[1].

Navigating adolescence is a challenge in its own right, but it is uniquely difficult for urban minority and immigrant girls who are affected by a confluence of external circumstances. In addition to the social pressures to engage in high risk behaviors that many adolescents face (Hymowitz, 2001), United States urban minority and immigrant girls are more likely to experience or witness violence (Talbott, Celinska, Simpson, & Coe, 2002), live in poverty (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Lee, 2005; National Center for Children in Poverty, 2007), have less connection to natural mentors and social capital (Rhodes & Davis, 1996; Stanton-Salazar, 1997), attend low-resource and substandard schools (Manz, Power, Ginsburg-Block, & Dowrick, 2010; Peske & Haycock, 2006), and face acculturative stress (Allen, Denner, Hirokazu, Seidman, & Aber, 1996). During this developmental period when it is critical for girls to voice their experiences, thoughts, and fears, counter pressures silence them. For many girls, parents, peer groups, classmates, teachers, and especially the media, establish role identities for them that hinder individuality, voice, and action. Without meaningful empowerment discourse, girls placate these pressures through silence and accommodation. At the same time strong, affirmative relationships can be a source of resilience for the girls to use to question and defy such pressures (Spencer, 2002; 2006). High-poverty, low-resource schools attended by urban minority and immigrant girls may be prohibitive of the formation of such supportive and beneficial relationships and therefore obstruct the girls' abilities to consider their "possible selves", the world, and their place in it (Cohen, Blanc, Research for Action, Inc., & American Association of University Women, 1996; Behnke, Gonzalez, & Cox, 2010). In fact, most schools are not prepared to support immigrant and low-income students to not engage in risky behavior and/or to not drop out of school altogether (Behnke et al., 2010).

Motivated by this situation and because of an existing sound partnership with a particular school and its English as a Second Language Coordinator (M. Lang), we—a group of women ranging from 22 to 46 years of age, and coming from varied economic, geographic, and cultural backgrounds—launched into a collaborative project with ten minority and immigrant (African-American, Latino, African) adolescent girls (Grades 6-8, aged 11-15 years) who attend an urban language immersion magnet school. The school serves K-8 students who are native Spanish or French speakers along with a large number of African-American urban youth. School admission is available to students across the city and is designed for families requiring foreign language instruction. Students are taught *primarily* in Spanish or French, in addition to American English. Almost all the students are considered US racial/ethnic minorities and increasing numbers of Latino and African immigrant students are attending the school. Some 45% of the current student body self-identifies as Hispanic/Latino and there is a growing population of West-African immigrant children. Almost 87% of the student body is economically disadvantaged (Ohio Department of Education, 2009), and financial resources at the school are severely lacking (personal communication with the principal and English as a Second Language coordinator, September 19, 2008 to present).

Although there is certainly a sizeable body of literature that would allow us as researchers to make informed decisions about initiatives we could introduce at school, we resisted such an approach since it does not reflect our ethical commitments as researchers. Rather, we wanted our research and work with the girls to be rooted in their actual experiences in this particular school and within their communities. Our research team is committed to building multiple understandings—based on the girls' perspectives about actions that we and other concerned adults can take to help them to successfully navigate these difficult years so that they can freely define and pursue their dreams. Furthermore, we are equally committed to

[1] *Pseudonyms have been used throughout to protect the anonymity of these girls.*

advocating for the girls' development of agency[2]. An assumption underlying our praxis is that through an ongoing cycle of empowerment, reflection, and action, these girls can craft a more positive future for themselves. Our study is one of many that attempt to achieve these goals.

This article draws on an afterschool project incorporating shared inquiry and arts-based research methodologies in which we and the ten girls collaborated to understand the challenges involved in navigating adolescence. The research question was formulated as, "What are these adolescent girls' visions of the future for themselves, their school, and their world?" In responding to the research question, we first describe the background of our community-academic partnership. Second, we describe the arts-based methodology including photovoice that was used in the study. We then discuss the results of the study and comment on the importance of developing a safe space for girls to share their thoughts, concerns, and what they envision for their futures. Finally, we share our sense of the possibilities raised by this type of collaboration and explore next steps.

Background

School-university-community partnership

This study is one of several that emerged from a collaborative community-academic partnership established more than four years ago between the K-8 school, our university (University of Cincinnati), and the local children's hospital[3]. The fact that this study emanates from such a partnership is important. All too often, well-meaning external researchers enter schools and impose their realities on the students, teachers, and school community, gather their data or implement their intervention and leave (Slater, 1996). We did not want to perpetuate such relationships which can be steeped in hierarchies that limit participatory involvement and undermine authentic action. Earlier interactions through service-learning initiatives involving four of the six members of our group helped develop a bond of mutual trust with the school and its faculty and students. This is not to imply that the partnership is without problems.

Methodology

Arts-based research and photovoice

We began this study with a question that pointed our gaze towards understanding the girls' perspectives about what we and other adults could do to push back against the social and cultural pressures that limit the options a girl from an urban school and urban community may have. Our sessions included a variety of arts-based activities: examining photographic images of notable minority women; creating identity collages from magazine images and then from the girls' own photographs; photographing the school in a photo scavenger hunt (girls were given a list of school-related items such as the letter grade of A+, a science textbook, and so on) in which they had to take photos to prove they had found the items); and photographing their communities and their lives. At the start of our work the girls were given research journals to record their own reflections about each of the photographs they took. In some sessions we asked them to share reflections with one another from those journals. Their final task for the year was to design a series of photo-narratives with the theme, "what I want for myself, my community, and my world", and to record videos of themselves explaining their photos. Throughout all of this research, the

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[2] We use a psychological definition of the term agency, that is, to intentionally exert influence over one's life circumstances. Bandura (2006) outlines four properties of human agency: intentionality; forethought; self-reactiveness; and self-reflectiveness.

[3] In an attempt to address the health and educational disparities of students at the K-8 school, the community-academic partnership was established among a researcher at the university, a researcher at the children's hospital and a teacher/English language coordinator at the school. The partnership regularly applies for grant funding and obtained university funding for the digital cameras used in the current project.

girls' interpretations of their work and the stories that their art evoked were central to our growing understandings of their lives in their school and in their community.

In this article we report on the use of photovoice. Our interest in using photovoice (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001; Wang, Wu, Zhan, & Carovano, 1998) and other arts-based approaches to engage the girls is largely based on our understanding that these methods would help us find an interstitial place between art and inquiry—one that would allow us to collaborate and learn from one **another. We as researchers approached the study with an understanding that the girls had their own** unique perspectives on art and photography and that the girls were able to share their own "expert" insights into their school, their community, their lived experiences, and into the dreams they had for themselves. Photography, which Ewald and Lightfoot (2001) describe as "perhaps the most democratic visual art of our time" (p. 14), can readily be used with youth and gives them a powerful medium in which to share their perspectives on the world. Even for us as university researchers, the democratic nature of photography—particularly when using digital cameras that are very forgiving of our amateur status—provided a comfortable platform for our work with the girls. Generally, adolescent girls are not given outlets for their voices to be heard and shared (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) and often, therefore, the voices of marginalized students go unheard (Angelides & Michaelidou, 2009; Cook-Sather, 2006; Kaplan & Howes, 2004). Engaging these voices can be most valuable in the development of a positive school environment. For example, in an examination of the value of research using images in school, Kaplan and Howes (2004) describe the reality that students "generally have the least amount of power in school communities [and] school authorities can make it difficult for pupils to engage in research" (p. 144). They had also sought a methodology that would encourage students to engage in research at school because, in their experience, interviews and questionnaires were not adequate for understanding and learning about students' perspectives. We share a similar view in that we believe the use of arts-based research can facilitate the verbalization of areas of tension and concern. We found our weekly sessions to be a safe place for the girls to discuss their photographs—which was also an effective means of helping the girls voice ideas that they may not have otherwise been able to verbalize or share (Leavy, 2009).

Our rationale for using an arts-based approach that included photovoice was to provide a space for girls "to use their voices and be heard within a supportive environment" (Hirsch et al., 2000, p. 222) while at the same time fostering the development of supportive relationships with peers and adult role models. According to Hutzel (2006), arts-based programs can help young people acquire knowledge and skills that apply to fields outside of the arts and can be a strong motivating force in the futures of young people, particularly alienated youth who struggle to find a place in public school systems. Arts-based expressive modalities can also provide a relational context recognizing both one's own unique expression and the expressions of others (Sassen, Spencer, & Curtin, 2005).

Using photovoice

Participants

The ten girls involved in this after school project were also part of a "Girls Club" initiative designed to engage the participants in activities and conversations about their sense of self and their well-being. We advertised the photovoice project to the larger girls club, and ten minority and immigrant girls (five African-American, four Latina, one African) from the girls club agreed to participate. The girls' ages ranged from 11 to 15 years. We began the photovoice project in late spring with 8 weeks remaining in the school year. Because photovoice is a participatory action research methodology, it is intentionally open-ended. One important facet of photovoice is the opportunity it gives participants to chart the course of the study (Wang et al., 1998). We initially invited the girls to develop photography prompts that were drawn from their own interests. This idea is rooted in the notion that the girls know their own communities and it is important that they be given the opportunity to communicate what they know to us (Vaughn, Rojas-Guyler, & Howell,

2008). With this broad framework, we hoped the girls would take the lead in raising areas for their inquiry as a group.

Data generation

The first two sessions (Session 1 and 2) were dedicated to introducing the girls to the project and to fostering connections between our research team and the girls, and between and amongst the girls themselves. Critical to success was the promotion of inclusion early on, which proved to be a struggle throughout our collaboration. Because the girls were in different grades and from different ethnic backgrounds, the groups were focused on interpersonal connection building as well as interacting in terms of established photovoice methodology. One example of an arts-based method focusing on inclusion was an initial "all about me" collage, which involved creating a collage of images and text to express who each was as individual. Every session thereafter included a brief activity that allowed the girls to interact and share a personal story.

Before distributing simple digital cameras to the girls, we, the researchers, wanted to create a dialogue about photography as an art form, as well as a medium for research (Session 3). To achieve this, the girls and our research team discussed photography as a medium, as well as a means to generate visual data about their lived experiences. An arts-based method that allowed for greater insight into photography and the action of taking pictures included an analysis of selected images, which included historical minority women, and different landscapes. The girls, in small groups, discussed several images using the SHOWeD technique (Wang et al., 1998). The girls answered the following SHOWeD questions: "What do you See here?", "What is really Happening?", "How does this relate to Our lives?", "Why does this problem or this strength exist?", and "What can we Do about this?" Several members of the research team observed the girls' initial hesitation to voice their own assertions and reflections regarding the images. However, the SHOWeD technique did enable a layer of analysis by the participants themselves.

Following a conversation on photovoice as a research methodology, we reviewed the goals and stages of the photovoice process. A brief PowerPoint presentation, a training video, and discussion were all included in the third session. The training video, for example, showed that a camera could turn a thought into a photograph and that great subjects for photography included people, places, and interests. The video posed the question: "What are you trying to take a picture of?" It also emphasized that sometimes an image about a person need not necessarily include that person.

Data analysis

In order to capture the content of the girls' discussions during each session, the research team took notes during the session and wrote reflections afterwards. The notes and reflections alongside the photographs served as the basis of the data analysis. Throughout the eight-week program, the research team reviewed the notes, reflections, and photos in order to identify tentative themes. According to standard qualitative research procedure, all the data was organized into broad conceptual categories and verified with the girls for clarification, consensus, and validation (Bradley, Currey, & Devers, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The girls revised their themes and compiled the final themes into photo-narratives, that is, posters using photographs in response to the photo prompts. As they worked on their photo-narratives, the girls discussed why they had created the posters and the meanings behind them. The photo-narratives would carry the girls' voices to the community when the next school year began with a gala celebration of their new school building. Such public dissemination of the photographs and photo-narratives is important in getting findings out into the school and community (Streng et al., 2004; Wang et al., 1998).

Ethics

Part of the training included a brief section on visual ethics. Ethical considerations included appropriate subjects to photograph, photographing other people, responsibility for carrying the camera, and sensitivity using the cameras. We also provided consent forms to be used when taking photographs of other people. During this discussion we emphasized the importance of respecting privacy and the rights of others. Following the introduction on using the camera and the initial discussion on ethical implications of photography, the girls generated themes for the first camera assignment. The girls agreed to return, with up to 25 pictures, each week for the remaining five sessions. We also encouraged the girls to take self-portraits and to respond to the self-portraits in their reflection journals. The girls identified their favorite themes for photo assignments as happiness, success, future, and dreams.

When, after 2 weeks, several girls had not taken any pictures, we realized that we might have rushed some of them into the study and that we needed to check in with them to figure out where they were with the project. One realization that we had fairly early in the process was that the girls were not accustomed to such broad parameters in terms of deciding the prompts themselves, and that they wanted us to be more direct in guiding the project. This led the research team to ask them to consider the prompt, "What I want for myself, my school, and my world". For the remaining three sessions, all the girls generated photographs and worked on their photo narratives in response to the suggested prompt.

Findings

Throughout the project it was evident that the girls had not previously worked with art as a medium to facilitate thinking about changes they wished to see both within themselves, and outside in their school and communities. The focus of the prompt we eventually introduced allowed the girls to consider themselves, their local (school) community, and the larger world—all of which they could define in any way they wanted.

Picturing themselves

The twenty photo-narratives illustrated tensions the girls felt between their dreams and impediments to achieving those dreams. Although all the work is compelling, here we focus on and share the two photo-narratives of one seventh grade Latina, Carolina. The first photo-narrative refers to Carolina herself, whereas the second refers to the school and community. We also include a discussion about the process of the photo-narrative of Rosario in trying to show how the photovoice process can be cathartic.

Carolina

Carolina is an intense young woman who is quick with an opinion and not hesitant to speak her mind in our sessions. She would sometimes play the mediator—helping us navigate group dynamics with the girls when we hit bumpy moments. She could also pull back into herself, sketching quietly, during the group discussions. In one of our sessions we noticed a figure that Carolina had sketched in her journal. The pencil drawing was of a young woman lying down, an expression of sadness reflected not only in her face, but in the way her body was draped. There was a profound heaviness in the image. The picture drew all of us in. The other girls asked Carolina if it was a picture of herself, but she told them it was "a friend who was crying" because "she didn't feel good." The girls suggested that she should be an artist but she demurred saying she was "just bored" and this is what she does when she is bored. It was in this conversation that she said she would like to be an artist, but that her father had told her "you can't draw that good." She also told us that he did not think that being an artist was an "acceptable career" and said that artists "don't make enough money" and that she should rather study to be a pediatrician.

Later, when the girls worked on the photo-narratives, Carolina let her art speak for her about what she wanted for herself. In her photo-narrative (see Image 1) we noticed the repetition of the words "dream" and "dreaming" that seemed to echo her uncertainty and questions about her future. Her photo-narrative moves clockwise from the top right corner and starts with the idea of traveling "to big cities" with the legend, "I'm just a teenager with dreams." Then she asserts that she just wants "to be someone." The next few pictures capture the fogginess of her dreams, suggesting that seeing ahead to realize those dreams is complicated. Crowded in the left corner is the climax of Carolina's narrative, her wanting to go to college but without "documents" she wonders if that is really possible. This poignant question is adjacent to her emphatic caption, "But dreaming is living and if I stop dreaming I'll stop living!!!" She then includes an image of murky river water and the statement, "I want to see clearly."

Image 1

Carolina's photo-narrative, "What I want for me"

Carolina's second photo-narrative perplexed us. In some ways it follows a similar story line, one which Carolina had been uncovering throughout the study and which speaks of the complexities that exist within Carolina's reality. The photo-narrative entitled, "What are we hoping (future)!", has several written questions about the future of her community. On the top left-hand side, the first question asked is, "Do we need to stop living life the way we are or do we start getting serious?" The photograph accompanying the question shows people, young and old, male and female, in a group setting. They appear to be at a meeting and signs written in Spanish cover the walls. We wonder if Latinos are the "we" mentioned in many of the questions inserted in the photo-narrative. Another photo, taken from a riverboat at night, shows a stadium with its lights on. The rest of the photograph is black with the exception of a few heart-shaped cut-outs in the boat railing illuminated by the stadium. The caption reads, "Do we wait for the lights to turn on in order for us to know where we're going?" The third picture shows several barges and a boat on a river. To the right of the photo is written, "What's in our future?" A final photograph, in the centre, features a blurry red rose with someone's hand holding it and Carolina asks, "Are things looking pretty for our future or bad?"

The bifurcated nature of the questions throughout her photo-narratives show two paths: the one she and her community are on, and the desired ideal future she envisions. Her questions show another side of Carolina. When she spoke in our group we perceived her as strong, and certain of her future desires and plans. However, her photographs convey a narrative that reveals the multiple layers of Carolina's reality. These layers are not only a result of her vulnerable age, but also of her minority and immigrant statuses in the US. The complexities and fears in her story shout loudly from what appear to be just a few pretty photos and drawings.

Rosario

In Rosario's case, it was not so much the artistic product, but the art production process that seemed to prompt a narrative of what she needs to have and to do in order to succeed. Rosario reminded us that it is through empowering relationships that girls can connect with what they know and who they are (Gilligan, 2002; Jordan, 2008; Raider-Roth, 2005; Spencer, 2006). She helped us understand that the ways in which we engage these adolescent girls are perhaps more important than the productions that emerge—in Rosario's case, the art was a conduit to connecting with others.

Rosario was also in seventh grade, although she is a year older than her peers. We noticed her quiet composure during the group sessions. She was not quick to share in the group, but opened up when the girls worked in pairs or in smaller groups. Having moved to this school from another state the previous year, Rosario often compared this school to her former school and in her assessment the former school was far superior. We had a strong sense that Rosario is very bright but that she is struggling to adjust to the new environment. For instance, when one of us walked around the school with Rosario and Leticia during a photographic assignment to capture images in response to the prompt, "what I want for my school", Rosario explained that they really needed more teacher aids in the school. She said that in her former school they had "more English as Second Language (ESL) teachers" and that the students were better behaved. She commented that it was difficult to learn in her classes because the teachers did not control the students' behavior. On reflection, we were struck with the realization that the educational system does not ask students what they think they need to help them succeed academically. In fact, Rosario designed her poster around the idea that students need "a helping hand" and used pictures of our team engaging with the girls to illustrate her point.

Rosario also helped us understand the power of engaging in art and conversation with adolescents to bring to the surface the tensions that are simmering within them. An incident that occurred 3 weeks before we wrapped up the project for the year convinced us of the necessity to build spaces for girls to come together to "just talk", particularly during this adolescent stage of life. While working on the final photo-narratives, Rosario was sitting off to the side of the group, not demonstrating any of the end-of-year excitement that was present amongst the other girls. A couple of her peers moved over to chat with her. Seeing the group forming, two of the research team members decided to walk over to check in on the group. As she worked on her poster, Rosario began telling the small group, "I wouldn't talk about this, but since we are all here…" and then she told us that in the last year she had been suicidal. Looking out the window at a young man in the parking lot whom she described as a friend she had met since she moved here, she said that this young man had kept her from doing anything to hurt herself. She revealed that she had shared her photographs with him and that he helped her to see that the photographs from the project, photographs that were representations of her life, captured the things in life that were important to live for. As she reflected on their conversation she began talking about the difficulties she had faced in the last year, adjusting to this new school and making new friends—difficulties that exhibited themselves in lower than usual grades, and the dark fact that those low grades only hinted at the struggle that was below the surface for her.

Picturing their school and communities

The dialogic nature of our visual arts-based study revealed several sources of contextual stress for the immigrant and minority girls regarding their school environment in both physical and sociocultural contexts. These stressors included the harsh physical landscape of the school itself and also posed a challenge to having a positive school and community. For example, the bullying and the destructive nature of other classmates served not only as a distraction to the learning process, but also as an area of great frustration for the girls—who envisioned their school environment to be something greater. During a photograph scavenger hunt activity—when the girls partnered with each other and one of the research team members—it was mentioned several times how much the girls did not like the physical state of the school and how the building had sustained damage both naturally over the course of time and as a result of other students' destructive acts. One of the girls (Tanesha) said, "Why do people have to mess up everything and destroy it." Another girl (Adanna) shared Tanesha's frustrations and agreed that she really did not like all the trash on the ground and the graffiti on the bathroom walls. When one of the researchers was in the bathroom looking at the graffiti with the girls, she asked why people destruct the bathroom walls and throw stuff on the ground. The girls replied, "They think it's cool or funny, but we don't like it." The girls said that "girls who were 'bad' were the ones who wrote swear words and did the littering." In this conversation, the girls presented two conflicting groups—a group of girls that "cared about the school" (they belonged to this group), and a group of girls that "didn't care about the school." When we asked what they could do to help the situation, they said they would like to "see more recycling done" and to "somehow tell people not to litter." The girls showed us in words and in pictures how much the physical state of their school affected them.

Another group made a similar acknowledgement in regard to the school being damaged. Carolina shared a photo narrative titled, "Damage Sucks", in which she asks the question, "Why can't we just keep things original?" (see Image 2). She was referring to doors that she had photographed, showing where the doors had been vandalized. Both Carolina and Barbara, who worked on this photo collage together, said that it was important to maintain school and community property in order to bring in visitors (an indication that impressions of the school reflected on to the school's occupants) and so that the property would last longer. Through group discussion the girls shared that there was a need for more art in their school; they said there was only one work throughout the building that the girls collectively felt could be defined as art. That work was a collection of post-it notes that spelled out the name of a teacher.

Image 2

Carolina's second photo-narrative, "Damage Sucks"

An area of concern that surfaced through discussions was the issue of ethnic and age-based bullying, which at the time involved some of the "bad" students who also had destroyed the school. In small group discussions, the topic of bullying was commonplace. One girl, Yasmine, commented that the other bad girls acted this way because they wanted to look tough. Perhaps this hinted at a larger strategy by the bad girls to protect themselves against bullying and ridicule from older students. The girls also indicated that bullying was an emotional challenge they experienced at school. There was pressure to conform and join the bad girls to destroy the bathroom and to make fun of other students for doing well in school. The girls in our group commented that this bullying made their experiences at school not fun, nor safe. The bullying and physical destruction served as a barrier to having a healthy and positive social terrain.

Some of the understandings that came to light were the importance of family and friends in the girls' lives and the high aspirations that the girls had for themselves in terms of higher education. Family and friends were often subjects in the girls' photos, and the girls often explained their commitments to their families' needs. Carolina, for example, explained that her family did not have the money to allow her to explore art as a career path. Yasmine described hopes of becoming a neurologist one day but had to defer entrance to a competitive college-prep high school in order to attend a local, less desirable high school, because she had to take care of her younger siblings after school while her parents worked. This and many other narratives exemplified the place of family and friends in the girls' lives. The aspirations that the girls had created and envisioned were rooted in positivity and education. They valued the significance of education. During one of the photo discussions, Yasmine commented on one of the photos that depicted a woman in a suit. Yasmine explained that one "never knew how education would help someone", but that it was more "important to have it than to be without it." Despite these educational aspirations, Yasmine and other girls in the group described what they perceived to be grave obstacles in access to higher education. Whether it was undocumented status or finances, the girls expressed the gap between their own desires and what actual opportunities would present for them in their future. The uncertainty about their future in higher education, coupled with their expressions of disappointment with their school's physical environment, certainly stifled the girls' dreams and aspirations.

Discussion

Facilitating this project allowed the adult researchers to see these girls' lives through a lens not used in traditional research methodologies. Although Carolina and Rosario stood out to us as representations of how other adolescent girls live, especially young Latina adolescents, all of the girls' stories captivated us, particularly as they explored the impact that the physical and social space of their school had on them and others. All of their stories helped us understand more about the roles they assume and their feelings about their school and communities. Throughout this study, many girls did not report positive attitudes towards the school because of their collective concerns about safety, pressure from teachers and parents about grades and good behavior, and the overall "lack of childhood" experience they had been feeling. The girls' attitudes and feelings toward school are consistent with much of the literature that suggests minority urban youth attend substandard and often unsafe schools in addition to other life challenges they are trying to manage (Hirsch et al., 2000; Manz et al., 2010; Peske & Haycock, 2006). Too often they are pulled into the physically and socially aggressive culture that is rampant in their schools, with few alternatives other than suspension to resolve the tensions (Talbott et al., 2002). Yet we also know that schools can become "sanctuaries" for urban youth, particularly when they are structured to care for children's emotional and physical well-being (Antrop-Gonzalez, 2006). For urban adolescent girls, schools can create spaces that promote positive self-identities and foster community, providing a "buffer to social injustice" (Pastor, McCormick, & Fine, 1996, p. 24); what others have identified as strategies to foster resilience (Johnson, 2008; Spencer, 2002; Vaughn, Jacquez, Zhao, & Lang, 2011). In the current project, the girls were clearly calling out for structures that would provide support—to create a buffer to all the negative forces working against their aspirations. The themes of support for healthy peer relationships, positive adult-

student relationships, and a more controlled and disciplined school environment all speak to their desire for their school to help them remain resilient in the face of these tremendous pressures.

Adolescent girls in modern cityscapes face growing challenges that threaten their everyday safety and sense of self (McIntyre, 2000). Many of these same challenges and concerns surfaced throughout the duration of the project and provided us with key insights into how these girls have to process and manage these threats. With the girls and their work as our guides, we as researchers have come to understand that the space and time provided through arts-based approaches allow girls to share their thoughts and concerns about the many issues they face and what they envision for their futures. This collaborative project fostered opportunities for the girls to get to know one another on a deeper level and invited them to see that empathetic, caring adults hear them and want to work with them to achieve their future aspirations. In one girl's words, "Sometimes we just need to get together and talk." In fact, self-in-relation theory tells us that relationships are important to adolescent development as a whole, but particularly to young women's development (Jordan et al., 1991). Peer relationships are an essential part of girls' development and can help create a greater sense of self-worth and life satisfaction (Hay & Ashman, 2003; Ma & Huebner, 2008). Furthermore, relationships with supportive adults have been shown to serve as protective factors for youth and contribute to resilience and academic achievement in youth (Beam, Chen, & Greenberger, 2002; Hirsch, Mickus, & Boerger, 2002; Rhodes & Davis, 1996). In a study across 20 primary schools in Queensland, Australia, students who reported more positive adult and peer social networks, feelings of connectedness to adults and peers, and a strong sense of autonomy, had higher self-ratings of resiliency (Stewart, Sun, Patterson, Lemerle, & Hardie, 2004).

Through the art interactions we shared, the girls have shown us that there are tensions in their families, school, and neighborhoods that directly relate to whether or not they can accomplish the goals they have set for themselves or live in a world they imagine. The messages sent through their words and pictures illustrate to us that these girls need rich experiences and support to equip them with strategies to handle their uncertain futures. The Girl's Club was more than an afterschool diversion—it provided a pivotal place for voice and support. Although the art-making is not insignificant in this process—art became a vehicle for voice in this project as it did in Sassen et al. (2005)—the crucial component that we heard from the girls in our project was to give voice to their hopes for their futures, their school, and their communities. This project allowed us to work with the girls and help disrupt the scripts that other people had for them. Whether it is society underestimating their potential, parents' well-meaning intentions pushing them toward particular careers and choices, or peers pressuring risky behaviors, there are numerous challenges the girls face now and will continue to endure. As the community-academic partnership moves forward, it is our hope to empower the girls to work toward their own goals for themselves, their school, and their world, to engage them in dialogue and action that is important to them, and to see the results of having a say.

Conclusion

We began this work with the hope that the girls would reveal their concerns about their school and their communities alongside visions for their futures. Not only did those themes emerge, but also several stressors were revealed that were unique in terms of the girls' minority and immigrant status. We had also intended that an exchange of learning would take place among the girls and bi-directionally with the researchers. The girls were able to experience a methodology rooted in empowerment and connection. They were engaged in a positive process which allowed for dialogue and art regarding questions about their future. The girls expressed gratitude about sharing in a research experience with female adult role models, seeing that research could involve action, and understanding that some adults "really do want to improve our experiences at school." The girls learned how photography could be applied as both an art form and as a tool for research. At the same time, we as researchers were able to look closely at the stressors and barriers to the girls' visions of future.

One of the main goals of photovoice is to critically examine what images are produced in the inquiry process (Wang et al., 1998). Early on in this process, most of the girls were enthusiastic about using the cameras and taking photos. The majority of the prompts that the girls initially generated for the photography assignments were optimistic and affirmative including qualities such as happiness, love, success, dreaming, and the future. However, many of the girls' photographs from their communities and school did not reflect the same qualities but instead, depicted images that the girls described as stressful and damaging. The few positive images (e.g. dreaming about future) included captions riddled with uncertainty and ambiguity around whether the dreams were possible. The findings of this study suggest that we need to do more to support adolescent girls and we need to listen more closely to hear the actual content of their voices (or photos).

> *We know that we want girls to be safe, be happy, be strong and be successful, but have we stopped to reflect on what these actually mean? Have we stopped to consult with girls to unearth their aims, ambitions, challenges, and frustrations? (Little & Hoskins, 2004, p. 89)*

This study and use of the photovoice process, in a small way, demonstrates that some of us are consulting with, and listening to, girls.

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An arts-based collaborative intervention to promote medical male circumcision as a South African HIV and AIDS prevention strategy

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Abstract

This article addresses the extent to and ways in which an arts-based learning intervention can be regarded as transformative specifically with regard to the quality of student learning across the domains of academic enhancement, civic learning, personal growth, and through engaging with social advocacy. This article focuses on a collaborative project between Artist Proof Studio, a community art centre, and Sonke Gender Justice, a gender advocacy organisation, in a series of HIV prevention and advocacy interventions. The project addresses the question: "Can an advocacy campaign for Medical Male Circumcision (MMC), with its complex messaging, be effective in communicating with South African young men?" This article however, responds to the question: "How can the visual arts be used to develop a communication strategy for the promotion of MMC and what influence does this have on the students involved in the project and their uptake of MMC as an HIV prevention strategy?" The article contends that the 'visual voice' expressed by the students as 'change-agents' led to self-reflection and behaviour change with some of the student participants undergoing MMC. It also highlights the value of arts-based methods as a catalysing and empowering strategy for social communication.

Keywords: Medical Male Circumcision; Advocacy campaign; Action research; Murals; Arts-based tools.

Introduction

This article focuses on how a collaborative project between Sonke Gender Justice (Sonke), a gender advocacy organisation and Artist Proof Studio (APS), a community art centre, that provides the visual imaging for an advocacy campaign for Medical Male Circumcision (MMC) through mural painting, posters,

comics and visual aids influenced self-reflection and uptake of MMC among participants[1]. The collaborative project between these two public benefit organisations links the visual arts to public education through engaging the skills of artists, learning programmes and arts-based workshops to generate visual tools that enhance Sonke's broader advocacy campaign.

APS is a community-based printmaking centre in Newtown, Johannesburg, open to approximately 60 art students annually who receive educational subsidies through corporate and donor funding or from contracted projects. The students receive three years of training in printmaking and professional practice[2]. The mission of APS is to provide a creative space for artists and students, skills and facilities for artistic production, and support to its students to self-actualise and enhance democratic purpose (www.artistproofstudio.org.za). APS attracts talented young people from the surrounding urban townships of Johannesburg as well as students from rural communities who do not have the economic means to further their education. The collaborative project between Sonke and APS students and artists on previous gender justice and anti-xenophophia advocacy campaigns through its One Man Can programme, casts the visual artist in the role of change agent in an HIV prevention campaign, which is arguably one of South Africa's most pressing social issues. The student body of APS is comprised of mostly male youth who understand contemporary trends and accessible messaging. APS has been tasked, through a jointly funded project with Sonke, to contribute innovative visual imagery for an advocacy campaign as part of a nationwide strategy on HIV and AIDS prevention[3]. The premise for this form of engagement is that if meaningful change is to be sustained to achieve full expression of human rights and freedom, community members require full participation in that freedom of expression[4]. While the project is a nation-wide campaign including the arts in bringing about public awareness, this article reports on an evaluation of the influence of the project on the students involved in designing and implementing the project, and their uptake of MMC. The first phase of the project, which involved role-plays, focus group discussions, and various interactive activities, was evaluated by Shoshana Zeldner, a visiting researcher and the second author of this paper[5]. The second phase involved the implementation of eight additional murals, community dialogues and the further refinement of visual imagery to support the MMC awareness campaign. Some of the findings have been applied in the design of the second phase of the intervention conducted in 2012-13.

Sonke Gender Justice Network, a Cape Town and Johannesburg based NGO that began in early 2006, addresses the HIV and AIDS epidemic from a gender-focused perspective. Sonke works to "strengthen government, civil society and citizen capacity to support men and boys to take action to: promote gender equality, prevent domestic and sexual violence, and reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS" (www.genderjustice.org.za). The One Man Can Campaign which began as a pilot project of Sonke, is based on the understanding that each individual can play a role in fostering a more equitable and healthy society.

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[1] This inquiry forms part of a National Research Foundation (NRF) supported research area at the University of Johannesburg on 'The role of art in social change', which has successfully developed an AIDS Action intervention using arts-based methods for generating awareness and activism in urban and community sites.

[2] The Media Advertising Print, Packaging and Paper (MAPPP) Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) accredited the Visual Art and Design printmaking training for 8 years before it closed to serving the arts and culture sector in 2011.

[3] This was made possible through a grant from the South African Development Fund (SADF) and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation from 2011 to 2012.

[4] This MMC project described in this paper draws on 15 years of HIV and AIDS advocacy and health promotion work conducted by APS involving arts-based methods in an HIV and AIDS awareness and action campaign that spreads its message through printmaking and craft, called Paper Prayers. The Paper Prayers Campaign began as a campaign in 1997 at APS to create awareness about AIDS by offering basic factual knowledge and providing emotional support for traumatized individuals and communities. The campaign team sought to make the pandemic visible through visual and creative expression (Berman & Allen, 2009).

[5] Sections of Zeldner's report were submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management

The campaign "supports men and boys to take action to end domestic and sexual violence and to promote healthy, equitable relationships that men and women can enjoy—passionately, respectfully and fully" (www.genderjustice.org.za). The medical male circumcision (MMC) campaign is a recent component of One Man Can and was initiated in response to research findings conducted in several sub-Saharan African sites that determined that men who have been circumcised reduce their risk of contracting HIV by up to 60% (Auvert et al., 2005). Sonke mobilises men in urban and rural areas to support each other in MMC as a prevention measure. Sonke also supports the South African National AIDS Council's call for strategic media campaigns to ensure that appropriate messages are conveyed to the public. Through this project, APS is expanding its work with Sonke on HIV prevention and gender equality educational programmes that engage young men in urban and township-based public art projects (see Image 1).

Image 1

One Man Can: Sonke Gender Justice and Artist Proof Studio students, Bree Street Taxi Rank 2007 (Courtesy of Sonke)

APS students participate in educational workshops, research, and image development as a way of engaging with the material, and producing viable campaign artwork. Artwork is collaboratively workshopped with APS students and Sonke staff and used in murals, posters, and comic strips. Verbal messaging alongside visual messaging is developed and tested throughout the campaign. Because APS students match the target audience for this campaign (primarily young urban men between the ages of 19 and 26) they are ideal contributors to the development of the visual messaging. In addition, the women's voice and sensitive gender perspective provides an important contribution to the process.

As mentioned earlier, the question that this article addresses is: "How can the visual arts be used to develop a communication strategy for the promotion of MMC and what influence does this have on the students involved in the project and their uptake of MMC as an HIV prevention strategy?"

Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical perspective for this paper draws on a Freirian approach of knowledge transfer to empower participants (Freire, 2003), and is employed to support the claim that an arts-based approach can facilitate social change. Concepts such as active or transformative citizenship are part of the educational mission of APS, which positions the artist as a change agent through her or his active participation in community-

engaged projects. The context for the arts-based work is the roll out of MMC as an HIV and AIDS prevention strategy (http://www.avert.org).

Transformative Citizenship

Transformative citizenship in the context of this article requires the mobilisation of latent energy of people in communities in order to promote value systems that will further the common good (Berman, 2012, p. 155). Mamphela Ramphele identifies the need to re-mobilise ordinary citizens to participate actively in transformation, stating that, "People have to become agents of their own development" (Ramphele, 2008, p. 299). Moreover, she asserts that government has a responsibility to create an enabling environment for citizens to contribute to their own development and to address the deep psycho-social dissonances in our society. Ramphele posits that "[t]he question each one of us must ask every day is whether we are giving the best we can to enable our society to transcend the present and become its envisaged self" (2008, p. 311).

In a political climate of intolerance and fear, how can the arts be integrated to creatively and productively engage citizens in dreaming and participating to realise a better future? John Paul Lederach explains that art is a tool that takes us into a collective imaginative arena. It is a way to "invoke, set free, and sustain innovative responses to the roots of violence while rising above it" (2005, p. 172). APS has attempted to create an enabling environment that recognises the benefits of mutually empowering relationships. The project presented in this article engages art students as active citizens in imagining and participating in the realisation of a better future.

Artist as change agent

Activist art (art produced with a purpose or message of social action) is often related to community-based art, which exists in many different forms, from public art (murals, performance, interventions) to community art centres. The common premise is that art cannot belong to an economic or social elite: it is a communal resource whose boundaries between creators, participants and the public are often permeable. APS uses arts-based approaches to address some of the social challenges facing youth. The future of urban youth in Johannesburg, for example, is full of economic opportunity but also full of social threats: HIV prevalence rates in 2010 affect up to 20% of youth in Gauteng, and the lure of drugs and crime is part of living in poverty and unemployment (http://www.avert.org). South Africa faces the challenge of educating youth in the time of AIDS, crime, violence against women, and rampant materialism in an urban city and culture in which the political leaders may not be perceived by all citizens as ideal role models in the HIV and AIDS prevention campaigns. Young men may justify their practices of unsafe sex and multiple sexual partners by citing examples set by political leaders (e.g., Jacob Zuma's polygamy and public disclosure during his rape trial of having had unprotected sex with an HIV-positive woman).

One goal of fostering the artist-as-agent is to subvert the traditional construction of masculinity to tap into the sensitivities of the artist as 'feelers' in society, and to address the gender bigotry so prevalent in South African culture. In a PhD study, the first author explored agency, imagination and resilience to facilitate change through the visual arts in South Africa, and contends that lessons in leadership, public engagement, social responsibility, human rights, and empowerment must be part of an artist's education and training in order to counter the dominance of material values in the wider society, and to instil a desire to address social inequities (Berman, 2009).

Harry Boyte, Director of the Centre for Democracy and Citizenship in Minnesota, USA, talks about finding more strategies to "make our work more civic" and asserts that "we need to talk about examples of culture change and spread them" (Boyte, 2006, p. 37). South Africa's developing democracy requires active citizens

with the capacity to disseminate values of equality, dignity, liberty and social justice. Awareness of active citizenship among South Africans can be developed through specific educational and skills interventions embedded in experiential learning programmes.

It has been argued elsewhere (Berman, 2009; 2012), that artists are able to imagine and create other realities as part of their creative practice and that they are active agents, in that they use multiple geographic and cultural references. These capacities are valuable in facilitating change in a particular community.

Promoting MMC to prevent the spread of HIV in South Africa

MMC as a preventative measure for HIV and AIDS, while initially controversial (Oluka, 2008; Tobian, Serwadda, Quinn, & Gray, 2009; USAID: www.aidstarone.com), has found increased support in public health policies. Well-recognised organisations like the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNAIDS and the Gates Foundation have recently supported MMC-related initiatives. According to the UNAIDS Factsheet on Male circumcision as an HIV prevention tool, the WHO and UNAIDS undertook a technical consultation in response to the outcomes of three studies, i.e. the South Africa Orange Farm Intervention Trial in 2005, and two U.S. National Institute of Health trials in Kenya and Uganda, respectively. Put together these three studies showed that circumcised men had between 50-60% lower levels of HIV infection than did uncircumcised men (Auvert et al., 2005; WHO/UNAIDS, 2007). A study carried out in Rakai, Uganda found that male circumcision reduces the risk of several sexually transmitted infections in both sexes, and these benefits should guide public health policies for neonatal, adolescent, and adult male circumcision programmes (Tobian et al., 2009).

In a Kenyan study exploring barriers to MMC for uncircumcised men, Herman-Roloff, Otieno, Agot, Ndinya-Achola and Bailey (2011) found that numerous factors and beliefs persuaded men to avoid being circumcised. These included religious and cultural values; pressure to avoid taking time off work; fear that MMCs will make men more promiscuous; belief that MMCs were unnecessary; and an unappealing abstinence period amongst other factors. Based on their findings Herman-Roloff et al. (2011) argue that increased involvement of religious leaders, women's groups and peer mobilisation groups could encourage more Kenyan men to have an MMC.

Significant cultural beliefs and practices are tied to circumcision that can either support MMC or not. Some South African groups historically do not practice circumcision (like the Zulus whose King has recently come out in support of MMC) while others (Xhosas) have an important coming-of-age ritual surrounding the practice. In many cases men may be compelled by social pressure to undergo circumcision in a medical or traditional cultural setting (Oluka, 2008; Huisman, 2008). Many young men who do not participate in a traditional circumcision are "labelled as cowards" and not considered to be men within their own communities (Oluka, 2008, p. 118). In the context of traditional practices in communities, there is a need to engage traditional leaders in the conversation on the practice of MMC in each community to accommodate dissenting views to promote broader implementation (Herman-Roloff et al., 2011).

According to Sawires, Dworkin, Fiamma, Peacock, Szekeres and Coates (2007), in their work on the challenges and opportunities of male circumcision, MMC rollout has been slowed down by concerns that it might lead to "risk compensation" (p. 708) which implies that the partial protection offered by MMC allows men to engage in more risky sexual behaviour. Women's rights advocates have raised fears that circumcised men might be less willing to use condoms and thus might pressure women into having unsafe and unwanted sex, and run the risk of unintended pregnancy. Additional concerns are that funding might be diverted from HIV prevention and treatment programs focused on empowering women and be shifted to support circumcision rollout. However, according to Sawires et al. (2007), the data from the male

circumcision trials provides an opportunity to address the need to improve gender equality, since it will go a long way toward resolving some of the most powerful dynamics of HIV transmission. In March 2007, the WHO and UNAIDS jointly issued a set of recommendations on male circumcision stating that "the efficacy of male circumcision in reducing female to male transmission of HIV has been proven beyond reasonable doubt" (WHO/UNAIDS, 2007, p. 2).

Project Description

The project examined in this article is a classroom intervention that involves art students from APS who develop imagery in response to HIV and gender advocacy workshops conducted by Sonke. Selected images are then adapted with appropriate messaging, managed by Sonke, that were applied in a public campaign though murals and posters.

The collaboration between Sonke and APS on the MMC initiative began in March 2011 when APS students attended two three-day workshops led by Sonke that focused on HIV prevention strategies and sexual health. Phase One of the workshops involved role-plays, discussions, focus groups, and various interactive activities. At this time, students were introduced to the concepts and material that they would use to develop visual messaging. During the second workshop students were asked to engage in small groups with some of the concepts learned by developing messaging and images. For twelve weeks these small groups, led by APS facilitator Shannin Antonopoulo and her team, convened bi-weekly, designing and developing artwork for the campaign that communicated the value of MMC. Students acquired skills and tools including brainstorming, carrying out informal interview processes, mind mapping, visual mapping and design, doing visual research, using photovoice and document reviews, and then learned how to apply them. Students had to leave the classroom and work in the streets and with the communities around them to find the information they needed to conceptualise relevant images.

The APS students were divided into three groups and a series of workshops involving them, APS and Sonke staff resulted in the development of a series of images suitable for posters, murals, and comic strips promoting MMC. The first evaluation of the students' imagery took place in July 2011 involving all the partners including Sonke, APS staff and donor representatives from the South Africa Development Fund. This forum selected the five most effective images they thought suitable to incorporate into the broader advocacy campaign (see Images 2 and 3). The images chosen were evaluated using the following criteria: provocative; graphically striking; and clear in their visual and textual messaging.

Image 2

APS MMC workshop and presentation with Shannin Antonopoulo and students 2011 (Image courtesy of APS)

Image 3

Poster developed by APS students for the MMC Campaign 2011
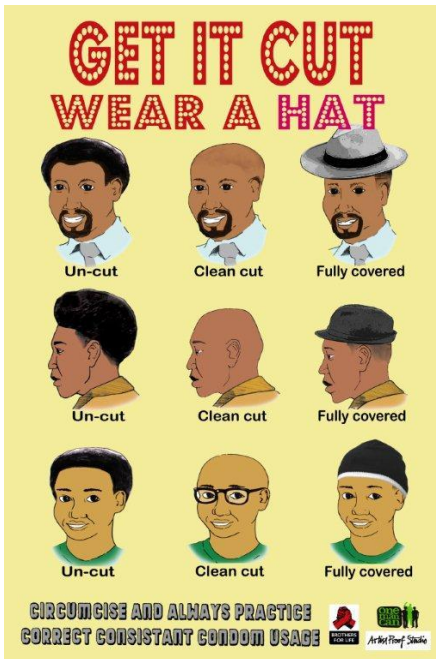
Further workshops and focus groups were held to brainstorm and reflect on the verbal messaging alongside visual messaging. Sonke and APS s incorporated messages with the posters and designs for murals such as "Get it Cut—Wear a Hat", "Less Skin—We Win"; then presented the images to different community forums. A series of questions attached to each poster tested responses to the effectiveness of the images in relationship to the messages. Sonke staff compiled and discussed this data in relation to their advocacy campaign in order to determine the need for clear and consistent messaging. Sonke subsequently approved only two of the five designs that they felt were suitable to transfer as public murals to promote the MMC campaign in Gauteng and Western Cape. The first mural, "Get it Cut—Wear a Hat", was completed in August 2011 in Bram Fischerville, Soweto. Two mobile murals carrying the same message were erected in two clinics in Zola and Chiawelo in Soweto in September 2011 (see Images 4 and 5).

Image 4

APS Students in front of a wall at Zola Clinic Soweto for the MMC campaign "Get it Cut—Wear a Hat", 2011 (Image courtesy of L Adleman)

Image 5

Mural outside Chiawelo Clinic, 2011 (Image courtesy of APS)

The fundamental approach for APS is to involve students on a deep level through their responses to the campaign slogans with original metaphors and complex messaging, for example "Get it Cut—Wear a Hat" that generated dialogue and debate. Sonke's objective is to promote clear, unambiguous, consistent and refined public images. While branding of the advocacy campaign is necessary, this objective in some cases diverges from the focus of the educational mission of APS that students engage with innovative imagery that sometimes promotes ambiguity and provokes dialogue. This position is supported by communication researchers who claim, "the best messages allow listeners to feel like they were not given a complete solution to a problem" (Shank & Schirch, 2008, p. 238).

The final image selected by Sonke with the slogan "Reducing Risk Together" has evolved into a coherent graphic design that is suitable for taxi wraps, T-shirts, posters and consistent branding of the campaign (see Images 6 and 7).

Image 6

APS students painting the mural for the Sonke MMC Campaign, 2012 (Image courtesy of APS)

Image 7

T-shirt design by Sonke and APS

Phase Two of the collaborative project (for 2012) plans to include eight additional murals linked to the community sites determined by Sonke. The process of painting each mural is aimed at engaging youth groups and community dialogues in a collective process with Sonke staff and APS art students.

The Evaluation

For her internship with APS, Shoshana Zeldner (the second author of this article) evaluated the impact of Phase One of the APS and Sonke collaborative project. Supervised by Kim Berman (the first author of this article), the evaluation used an Action Research approach since it is an emerging and encompassing methodology and includes multi-modal approaches to monitor the effectiveness of the project (see Zeldner, 2011). In her fieldwork, Zeldner analysed the visual methods from the APS workshops (e.g., photovoice, collage, visual mapping and drawing). The evaluation focused on how these approaches worked to ensure participants' movement from awareness to action in terms of their views on and uptake of MMC. It used an evaluative lens to analyse the ways in which the artistic process sought to influence participants, the strengths and challenges of the campaign, and strategies that can be employed to increase the reach of the initiative.

The evaluation was located within the Most Significant Change (MSC) framework. According to Davies and Dart (2005), MSC is particularly valid in the context of participatory programmes. It does not use pre-determined indicators but uses a story approach of what, when and how (Davies & Dart, 2005). MSC is an emerging technique that requires among other steps a process of collecting stories of change, reviewing the stories within the organisational hierarchy, and providing stakeholders with regular feedback about the review process. They recommend that participants look for significant changes in four domains or broad categories of possible Significant Change stories. These include changes in the quality of people's lives; changes in the nature of people's participation in development activities; changes in the sustainability of people's organisations and activities; and any other changes (Davies & Dart, 2005).

The domains of change can be adapted to each inquiry. Examples of MSC questions include:

- How have you been involved in the project?

- What are the important changes that have resulted from this project for you?

What are the important changes that have occurred in the community as a result of this project and what problems were there? (Davies & Dart, 2005, pp. 25-26)

In this case, the questions were adapted to include changes in individuals with regard to the role of art as a catalyst for transformation; community engagement; social activism; empowerment; and skills development. These four areas became the intended targets to monitor change in the evaluation.

In the interview the following questions were therefore asked of the APS participants:

- From your point of view, describe the most significant change that has resulted from your involvement with this project.

- Why is this significant to you?

- Did the artistic process facilitate any of the learning and/or changes that you have experienced and how?

- How do you think this training will influence your future lifestyle choices? How has it already?

- How has this training shifted your understanding of MMC?

- What do you think was the most significant portion of this training? (Zeldner, 2011, p. 12).

Data collection involved the use of the MSC technique to conduct a baseline study, midterm interviews, and to collect stories from students, staff and partner organisations that addressed the research questions. Stories of change were collected through interviews with participating students at three different times (June, September, and October 2011) as a way of examining how students' understanding of the campaign developed over time, and how different parts of the campaign influenced their thinking about MMC. While the campaign began in February 2011, the first round of interviews was conducted in mid-project in June 2011 with approximately 30 students (1st to 3rd year). Students at APS were on site at the studio each week, and spent between 20 and 60 minutes being interviewed. Students brought artwork to each interview and while there was a pre-determined set of questions, the artwork guided discussion about the artistic process and the related transformations they may have experienced as a result of the initiative. The semi-structured interview process and the inclusion of artwork allowed the researcher to develop trust and rapport with the students through a more informal yet organic conversation. This helped to overcome one of the limitations of the evaluator's role as a white, American female (Zeldner, 2011). During mid-June, APS students and interns participated in a focus group discussion which provided an understanding as to how they collectively worked through the imaging processes. The authors also participated in artwork critiques with the students and other staff meetings pertaining to the visual campaign. In August 2011, organisational and educational changes took place that reassigned the majority of the students to other projects and left only ten 3rd year or senior students working on the visual MMC campaign. During this time the remaining ten students were interviewed as a way of tracking the project changes. The final interview phase of the initiative occurred in October, when the mural team was interviewed for a final time at the site of the first mural in Soweto (Zeldner, 2011).

The interviews with the students were recorded, transcribed, reflected upon and analysed. Common themes were identified from the interviews and documents, which included reports, workshop agendas, educational material disseminated to participants, and artwork created during the project (Zeldner, 2011).

The influence of an arts-based intervention on the uptake of MMC among students

The narratives generated by the students during the MSC technique and interviews were analysed. The domains of change focused on the artistic process as a catalyst for transformation; collective process, relational transformation, and community engagement; commitment to social activism; and empowerment, critical thinking and skills development.

Artistic process as a catalyst for transformation

Based on responses of approximately 50 interviews conducted during the evaluation process, it became apparent that significant individual transformational change happened as a result of these initiatives. The artistic process presented programme participants with a creative space that ultimately encouraged, facilitated, or allowed for meaningful change. Some of the reasons for this level of change stem from the space that the individual artistic process presents. It offers participants a means to explore issues presented on a highly personal level by developing a connection to the material at hand (Zeldner, 2011).

The majority of the 30 students interviewed in June/July acknowledged the importance of the artistic process in enhancing their learning of the material and in many cases as a driving force for change in their views on and uptake of MMC. Most students understood that the image-making process required them to think about information in a more complex and engaged way, which then resulted in a deeper level of learning. In order to share information about MMC with others, several students acknowledged that it must be completely understood on an individual level, and art offered an appropriate arena for this personal learning. As one student expressed, "*for me, working with images makes learning much more exciting and interesting*" (Zeldner, 2011, p. 25). One student explained that the artistic process allowed him to think through challenging concepts and themes in order to develop an idea that someone else could easily understand (Zeldner, 2011). For many of these students, art is a field they respect and love and that, as well as a demonstration of artistic skill or talent is the basic premise on which they are admitted to APS. Each art student is provided with subsidised training in which the learning programme is designed to engage them in larger social concerns while concurrently reinforcing their own personal discoveries and knowledge in the process.

While students understood the importance of this process, many of them expressed frustrations as they struggled to develop appropriate and well-received visual images for the circumcision campaign. They discovered that researching and consolidating ideas into a coherent outcome was not an easy task. This challenge can be viewed as something that speaks to how difficult it is to change human behaviour. Many students acknowledged that the art-making helped them understand the universality of the HIV and AIDS crisis and their need to become active participants in the prevention of the spread of the disease (Zeldner, 2011).

According to a 26-year-old male student at APS, in response to the question on the role of the artistic processes in facilitating learning, "*Images help us to realise there are people who behave riskily. For [us], images remind you about how to behave*" (Zeldner 2011, p.24). The visual campaign significantly increased student interest in the subject of MMC and encouraged many students to become advocates for the health practices that they learnt in the Sonke workshops. Several students explained that because of the artistic component, they felt encouraged to undergo an MMC. Others reported that the process has inspired them to be faithful to their partners; to use protection; to communicate openly with partners; and to get tested. Many students articulated a newfound realisation that they are not "*immune to HIV/AIDS*" (Zeldner 2011, p.24).

Two of the students who decided to have MMCs as a result of this project attributed this decision solely to the knowledge gained in the Sonke workshop and did not link it to their image-making process. However, due to the participatory and multi-modal design in which the art-making process is so intimately involved, the Sonke workshops cannot be seen as a stand-alone process in this case. One of the interns on the project described his most significant change (MSC) from this project as a real transformation of self, in terms of how he was able to engage with students and staff, how he developed a true sense of self, increased confidence, and enhanced leadership skills. Another student explained that his MSC was not only his choice to undergo circumcision but also encouraging four of his friends to do the same. In total, three students out of the 30 interviewed underwent MMC during the four months of involvement in the project (Zeldner, 2011).

Collective process, relational transformation, and community engagement

While much of the artistic process takes place alone, the presence of the community (whether it be classroom or cohort) plays a significant role in supporting newfound realisations and confidence that emerge from the creative exploration. APS students gained strong interpersonal skills and necessary life experience working in teams (Zeldner, 2011). According to a 23-year-old male student in response to his community engagement experience, "*Working with people has changed me a lot; now I know how to work with people, tolerate them, understand their talents*" (Zeldner, 2011, p. 26).

One of the students from the mural team experienced personal change in a way that was apparent to the researchers, APS staff, and fellow students. This third-year APS student began the project as a noticeably quiet, shy and timid 24-year-old. In his first interview, he barely elaborated on any of the questions beyond a short phrase. During the mural painting in Soweto this student was able to take ownership of the process as his artwork was chosen for one of the murals. He later explained to the researcher that having the opportunity to engage with community members affirmed the work he and the team were doing, and helped him realise how important and needed his role is as an advocate. The interview following the execution of the mural was a completely different experience from the first, in that he articulated his ideas in full sentences, looked the researcher in the eye, joked with her, and presented a newfound confidence (Zeldner, 2011).

Another student from the mural team explained that seeing his artwork in a public space was very encouraging. He explained that the images he created made him aware of his own responsibility to change behaviour with regard to sexual health and communication: "*I understand that I have a responsibility to change the way I act*" (Zeldner, 2011, p. 25). For these young artists, having their artwork displayed in a public setting that engaged the local community is empowering and ultimately strengthens and supports their newly gained knowledge of HIV and AIDS, gender advocacy and MMC.

Commitment to social activism

A core objective of APS student participation in this project is to encourage the development of a social consciousness and to use art as a means to advocate for positive social change. In response to the question on how personal change can be extended to others, a 22-year-old APS student asserts that "*the project has influenced my choices in a positive way; living positively results in a good society.... Youth have the power to influence change in people*" (Zeldner 2011, p. 23).

Through the initial 30 interviews in June/July, most students expressed their desire to work as self-employed, successful artists earning generous incomes (Zeldner, 2011). In a country in which unemployment rates are around 40-50% it is not surprising that youth have a focus on financial gain (Roos, 2011). After three sets of interviews, most students affirmed their new role as advocates for sexual health,

MMC, and positive gender roles. They are further able to openly speak to friends and family about ways in which they can make healthier life choices (Zeldner, 2011). The aspiration for financial independence is a consistent motivation for young artists at APS to achieve excellence in their careers as printmakers. However, classroom interventions, such as the MMC project, that promote community engagement and social advocacy, position APS graduates as change agents.

Empowerment, critical thinking and skills development

Many participants from the project commented that they learned how to think critically, examine facts from a variety of angles, and make their own, informed decisions (Zeldner, 2011). The artistic process encourages questioning and exploration as a way to produce artwork and this ultimately supports the same interrogation in other aspects of one's life. One of the students who developed the script and storyline for the comic explained that through that process, "*I had to change the way I thought … I began to think about all sides of the issue and became quite critical*". Another observed that "*the text is in your face so you have to listen*" (Zeldner, 2011, p. 24).

Other students expressed a sense of urgency to share the information with those around them and felt that the visual artistic process allowed this important information to be communicated. Most of the students explained that they gained necessary life skills including how to co-operate and collaborate in teams, to work with important, and that they improved their visual and verbal communication skills. The research aspect of the process allowed for deepened learning opportunities and some students reported the research and the conducting of interviews to have been the most significant part of the project. Approximately half the students reported artistic growth and development as a result of the process (Zeldner, 2011).

Implications

The findings of the APS/Sonke project in Phase One confirmed that it is necessary to have a well defined strategy while allowing for flexibility and change. The objectives of this project focussed on process and tangible outcomes such as the key deliverables in terms of murals and visual aids. However, the findings revealed that it is necessary to incorporate outcomes that reflect not only enhanced agency of individual students but their ability to engage with the community. Additionally, future projects could include an outcome that engages with the evaluation of change through artistic processes with members from surrounding communities. Provided that art-making is thoughtful and intentional and linked to purposeful messaging, it can foster growth and transformation though participation and ownership of the processes. The aim of Phase Two is for the artists to engage more actively in the community dialogues to ensure greater participation and ownership.

It became evident that tracking change through the artistic process takes time. The longer the students engaged with the material and the project, the more they came to really embody the lessons in their own actions, ideologies and life choices. There was a clear change from the first interview to the second and third, and it became evident that participants had the opportunity to reflect on the material presented, engage with it individually and include it into their daily lives As a participant put it, "*[T]he training teaches us personal hygiene and how to live positively*" (Zeldner 2011, p. 23). The challenge remains to continue with workshops and focus groups in Phase Two that deepen and embed the values and personal activism in the campaign[6].

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[6] *During Phase Two in August, 2012, a class of 17 senior male APS students was given a short questionnaire and asked if they considered MMC an important strategy and if they would consider undergoing MMC. 100% answered affirmatively (APS/Sonke workshop questions August 16, 2012).*

The findings reveal that art holds the potential to engage and transform communities in a larger sense, which is part of the goal of the collaborative project to promote MMC. In order to effect large-scale change, projects must broaden their reach by adopting a scaled up approach which requires expanding networks, engaging with key leaders, and integrating the campaign into culturally appropriate parts of South African life. Establishing a strong, relevant and strategic programmatic vision is essential for maximising resulting transformation.

The partnership of an HIV/Advocacy organisation and an arts organisation is an innovative concept for South Africa as far as we are aware. The challenge is to find common ground, clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, and consistent reliable communication that supports the mission of the campaign. However, since this is a complex and culturally sensitive campaign it is not always possible to have mutual agreement on imaging the campaign messages and objectives.

The monitoring and evaluation process through conducting interviews with APS and Sonke staff reflected frustration and a lack of alignment. The objectives of APS towards Phase Two of the project differed significantly from that of Sonke. Community dialogues scheduled for sites around the country should include a team of senior artists to ensure that visual messaging includes local language, local and culturally specific messaging and imagery. Involving traditional leaders, healers, women and trained artist facilitators in the community dialogues for youth conducted by Sonke counselors would necessitate imagery that is more complex than the current campaign design (see Image 5). While the messaging can remain consistent, it is very important to have it translated into the local verbal and visual languages to be locally relevant and intelligible.

Conclusion

The findings present a powerful argument that the intervention by Sonke resulted, according to the students interviewed, in significant change in how they view MMC. Most expressed a deeper understanding that will affect their own sexual practices while others felt strongly enough to become active in the advocacy campaign. Moreover, three students during the time of the interviews in 2011 actually underwent MMC[7]. All the students who participated in community engagement through mural painting experienced increased confidence, were excited by the response to their collective image and they experienced a sense of ownership of the material and process. Empowerment by each student was arrived at through the students' ability to incorporate relevant and urgent social issues into a visual language that was required to communicate complex messaging.

Boyte (2006) urges that the challenge for building transformational change is for people to become "co-creators of our democracy, not simply its spectators and consumers.... Turning the tide on today's toxic culture requires building confidence, spreading organizing skills, and providing language and examples of civic identity and practice" (p. 32). Through their involvement in the MMC campaign, the students gain a larger sense of purpose beyond individual material acquisition, and realise that they can put their energy and talent to use in ways that benefit not only themselves, but the broader society as well.

This collaborative programme is potentially transformative at a number of levels. Firstly, it provokes a shift in some of the individual participants' values and life purposes. Secondly, the art students also develop a sense of collective purpose that is re-inforced by collective work in which they plan and intervene together to harness the power of public communication. Thirdly, APS itself is an effective facilitator to partner with Sonke which further builds the power of the campaign. The networks of change-agents create the

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[7] *In a subsequent questionnaire administered in the second phase, as least three more students indicated they had undergone MMC and most others indicated that they intend to (APS/Sonke workshop questions August 16, 2012.)*

possibility for an ever-growing wave. While MMC is the point that gets people talking, the bigger point is taking control of one's own life and having a deeper sense of purpose. This collaborative intervention between Artist Proof Studio and Sonke Gender Justice facilitates the expression of participatory voices, which enables both personal and collective transformation.

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Yesterday as a study for tomorrow: On the use of film texts in addressing gender and HIV and AIDS with secondary school youth in KwaZulu-Natal

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Abstract

The South African film *Yesterday* (Singh & Roodt, 2004) depicts a woman's lived experiences in relation to being infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. It describes her fears, hopes, dreams, and suffering as a woman, mother and wife. In this paper I chronicle how I used the film as an entry point for secondary school youth to engage with issues of gender and HIV and AIDS, and report on the preliminary findings of a study exploring secondary school learners' responses to a visual text. The study investigated one class of Grade 11 learners' responses to gender representations in *Yesterday* through comprehension activities (questions and discussions before and after the viewing of the film) which focused on relationships between the film text and the experiences of the readers/viewers. I hoped that these activities would equip learners to construct and reconstruct texts – as future writers and social change activists. The findings are based on my observations and on transcripts of classroom discussions. The findings show that film analysis using feminist theories and theories of critical literacy can help learners acquire skills as critical readers/viewers.

Introduction

There is probably no area of public health worldwide that has been more a subject of the arts and literature than HIV and AIDS. As Mitchell and Walsh (2004) have highlighted, there are many projects which have been undertaken by artists to address the social and political aspects of HIV and AIDS. They suggest that projects such as the *Positive Lives* photography exhibition, the *Memory Box* project, and the *Steps to the Future* documentary series have helped not only to break the silence about HIV and AIDS but also to give a face to HIV and AIDS in that these projects often highlight stories about real people living with HIV and AIDS. The study from which this article draws used a film text, *Yesterday* (Singh & Roodt, 2004), to address issues of gender and HIV and AIDS with secondary school learners. In this article I focus on only one aspect of the larger study—work with a cinematic text—and in so doing I explore the ways in which

reading/viewing a film can be a key component of critical literacy. In the article, I address one pivotal question: How can artistic texts such as films become part of a curriculum to address gender and HIV and AIDS?

Critical literacy for social change

The analysis is embedded in a study of critical literacy. Critical literacy is an important pedagogical approach that language educators employ in their teaching and has been defined as "language use that questions the social construction of the self. When we are critically literate, we examine our ongoing development, to reveal the subjective positions from which we make sense of the world and act in it" (Shor, 1999, p. 2). Coffey (2008, p.1) described critical literacy as an "ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner in order to better understand power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships." She argued that the development of critical literacy skills in an individual enables him or her to interpret messages through a critical lens and to challenge the power relations embedded in those messages. Learners need to be enabled to make judgments about how a text is argued. A number of studies in the field of literacy have been carried out to interrogate more thoroughly the interrelationship between gender, literacy acquisition, and academic performance. For example, Wing (1997) discussed the relationship between gender roles, boys' and girls' language, and classroom behaviour, while Balfour (2001) analysed boys' and girls' reading and interpretation of texts. Stokoe (1997) explored the methodological difficulties associated with research on gender and language.

Studies by a number of researchers such as Balfour (2005), Cobine (1995), Arizpe (1994), and Pantaleo (2012) who have looked at critical literacy have shown that classrooms that embrace the reader-response theory have learners that are active and confident. This gives them power and a sense of responsibility to make their own judgements about what they read (The expanding canon: Teaching multicultural literacy, n.d.). These learners are more open to multiple interpretations of a text than to one single interpretation from an authoritative voice such as a teacher. Bender-Slack (2010) also argued that the role of the reader in reader-response is critical to meaning-creation of a text. Pace (2006), citing a number of research studies, argued that diverse perspectives arise from diverse ideas that learners share in post-reading activities. Knoeller (1998) showed that learners who participated in discussions that questioned dominant readings influenced one another's analyses. These studies were conducted as part of English language as a subject and some of them had had English non-mother tongue speakers as participants

Theoretical Framework

The role of gender in language is regarded as an important part of critical literacy agenda, particularly in the context of deconstructing power. For this reason a feminist framework has been used as lens to contest the notion of classrooms as non neutral sites for the production of knowledge. Feminist frameworks seek to correct the power imbalance in society and as such have turned to new ways of reading texts to reveal the ways that they reinforce or challenge patriarchy. Hearn and Lykke (2009) proclaimed that feminist theories and practices have shown that gender is a major structuring force and principle in and across societies and cultures, both globally and locally. They argued that gender relations are both subject to change and also resistance to change, within what can be seen as a turbulent historical period.

Complementing this work is the idea that reading/viewing itself is a highly interactive process. Rosenblatt's (1985) transactional theory is crucial because I have used it in this article to frame reading and viewing. Her theory suggested a "reciprocal, mutually defining relationship" between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 1985, p. 122). Rosenblatt's work complemented theories of critical literacy with its emphasis on the importance of democracy and social justice. Critical literacy has also been used to explore issues of power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships. Apple (1990) claimed that reality is socially

constructed hence "texts are not simply delivery of facts. They are the simultaneous results of political, economic, and cultural activities, battles, and compromises" (p. 4). Apple also argued that "what counts as legitimate knowledge is the result of complex power relations and struggles among identifiable class, race, gender, and religious groups" (p. 4), and that "it is not a society that has created such texts, but specific groups of people" (p. 5). Therefore, the processes of reading and of texts being read are power-laden. In order to make meaningful understanding of, and to gain insight into texts readers should adopt a feminist and critical stance in order to engage meaningfully with the text.

Why use film text to study gender and HIV and AIDS?

There is no shortage of media texts that have been produced in South Africa to respond to the AIDS pandemic and to assist in promoting AIDS awareness. The very successful *Steps to the Future* documentary program, for example, encouraged local film makers to produce videos that addressed HIV and AIDS at a local level. One media text which went beyond local circulation and won awards internationally was the feature length film *Yesterday* produced by Anant Singh in 2004 and directed by Darryl Roodt and which featured Yesterday (Leleti Khumalo) as the main character, along with a cast of local actors. This South African film depicts a woman's lived experience in relation to being infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. The film describes Yesterday's fears, hopes, dreams and suffering as a woman, mother and wife. Within a short period of time, barely a year, Yesterday's life undergoes physical, social and existential change. She battles to do her chores in the home, as well as those outside the home, such as subsistence farming. She has difficulty in turning the water pump handle. When her husband returns from the mine in Johannesburg, his thin body and marked skin serve to indicate full blown AIDS. The women in the village start taunting her with all sorts of questions about her husband. As a family they are socially discriminated against by the members of the community and this eventually drives them out of the community. After she fails to get her husband admitted to a hospital she builds a shack outside the village where she nurses him until his death.

In using the film with the Grade 11 learners, I had three main aims. First, I wanted to bring to the classroom a different type of text which learners had never used before. This information was ascertained when I discussed with the educator the types of texts I would like to use with her class. She explained that she had never used film with her class even though the secondary school curriculum makes provision for use of film texts. Second, I wanted to use a text that represents a female protagonist in a positive way. Horne (2005, p. 182) noted that "Roodt's film representation is informed by feminist ideology as seen in his choice of a female protagonist from whose perspective the audience experiences events." She argued too, that this is also evident in the protagonist's "growth as a character when she is tested by adversity and the way her complexity as a human being is portrayed" (p. 182). In this way the character of Yesterday challenges many of the stereotypes about women. I argue that if learners are exposed to texts that depict characters, especially female characters, positively this would have a positive impact on them. My third aim was to use a text that addresses a number of critical social issues such as poverty, stigma, migrant labour, HIV infection, access to health facilities, gender-based violence, and gender relations. These social issues are significant in that they demonstrate how women are not in a position to make decisions pertaining to their lives, since these decisions are linked to how femininity, masculinity and sexuality are socially constructed, and to the power relations within cultures (Hoosen & Collins, 2004).

Amaya-Anderson (2008) highlighted the point that film, apart from its formal or aesthetic properties, is also a social practice in which audiences of all ages participate. Adolescents and young adults most often patronise theatre movies. She ascertained that according to the Motion Picture Association (MPA)(2007) about 37% of frequent and occasional moviegoers were aged from 12 to 24 years old. She also argued that this percentage is large and supports the argument that film is the audiovisual literature of a younger generation (Open the Window on literature, 2004, p. 9). Even though the reports mentioned above refer to the American context they are relevant to the South African environment because the latter is influenced by American popular culture which most South African youngsters emulate. At the same time film is, for

the younger generation, a more familiar text than print because watching movies seems much easier to "read". Nonetheless, the act of watching is not to be taken as a passive activity (Berger, 1972) but rather as a highly interpretative act.

Amaya-Anderson asserted that film study in the writing classroom provides an excellent opportunity to introduce learners to alternate points of view, to different perspectives raised by the film text itself, and to the multiple voices that make up the classroom. Thus, film presents a lived experience that learners engage in to understand their lives and world. Furthermore, Amaya-Anderson explained that it fosters thought and the pleasures of forming and making meaning. Since learning is socially constructed, she commented, it is essential that educators bring social practice into the classroom as a way to bridge the gap between what learners know and what they need to learn and practice. In this way, film serves as a pedagogical space where learners' knowledge meets school knowledge. Amaya-Anderson stated too, that using a film text which learners are familiar with helps them to acquire analytical discourses and intellectual skills. Further, she argued that it helps move learners from private knowledge and experience to alternate viewpoints and public discourse. It is a favourable medium for the writing classroom as learners can dialogue about charged social issues depicted in the film. She considered that these issues present learners to public concerns on the representation of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and more. Writing about these issues prepares learners who might otherwise be indifferent to delving into a discussion on cultural politics.

Dovey (2009) pointed out that "cinematic texts in South Africa have a great deal to offer when read as primary texts in the same way as literary texts as evidence or even as interview and narrative 'entry-point' texts for eliciting perspectives of review participants" (p. 70). Dovey's research showed that media texts are essential and legitimate in enhancing literacy. Media literacy theorists have argued that that which a good reader brings to a written text is similar to that which a critical viewer brings to visual texts (Masterpiece Theatre Learning Resources, 2012). Both the literary and visual texts require a critical thinker to predict, make connections, infer, ask questions, and interpret. In both texts the details of character, theme, plot, mood, conflict, and symbolism allow for meaning making. In both instances, learners must be guided to be active interpreters. Culkin (1995), a media education pioneer, argued that:

> *we live in a total-information culture, which is being increasingly dominated by the image. Intelligent living within such an environment calls for developing habits of perception, analysis and selectivity that are capable of processing the relentless input of visual data . . . [because] schools are where the tribe passes on its values to the young, schools are where film study should take place. (p. 124)*

Thus, it is significant to work with media texts alongside literary texts as part of literacy in the twenty-first century.

Methodology

The site of the study was a Grade 11 isiZulu literature class in a township secondary school in a peri-urban area in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The home language of the learners in the study is also isiZulu, and the school draws learners from the township and neighbouring informal settlements. The rate of unemployment in this area is very high. Most learners come from a working class background and some head their families. The school runs a self-funded feeding scheme to cater for AIDS orphans and vulnerable children. Some of the learners are from remote areas and have found residence in rented cottages around the school and are exposed to risky lifestyles because they live on their own.

I selected the sample purposefully because I assumed that Grade 11s would be mature enough to discuss gender related issues, and at the same time they would not be dealing with the pressures of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grade 12 examinations. The educator suggested a Grade 11 (E) class to be used, in which she is a class teacher and so knows the learners very well. In total, 43 Grade 11 learners, 6 males and 37 females participated in the study.

Design

A classroom intervention programme based on the film, *Yesterday,* was designed and implemented by the educator with the researcher observing the proceedings over a period of five weeks. Since the film deals with HIV and AIDS and the spread of HIV is socioculturally related, context-specific interventions are valued (Ford, Odallo & Chorlton, 2003). The focus of the activities was on viewing and re-viewing, speaking and writing within the context of the selected text. Mitchell and Weber (1999) suggested that film as a primary text could be studied through close reading strategies. Using those strategies, the educator and the learners viewed and re-viewed the film and focused on certain scenes for class discussions. The focus of the observation was to see how learners interact with the film through the educator's direction. Classroom observation plays a crucial role in assessing the effectiveness of an intervention (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997). They argued that it is the observation of learners and educators at work that documents the learning experience itself.

The film was first shown in full to the learners and this session lasted for almost two hours. Subsequent viewings focused on six film clips which depicted themes that emerged from the film, such as poverty, service delivery (lack of health facilities, sanitation, transport), gender relations, gender-based violence, migrant labour, HIV infection, living with HIV and AIDS, and HIV and AIDS stigma and discrimination. Here, I discuss only two of the film clips.

Film clip 1: Yesterday visits the doctor

This clip was longer than the others because it covered Yesterday's two visits to the doctor before going to her husband in Johannesburg. The film clip depicts Yesterday and the doctor when the doctor had asked if she and her husband engaged in protected sex after she (the doctor) learnt that Yesterday's husband was working in the mines in Johannesburg. Yesterday responded by saying there was no need to use a condom because she was a married woman. Yesterday's blood was drawn for HIV testing and after a few days she returned for her results and to learn that she was HIV positive. The doctor suggested that she ask her husband to come for testing as well.

Film clip 2: Yesterday visits her husband in Johannesburg

This clip shows Yesterday arriving in Johannesburg, overwhelmed by the big city and its big buildings and busy traffic. She arrives at the mine where her husband works and tells him about her HIV results and that the doctor has suggested that he gets tested as well. The husband responds by assaulting her. The mine male official who is in the office does not come to her rescue.

Trustworthiness

Patton (2002) posited that the credibility of a qualitative study hinges on trustworthiness. To ensure trustworthiness, first, the intervention programme and the observation schedule were piloted to ensure suitability before data collection. Second, verbatim accounts of participants were captured. Last, the entire data collection process was conducted in the participants' home language.

Analysis

Working with the data

In this article I focus primarily on the response of the learners to the two film clips. Overall, learners dialogued confidently on social issues on representations of class, gender, HIV and AIDS, poverty, stigma and discrimination, and gender-based violence depicted in the film despite the fact that they were not familiar with the use of visual texts in their isiZulu literature classes. Although the learners were intensively exposed to the conventions of film study, time constraints made it difficult for them to fully grasp the necessary skills required to engage with a visual text. The reading and analysis of the film posed a challenge to both the educator and the learners. Learners were enthusiastic and appreciative of the use of film as a teaching text particularly as they regarded films as sources of entertainment. For them this was a new experience of exploring a text that was different from the literary texts that they had been exposed to. As a result, learners were grateful and acknowledged the efficacy of the new approach through which they would be viewing films in future.

A close reading of the themes

In this section I consider some of the themes and issues that came up from learners' discussions. I call this "close reading" of the themes as a way to signal an analysis that is embedded in the literature of feminist studies and media studies. In part, this type of analysis also draws on my own readings/viewings as a Zulu woman growing up in South Africa and having been educated under the Bantu Education system where critical thinking, especially for African learners was discouraged. I declare my positionality here because as an academic interested in feminist research, I regard it important to expose learners to different kinds of readings/viewings of texts so that they understand that messages in texts are power-laden and need to be deconstructed for meaning creation.

The excerpts of text presented in the next section are taken from transcriptions of class discussions during classroom observations. The selected portion shows the part where the debate/discussion was at its peak with these learners being the key participants.

Migrant labour and HIV infection

Most men in the community in *Yesterday* were migrant labourers. These men left their wives or partners in the rural areas when they moved to the cities. Learners speculated that these miners, when they are in the cities, have relationships with other women and in most cases they do not practise safe sex which puts them and their wives at risk of contracting HIV. This assumption about miners' extramarital affairs is supported by the doctor's comment when she heard that Yesterday's husband was a miner in Johannesburg.

> Doctor: *Niyalisebenza ijazi lomkhwenyana uma niya ocansini?*

> Doctor: *Do you use a condom with your husband when you make love?*

> Yesterday: *Ini? Ngobani? Ngishadile nje.*

> Yesterday: *What? What for? I am a married woman.*

Learners' comments about Yesterday's response to the doctor suggested that she displays naivety and blind submission to marital expectations and conjugal rights. Dominant discourses of sexuality position women as the objects of men's sexual desire: meeting the needs of men and ensuring men's pleasure is

seen to be an expression of affection (Holland, Ramazanoglu, Scott, Sharpe & Thomson, 1990; Holland, Ramazanoglu, Sharpe & Thomson, 1994; Lindegger, 1996). Learners argued that she got infected by her husband because he engaged in unprotected sex with other partners. This demonstrated that learners were aware of how HIV is contracted. However, when they were asked what Yesterday could have done to protect herself from being infected they were very uncomfortable and reluctant to respond. There was some silence for a while with no learner volunteering to lead the discussion. The reluctance to engage in such matters publicly is influenced by cultural appropriateness: in Zulu culture it is taboo to discuss, openly, matters relating to sexual activities; even married couples are constrained by this taboo (Hoosen & Collins, 2004). It is generally accepted that men initiate, dominate and control sexual decisions and interactions, while women have to take responsibility for the contraceptives (Gupta, Weiss & Mane, 1996). In spite of women's lack of power, the responsibility for safe sexual behaviour is placed squarely on them (Strebel, 1995; Strebel & Lindegger, 1998). The educator probed until the learners started to respond. Learners' comments are reflected in the exchange below:

> *Nosipho: Ubengamcela kodwa kona kunzima.*
>
> *Nosipho: She could have asked him but it is difficult.*

> *Thandi: kona kunzima mam . . . kodwa wayezoqalaphi?*
>
> *Thandi: Yes it is difficult madam . . . but how was she going to approach this?*

> *Sihle : Impela . . . umqansa nje lo. Isizathu uzothi yini?*
>
> *Sihle: Indeed . . . it is difficult. What reason was she going to give for this request?*

> *Zethu: Mina ngicabanga ukuthi wayengathi uyagula manje ucela balisebenzise.*
>
> *Zethu: I think she could have said she is sick therefore they must use a condom.*

> *Lucky: hee hee(Uyahleka) Ubiza ukufa kodwa phela lapho.*
>
> *Lucky: Hee. Hee. (He laughs) She would be playing with death.*

> *Thisha: Hawu ! Ukufa ngobani manje?*
>
> *Teacher: Gosh! Death, why?*

> *Lucky (agcizelele nangezandla): Mam phela manje . . . ubaba wekhaya uzofuna ukwazi ukuthi uze ugule nje bekwenzenjani.*
>
> *Lucky (emphasising with his hands): Madam you see . . . her husband would have demanded to know how did she get sick.*

This exchange seems to indicate that the learners are aware of the challenges women face in negotiating practicing safe/protected sex. Even though they did not make reference to personal experiences one can deduce from their comments that they are aware of such challenges either personally or from very close friends or relatives who might have shared such information with them. Nosipho, for example, suggested that Yesterday should have asked her husband to use a condom but expressed reservation about the

request. Thandi, Sihle and Lucky all highlighted that it was not easy to negotiate use of condoms with her husband. The suggestion raised by Zethu, that she must ask her husband to use the condom under the pretence of being sick, was vehemently disputed by Lucky who pointed out that that would have been her death sentence. The teacher's interjection helps to elicit clearer explanation from Lucky. Lucky's explanation, even though not explicitly put, suggests that the husband would have suspected that his wife cheated with another man in his absence and contracted a sexually transmitted disease. This suggests that the husband would have demanded to know the reason why she wants to use a condom. The learners' discussion indicated that women, especially married ones, have a challenge in protecting themselves from being infected by their husbands who have extramarital affairs with multiple partners. It is evident that the lack of open communication about sexual issues between men and women due to cultural barriers and the expectation that women should not be assertive contribute to the low usage of condoms (Heise & Elias, 1995; Strebel & Lindegger, 1998; Wingood & DiClemente, 1998). This then results in a high HIV prevalence in females.

Stuart (2009) argued that despite the ARV roll out and other strategies to reduce HIV prevalence, statistics reveal an alarming reality for South African women. Citing Shisana et al. (2009) she stated that "the 33% prevalence rate for females aged 25–29 years remained constant from 2002–2008 and that in 2008 females aged 20–29 years were twice as likely as males to become HIV positive" (2009, p. 74). Stuart further stated that even though it appears that there was a national decline in HIV prevalence in teenagers aged 15–19 from 2002–2008 this was not so in Mpumalanga and some parts of KwaZulu-Natal (two of the most rural of the nine provinces in the country) including Bergville, the setting for the film, *Yesterday.* She argued that the high HIV prevalence rate amongst females aged 25 to 29 years and those aged 15 to 19 years is attributed "to increased intergenerational sex or sexual relations with males at least five years older them" (Shisana et al. 2009, as cited in Stuart, 2009, p.74).

Gender relations and gender-based violence

The film clip that shows Yesterday going to her husband in Johannesburg to tell him about her HIV status and to tell him that the doctor suggested that he also be tested for HIV, highlights issues of gender relations. The educator asked learners to discuss gender relations depicted in the film; learner discussion was directed by the teacher's question below:

> *Yini oyifundile kulesi siqeshana sefilimu emayelana nezobudlel wano bobulili?*
>
> *What did you learn from this film clip about gender relations?*

> *Nosipho: Ngisasho namanje . . . mina . . . ngibubona bungebuhle.*
>
> *Nosipho: I still maintain my position . . . this relationship . . . is not good at all.*

> *Thandi: Ngiyavuma . . . kodwa mhlawumbe . . . lo baba uthuswe izindaba ezimbi azizwile.*
>
> *Thandi: I agree with you . . . but maybe . . . the man was shocked about the news he had just heard.*

> *Nosipho: Ukuthuka ? Mnh . . . cha . . . lokho akumniki ilungelo lokuthi amshaye.*
>
> *Nosipho: Shocked? Mmh . . . no . . . that does not give him a right to beat her.*

Sne: Empeleni . . . kumele engabe uyazisola ngokwenzekile kodwa yena uveza udlame (kukhona abafundi besilisa abavungamayo).

Sne: Actually . . . he should be sorry about what has happened instead of being violent

(murmuring amongst male learners).

Lucky: Phela uyindoda, lento imehlisa isithunzi (uhleko).

Lucky: He is a man, this thing is tainting his dignity (laughter).

Nosipho (uyahwaqa): Kanti uma uyindoda kumele ungamhloniphi yini umuntu wesifazane?

Nosipho (she frowns): Does being a man mean one should not respect a woman?

Lucky (uhleko): Kahle bo ngodlame . . . bengidlala.

Lucky (laughter): Hold it don't be aggressive . . . I was only joking.

Nosipho: Vele nje abantu besilisa ababahloniphi abantu besifazane. Buka nje . . . nalona osehovisi akamsizi uYesterday.

Nosipho: It is obvious that men do not respect females. Look . . . even the man in the office does not help Yesterday.

The discussion was lively. One learner, for example, commented that the news about Yesterday's HIV positive status and the suggestion that the husband should be tested, angered the husband and so he assaulted her. Learners condemned the husband's behaviour as being unacceptable. This kind of gender-based violence is related to power inequalities based on gender roles, which are marked by the domination of men and the subordination of women (Njuho & Davids, 2012). Nosipho played a central role in the discussion, commenting on gender relations, power and gender-based violence as the key issues to have been raised. She saw Yesterday, the main character, as powerless and unable to defend herself from her husband who is beating her for nothing.

While Thandi concurred with Nosipho, she also suggested shock as a reason for the man to have behaved that way. Nosipho argued that being in a state of shock does not justify any actions of violence. Sne felt that the husband should have been very apologetic about the whole issue and have asked for forgiveness instead of being violent. Lucky's defence of the husband's violent action as being the demonstration of his manly power angered Nosipho who retorted by saying males do not respect females. Her generalisation about men's attitudes towards women was somehow prompted by the noncommittal attitude of the man in the office who read his newspaper as if nothing was happening just outside his window. The mine official had just distanced himself from the incident and not intervened.

At the same time, a reading of Lucky's comment demonstrates patriarchal attitudes entrenched in his reasoning. Although he said he was joking, this did not erase the statement he had uttered and which reflected how he thinks about women and how he would act towards them. Research has shown that this reflects the thinking that most men still hold—that to demonstrate their masculinity they must be aggressive towards women and homosexual men. According to Koenig et al.'s study (2003), 70% of the male participants and 90% of the female participants considered the act of beating up a woman as justifiable. Bhana, De Lange and Mitchell (2009) referred to Wood, Lambert and Jewkes (2007) who argued

that many South African researchers when linking gender-based violence and masculinities have shown how violence is understood within the context of entrenched sociocultural notions about "male superiority and privilege as well as the social impact of apartheid, political emasculation and unemployment on generations of African men" (2009, p. 49). Judging from this one could only assume that Lucky uttered this statement because he sees the matter at hand as being private and not an issue to be discussed in a public arena such as the workplace. Bhana et al. (2009) further noted that in rural areas in South African as well as elsewhere in the country, "teachers and youth emerge from social contexts where ideas and social values affirm gender inequalities, and popular ideas about gender permit the use of violence to maintain male authority" (Sideris, 2004, as cited in Bhana et al., 2009, p. 50). Bhana et al. also commented that "rigid notions of masculinities are defended by invoking the patriarchal content of Zulu culture" (p. 50). They argued that it is crucial to understand the ways in which male teachers in specific contexts give meaning to gender-based violence for developing appropriate strategies for HIV and AIDS education. What is interesting in the learners' discussion is that none of them mentioned the catcalls from miners as they filed past Yesterday. Learners just concentrated on Yesterday, her husband and the mine official, whereas the miners' actions could be classified as sexual harassment, disrespectful, and intimidating and needed to be commented upon.

Learners' responses overall

The learners' responses affirmed that there is pleasure in watching, understanding, and analyzing films because they seemed to engage confidently and enthusiastically with the text. For these young people it was evident that the use of film has a pedagogical role both inside and outside of the classroom. Learners described the experience as an eye opener to the way they watch films. Learners' comments on the fact that they would now watch movies with a critical eye in order to decode hidden massages shows how much they benefited from the learning experiences. This is also illustrated below by a learner's comment from her journal entry:

> *Ngikuthokezela kakhulu ukufundiswa ukuhluza amafilimu ngoba lokhu sekuzongenza ngiwabuke ngendlela ehlukile kunasekuqaleni. Ngizowabuka ngehlo elicwaningayo.*
>
> *I greatly appreciated to be taught how to analyse a film as this would make me watch movies differently than before. I would watch them with a critical eye.*

This is an important observation—especially coming directly from one of the learners.

Conclusions and implications for further research

This article examined some key issues on gender and HIV and AIDS with secondary school learners using the film, *Yesterday.* Working with film, I argue, offers a crucial way to engage learners in exploring, understanding, and reflecting on their everyday lives. This, in turn, exposes the everyday challenges they face in the context of poverty, gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS, and stigma and discrimination, and helps them think of possible solutions.

Using film in a classroom environment is essential because film demands a certain level of engagement for its particular narratives, subject positions, and ideologies to develop. Giroux (2002) ascertains that in ninety-minute to two-hour formats, film offers "a deeper pedagogical register" than "a three-minute pop song or a twenty-two minute sitcom" (pp. 7–8). Amaya-Anderson claimed that a film's textuality requires viewers to enter the world of character, setting, and sociopolitical themes. The viewing process in watching a movie is informed by a wider spectrum of cinematic discourse. As a result, film has a larger vocabulary which cues and constrains viewer response (Fehlman, 1994).

Since film is a social practice that adolescents and young adults enjoy, it is highly recommended that educators include film study in their language and writing programmes, especially in African languages including isiZulu. In the South African school context, film study has been a prevalent feature in schools which were previously for Whites, Indians, and Coloureds but not in Black African schools. The assessment standards in the NCS for Grade 10 to Grade 12 stipulate that learners should be able to analyse and explain the sociopolitical and cultural backgrounds of texts (DoE, 2002, p. 25).

hooks (1996) suggests that even though it might not be the filmmaker's intent to teach audiences specific things, young viewers extract lessons from narrative films and in some cases they learn from these films more than they do from books. Like Heyda (1999), I argue that even though film may offer entertainment, escape, and pleasure, educators and learners must explore the nature of these affective responses—looking specifically at what they have to say about culture and their subject positions as viewers. Film in this case is not the end but the beginning of inquiry, dialogue and writing

This type of material, when brought into the classroom, could have a positive effect on learners' attitudes towards men, women, and people living with HIV and AIDS, and also promote their active engagement in challenging and changing the dominant images of gender inequality, poverty, gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS, and HIV related stigmas. The process of viewing and discussing allowed these learners to construct and reconstruct their experiences and the challenges they face in relation to the issues mentioned above.

It would be naïve to expect drastic changes from the learners when they have been exposed to just one text over a short period. Moreover there are other questions that might be raised: To what extent might *Yesterday,* the film, become dated in its representation of gender and HIV and AIDS? What are some of the challenges of showing a film in a rural school? How do teachers empower learners from disadvantaged ethnic and gender groups who do not have critical analysis skills? While the answers to these questions remain to be explored, it is apparent that film study seems to offer a space for dialogue and discussion—and perhaps that is the best that can happen to truly make the life of Yesterday a yesterday.

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This Thing Called the Future: Intergenerationality and HIV and AIDS

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Abstract

In this paper I explore the idea of intergenerationality and examine some ways in which the critical reading of a literary artefact may contribute to our understanding of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. By examining, through a literary text, the lived experience of an adolescent, the text can become a site of research (Smith, 2000) and expose some of the power imbalances that occur in intergenerational relations. Specifically, I explore the concept of inter-relations as a way to understand the blending of adult and child relations by using Stephanie Powers' 2011 young adult novel, *This Thing Called the Future*. Her novel is infused with three subthemes that intersect within the context of HIV and AIDS: the significance of youth as knowledge producers; the possibility of social change; and the importance of agency.

Keywords: HIV and AIDS; Intergenerationality; Literary Method; Social Change; Youth.

Introduction

In this paper, I examine the issue of HIV and AIDS in the everyday context of adult and child relations. In particular I explore how reading a novel, as an arts-based research method, may deepen our understanding of HIV and AIDS (see Moletsane, Mitchell, Smith & Chisholm, 2008). I do this through an analysis of Stephanie Powers' young adult novel *This Thing Called the Future* which offers examples of intergenerationality that allow for the study of both positive and negative relationships between adults and young people.

This Thing Called the Future depicts the life of 14 year-old Khosi who grows up in poverty in South Africa at a time of transition between the old spiritual ways of healers and the newer contemporary world of science and medicine. Khosi's mother, a teacher, lives in the city during the week in order to support her two daughters, Khosi and Zi, while Khosi's 'Gogo' (grandmother) looks after the girls in the country. Khosi struggles to respect her elders, particularly her grandmother, and to honor her mother who has worked hard to give Khosi the opportunity to make different choices in her own future. Powers exposes intergenerational conflicts through her portrayal of Khosi's life and her trajectory towards a future. The

theme of 'having a future' is reiterated in the novel through Khosi's daily struggles and her journey to the realization that HIV and AIDS do indeed play a role in her life. Her battles are linked to both urban and rural contexts, and are also connected to the constant tugs of the past ways of life and choices for a young girl's future. They are interpreted through the lenses of three generations: that of the Gogo, of Khosi's mother, and of Khosi and her little sister.

The novel offers an illuminating reading of intergenerationality and, using a method similar to that which Ann Smith (2000) used in her reading of *Nervous Conditions*, (Dangarembga, 1988) helps the reader understand the experiences of Khosi and her adolescent journey in the context of living with HIV and AIDS. Literary method, in these cases, adapts the fictional representations of lived experience to point to possibilities of social change. I argue, in similar stance to Smith, that the young adolescents in this work of fiction are not victims; they are living within their life experiences. They may live in frameworks of poverty but are not telling a narrative of desperation; their narratives tell their life experiences within a male dominant society in South Africa. The underlying tone of Smith's review is one of empowerment and I reflect this tone of empowerment and develop a literary space into a site of research that envelops the life experiences of Khosi in her journey through adolescence.

In the first section I develop a conceptual framework that draws on two key areas: intergenerationality, and the idea of youth as knowledge producers. In the next section I build a pathway to understanding my process of engaging Powers' narrative framework as a tool to amplify issues associated with HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa—specifically in youth and family situations ending with possible social change. The final section points to the ways in which intergenerationality can be further explored in real life and not just in fiction through participatory research. I argue that literary method can help to create dialogues about everyday lived experiences in connection with HIV and AIDS.

Conceptual Framework

What is This Thing Called Intergenerationality?

Within the context of HIV and AIDS, I am interested in the notion that intergenerationality[1] is part of a complex space of inter and intra-generational interactions. I connect adult and youth sexuality due to cultural transitions and an uncertain future, and create a space for understanding youth as knowledge producers through their everyday lived experiences. Lack of knowledge and information about HIV and AIDS and disbelief in scientific methods have helped perpetuate myths that are difficult to change—for example, sleep with a virgin and HIV and AIDS will be cured—making cultural transitions more complex (Mitchell, Strong-Wilson, Pithouse & Allnutt, 2011).

Youth are viewed as being "a non-sexual subject or being" (Allen, 2007, p. 575) when, in fact, a male dominant society pulls them into adult roles within the context of HIV and AIDS. Allen believes that knowledge is power and that encouragement through the school system, of safer sexual education practice, would help build a better sexual identity for young people—yet school environments are often influenced by moral overtones that can prevent useful information from being shared in a user friendly way; for example, giving sexual education classes from a biological viewpoint but not including the social aspects of human sexuality. She argues that youth are taught a split agenda of a non-sexual identity together with given information for a prevention-scenario which makes their lives a duality of information and a game of roulette as far as prevention or the development of sexual identity are concerned—because the school will give out the information but cannot condone a sexual being as a youth in school. There are strong elements of control of children in every school system; within the context of HIV and AIDS misinformation could be interpreted as a serious issue.

High risk behavior is often a signal that there is a lack of information or awareness, and Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala (2002) explores the context of high-risk sexuality by building an awareness of the sexual culture of young adolescents—it is not enough to create awareness through sex education, it is vital to understand the context of risky behavior. Leclerc-Madlala, who researches the social aspects of HIV and AIDS, interprets the high-risk game that sugar daddies engage in with younger women as a lack of knowledge on the part of young women about protecting themselves against HIV. She is concerned about men thinking that condom use is optional because girls and very young women are seen to be 'clean' because they have had fewer partners, and younger women for their part believe that older men are safe sex partners.[2]

In order to think critically about intergenerationality Pain (2010) turns the lens towards a relational perspective, and in reading Power's novel it becomes evident that this relational perspective pulls the intergenerational lens in many directions. One example that Powers writes about is the crocodile; a character she uses to show the constant strong desire of the male who sees the youth as sexual conquest—or forcibly appropriates their sexuality.

Youth as Knowledge Producers

In using the term 'youth as knowledge producers' I am drawing on the work of Lankshear and Knobel (2003) which refers to the ways that young people can become resources to each other through cultural production. Evans and Davies (2011) write about the relationships that individuals experience within their everyday lives:

> *individuals and populations are positioned 'in relation' to knowledge, discourse, and culture, but also relations within them (p. 264, author's emphases)*

Youth, and young women are positioned in relation to their knowledge construction—yet discourse and culture are part of the cultural factors that can mask or hide children's voices (Warshak as cited in Mannion, 2007, emphases in original). Youth as knowledge producers is evident in Powers' narrative and she uses Khosi's life experiences to introduce the audience to multiple themes that can be connected to living in the context of HIV and AIDS. The use of literary method in this case helps uncover cultural issues that young women experience in an everyday life context. A critical reading of Khosi's adolescent journey exposes intergenerationality as a cultural issue that may be perpetuating the spread of HIV and AIDS. The novel acts as a tool to help youth understand and explain, through participatory and literary methodologies, that they are aware of the power imbalances in their everyday lives.

Intergenerationality in This Thing Called the Future

In this section I apply the concept of intergenerationality to demonstrate how it can be used as a framework in relation to HIV and AIDS. Intergenerationality is a social perspective that examines HIV and AIDS through a relational perspective (Pain, 2010) and to understand this perspective it is important to understand a bit more about how HIV and AIDS prevention are taught. Often the literature about the prevention of HIV and AIDS is economics based, or about programs of intervention which are medicalized—prevention with the focus on what not to do; a prescriptive viewpoint—and there is little thought given to the social impact aspect of HIV and AIDS (Leclerc-Madlala, 2002). The political reasons for this focus on the economy is largely due to the investment of international partners who will fund programs for the distribution of literature about HIV and AIDS—yet this information is mechanical and lacks a human face, a social posture.

Looking ahead to the future and to help young people and seniors bridge the gaps of knowledge Moletsane et al. (2008) have examined issues that are explored in a relational sense through participatory research using photovoice (taking pictures and interpreting them) as well as other arts-based methods. Smith (2000) creates a literary space as a site of research through literary method that is readily available to enhance the representations of fictional lived experience as a place of possible social change. Intergenerationality encompasses cultural traditions, men with multiple sex partners having unprotected sex, and men continuing to harass young girls; and the transitions in society between contemporary and traditional health models all deepen the complex issues associated with HIV and AIDS. Young girls and senior women appear to be the people who balance the realities of these everyday issues within the context of HIV and AIDS.

Youth is a time of experimentation; it is also a time of identity construction. HIV and AIDS is no longer a death sentence and Powers gives voice to an open discussion between Khosi and her friend Thandi on the way home from school. The girls have learned that if you take medication you will not die—but that not everyone responds to the medication either. This not knowing what to believe leaves the two young girls doubting their own identity construction and brings out a number of questions that young girls think about on their way to becoming young women—if they dare think about having a future. According to Mannion (2007), "spaces for children's lives are co-constructed by the actions of key adults……" (p. 417). Children are not passive receivers of all adult interactions, life happens around Khosi, Thandi, and Zi and they are subjected to adult interactions—some less pleasant than others. Because of many connotations of slipperiness, slyness, and tenacity, Powers refers to a drunk man in the quote below as a crocodile. The man is a recurring character in the narrative that Khosi has to deal with on many occasions and the crocodile metaphor definitely conjures images of fear:

> *The drunk man starts waiting for me (Khosi) at the khumbi (taxi) stop when Zi and I come home from school. He doesn't say anything to me—he just smiles with his big rotten teeth and follows us home. (p. 70, Powers' emphases)*

After a few episodes of the drunk man following Khosi and Thandi, Thandi shows her agency by throwing rocks—yet this doesn't deter him—the drunk continues to follow the girls. One day the conversation turns to Khosi and Thandi says, "you should never walk anywhere alone" (p. 70). This refers to the fear young girls have to deal with because of this intergenerational dominance factor—the girls are socialized to take on the adult responsibility.

Mitchell (2009) in an essay on schools and toilets refers to fearfulness in association with a bogeyman known as the tokoloshe. Powers also writes about the tokoloshe and shows the representation of this childhood icon of fear. In Mitchell's work the tokoloshe, known as Pinky, Pinky, an urban legend in South Africa, is seen only by young girls. As the South African artist Penny Siopis notes in her Artist's Statement on a series of visual representations, Pinky, Pinky:

> *embodies the fears and anxieties that girls face as their bodies develop and their social standing changes. He can also be seen as a figure that has grown out of the neurosis that can develop in a society that experiences such change and tension as is found in South Africa. It is also a society in which rape and the abuse of women and children is extremely high. (Nuttall, 2002 in Mitchell, 2009, pp. 62-63)*

Pinky, Pinky lives around the toilets where young girls are often raped in South Africa and Mitchell reminds the audience that there is a public (toilets at schools without doors or privacy) and a private (bodily functions) component of examining the fears of young girls in South Africa. She uses drawings and photos

to explore "the powerful images of toilets that young people produced in relation to 'safe' and 'unsafe' spaces in and around their schools" (p. 64). These visual forms of participatory research have helped school officials understand a part of young girls' everyday lives that had gone unnoticed until the photovoice workshop around safety was examined by students and school teachers.

While Mitchell uses images to embody the issues of young girls in South Africa, Powers uses narrative which she builds through Khosi's everyday interactions with her family and friends. Thandi is Khosi's best friend and has a different outlook on life:

> *Thandi's jewelry-store sugar daddy disappears quickly, a week or two later. And almost as quickly, she finds a new boyfriend. . . . "His name is Honest, he drives a khumbi, (taxi) he says sometimes he can take the khumbi out after work and pick me up. I can sneak out and we'll go dancing." She says this all in a rush. "He gave me this"—she holds up her wrist to show off the slender black-and-silver-beaded bracelet on her wrist—"and this"—she tilts her ears to show off the red, gold, and green beaded earrings dangling from her earlobes—"and those are just the first of many gifts, Khosi!" (p. 61, author's emphasis)*

Thandi is not in a position to buy jewelry and there are many willing men, often referred to as sugar daddies, who will trade sexual favors. Intergenerationality is present in the way in which the cultural practices of a male dominant society are part of the everyday life of young women in South Africa. A young adult reading this novel for school or for pleasure can see similarities and/or differences in relation to their own lives. There are many such connections to everyday life issues for young adults in this narrative about Khosi's life.

Young adults' lived experiences with HIV and AIDS can help explain how young women relate to cultural expectations. Poverty creates vulnerability in youth and cultural expectations surrounding sexual education have built a barrier of silence (Leclerc-Madlala, 2002). Intergenerational issues surrounding this cultural barrier of silence are perpetuated by non-communication about sexuality and one of these issues is the sugar daddy who is attractive to school girls, and the lack of sexual education for these youth leads to the spread of HIV and AIDS (HIV & AIDS Community of Practice, 2011, p. 21). Intergenerational issues of power are at the base of the context of the sugar daddy.

Fear about the possibility of contracting HIV and AIDS is also expressed in the narrative. A young woman who normally attends church does not appear for a while and when she comes back she is thinner than before. Thandi and Khosi witness how she is treated by the other women in the congregation when during 'the peace' (a time of fellowship, hand shaking and hugging within the congregation) members of the congregation do not want to touch this woman. The fear is of catching AIDS because, as much as information is given, there is often misinformation and lack of knowledge to cope with as well. Young women's identities are being altered due to the fear, and not knowing, about HIV and AIDS.

Khosi's mother gets infected with HIV and she (the mother) lives in shock and denial. She stays in the city for an extended period of time and when she returns her ill health is apparent; leaving questions in the minds of her family. Here Khosi wonders about her mother's health**:**

I'm thinking of Mama. All the weight she's lost. Could she be HIV positive? It's not possible. Unless. . . .unless Thandi's right, and Baba does have other girlfriends on the side. It could happen. It's very common for Zulu men to have more than one girlfriend. Just like in the old days, they married more than one wife if they could afford it. I feel a sudden spurt of anger at Baba. Then I try to calm it. After all, I know nothing. There are other reasons Mama could have lost weight, hey? But I can't think of any. (p. 88, author's emphases)

Khosi's mother has a difficult time accepting that her husband could have infected her with HIV and this is part of her denial. This part of cultural traditions (men having multiple sex partners) has not disappeared and can be viewed as part of the complex issue of intergenerationality. There is a scene on Zi's birthday, when the girls and their mother go to Durban to visit Baba, in which a young woman comes to the house (the mother-in-law's house) and Baba goes outside and has an exchange with her. This confirms Khosi's mother's fears about her HIV and eventually leads to a heated conversation with Baba. This interchange with the young woman confirms Khosi's mother's worst fear of the possibility of a girlfriend (another partner) for her partner.

Media discourse is present in young people's lives in South Africa; those warnings that appear on billboards and advertisements are everywhere—one is significant on the way home from school for Khosi and Zi:

Zi interrupts my thoughts, poking me in the side. "Look, Khosi, a new advertisement!" she shouts, pointing at a billboard with a cartoon drawing of a man and woman together, embracing on a blue sofa. Large block letters announce: "A man can get AIDS by having sex with an infected woman." (p. 72)

This second billboard message clearly places the blame of AIDS on "an infected woman" and Zi and Khosi are witnesses to this language of blame on their way home from school. This is one example of the blame language and of responsibility being placed on women that is part of the dominant discourse that Powers explores with Khosi's narrative.

As Evans and Davies (2011) have discussed, discourse is everywhere—billboards have taken up prominent space in people's everyday world and give a dominant message of blame talk towards women. Zi and Khosi also experience negative blame talk in association with the billboard advertisements that are placed in plain sight. This represents a negative discourse that is faced by young women in their daily lives. Cultural factors in this instance mask the male domination factor in the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Intergenerationality reveals the power of cultural beliefs and the social aspect and positions that occur in the everyday context of living with HIV and AIDS. Young girls are subject to relations of power that circulate around them in their daily lives. By examining the framework that Powers uses in writing this narrative the audience can see the male domination and associated factors, such as the discourse in the media that blames women for the spread of HIV and AIDS, and how Thandi believes that catering to a man is the only way she can acquire material things for herself.

"My grandmother used to say that each generation has its own challenges, its own work to do. You'll figure it out. Just give it time" (Powers, p. 59). Baba attempts to teach Khosi that all generations have challenges to work through and this reminds the reader that intergenerationality is a complex concept that requires reflection. The act of reflection is less invasive than participating in an interview or survey as in a more traditional method of inquiry and it also "affords opportunities for uncovering these silences both from the point of view of the narrator and/or author and the audience/reader" (Moletsane et al., 2008, p. 75).

One more manifestation of intergenerationality occurs in the transitions between a scientific society (medical model) and the traditional healer. Khosi visits the local sangoma (traditional healer) because her grandmother believes in the traditional methods of healing as well as being a Christian. It is not only about healing the body but also about healing the spirit therefore religion is involved in daily practices of culture. Here is an exchange between Khosi and the sangoma:

> *"Sho!" she says. "It is terrible! When you become a sangoma, the ancestors never let you rest. They fill your sleep with other people and spirits and recipes for new muthi (herbal potions) to cure this or that illness. It is too much difficult." She smiles at me. "You go to sleep, never knowing if that is the night they get you up out of your warm bed and say, 'No, you mustn't sleep. Go here, do this.' You wake up in the morning, not knowing where you will go that day or what you will do. Even if you had planned to spend the day with your family, you must obey. . ." At least [Khosi thinks to herself] she is never in doubt about what she must do: obey her spirits. I am all the time torn between Mama and Gogo, the new world and the old world, the science I learn at school and the African medicine Gogo sends me to fetch. (p. 66, author's emphases)*

Khosi and the sangoma have several interchanges throughout the narrative about life issues; Khosi's Gogo believes and practices the older traditional ways that use herbal medicine to cure and treat spiritual and physical illness. This is also a form of intergenerationality; one that straddles contemporary life and older traditional ways of healing and knowing. Khosi lives in a home with her Gogo and with her mother, with the support of both, yet there are times when she is confused about whose traditions she will choose to follow. Khosi also has vivid dreams and believes that her ancestors are speaking to her through her dreams.

Social Change

Social change occurs when communities and researchers examine, and act on possible solutions that have previously appeared to be hidden and Powers' narrative gives strong voice to the social change that is a recurring theme throughout the novel. We see Khosi's parents struggle to earn their livings and how they are unable to live together because of decisions they made when they were younger. Khosi's father has paid an economic price for not pursuing an education and, through narrative, Powers examines social change quietly—as when Baba talks about his early life choices in relation to his lack of employment:

> *Don't long for the old days, he says. When your mama and I were young, we thought only about freedom. We sacrificed everything to fight for it. But now, without an education, I can't even find a decent job. I try and try, Khosi. Every day, I go knocking on doors and nothing. But you can go to school and really become something. (p. 59)*

Social change was something that Khosi's mother and father both worked towards when they were younger and at great cost to themselves as a couple. Baba was not able to pay the dowry needed in their culture therefore Khosi's parents never married. Khosi's father is also honest with his daughter about the political changes in South Africa.

Khosi has a conversation with her mother too, that confirms her fear that her mother has AIDS. Yet the conversation is more; it is a time of exchange about life issues that the mother wants to share about democracy and opportunity and AIDS:

Do you think the world's a better place now? I [Khosi] ask. Now that apartheid's dead? Now that we have democracy? Yes! Mama exclaims. You have so many opportunities that I never had. But what about this thing of AIDS? I ask. It's killing so many people—I break off, mid-sentence, seeing the look on Mama's face. (p.131)

And suddenly I know the truth. I knew it all along, of course. But it has just been confirmed. AIDS. That's what Mama has. The shock of it is so strong, it feels like a small fire has been lit deep in my belly, flames licking up my esophagus. It's burning me up. But no, it's not me that is burning up from the inside out. It's Mama. Her body, utterly betraying her. Mama, I say helpless. It's all I can say, like I've been reduced to baby talk, with only one word in my vocabulary. Mama. But Mama is fierce, glaring at me. So I shut up. You see, you do have a better world, she continues, as if I had said nothing. You can study science or business or medicine. She sees the look on my face. She sees how I don't have words to answer her. How can the world be a better place when it holds such an evil disease in it? (p.132)

This is a life altering moment for Khosi and her mother yet the mother wants Khosi to know that life has improved from her generation to Khosi's generation. This was Khosi's mother's way of letting Khosi know that social change happens slowly and its effects are intergenerational.

Conclusions and implications for moving forward?

The use of literary methods as a possible driver of social change can be related to creating awareness thus opening dialogues across generations. In this article I have drawn on Stephanie Power's powerful young adult novel, *This Thing Called the Future*, as a way to highlight the ways in which intergenerationality offers a framework for studying both positive and negative relationships between adults and young people. Powers uses Khosi's life experiences as a map to help readers understand intergenerationality portrayed in the framework of a narrative. While literature itself can be a force for social change in terms of inspiring people to act, what I want us to think about are the ways that the novel has so aptly foregrounded what intergenerationality looks like and how we might think about the practicalities of doing something. In this way, I would argue, literature can be participatory. The social aspects of HIV and AIDS are seen through the eyes of those who live in the everyday context of HIV and AIDS. Power's narrative ends with strong words from Khosi's mother to her daughter that supplies the intergenerational hope of each generation to learn from the past and work towards a future. Khosi's ***now*** is lived in the context of HIV and AIDS and carries the responsibility of the past and a hope for a future. Khosi's discomfort over many intergenerational situations is the backbone of this novel. Power's novel gives voice to cultural and traditional behaviours that have continued without question between each generation. Such behaviours could perpetuate the spread of HIV and AIDS and when awareness is created choices can be made:

Don't look at the past, Khosi, she [Khosi's mother] says, reaching out a soft hand to caress my face. It's there and will always be there and there is nothing you can do to change it. Now, now you must look ahead. There is only this thing called the future. (p. 132, author's emphases)

But how can the ideas of intergenerationality as depicted in *This Thing Called the Future* be applied to an everyday context? Leclerc-Madlala (2002) has uncovered "the fact of social acceptance and normalization of sexual coercion" (p.24) in many places in Africa, by writing about cultural issues such as sexual coercion; these issues are discovered to be part of the silences that young women are not aware of until HIV and AIDS becomes a fact of life. Khosi, her Gogo and her mother learn from each other. I want to suggest that as researchers we look for methodologies that allow members of different generations to speak to each

other. In this article I explored through various researchers how an arts-based research method can create connections and help people explore possible social change.

One promising practical area for addressing intergenerationality might be the use of participatory research methods, particularly those that are visual such as photovoice, in giving a space for generations to hear and see each others voices. The use of visual research techniques came into being during the 1990s in many forms that continue to grow in depth and use by many researchers (for example, Wang, 1999; Mitchell, et al., 2005). The use of cameras allows the participants to see for themselves what the issues are surrounding HIV and AIDS (Mitchell et al., 2005) and they also have the potential for different generations to learn from each other's photographs. In their article *Giving a face to HIV and AIDS*, they describe a project in which they encouraged workshop participants, teachers and community health care workers, to be part of the process of knowledge production and in doing so the participants learned from each other; and, from their photovoice experiences, learned that they are empowered through the further creation of dialogues that are an outgrowth of these participatory workshops. The visual becomes the generator of dialogues. It is this dialogue that is such a powerful aspect of Powers' novel and it is this dialogue through participatory visual methodologies that can be such a powerful step towards the future.

Arts-based methods are varied and powerful tools to engage participants in re-thinking their everyday lived experiences. It is vital to discover the 'silences' and to participate in the social action to help turn them into knowledge with young people. Initiating dialogues through arts-based approaches could create social change in how young people connect to each other while living in the context of HIV and AIDS. The participation of youth through the use of participatory methods opens dialogues for social change and a future by empowering youth as knowledge producers.

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[1]*The concept of intergenerationality as put forward by researchers such as Talburt (2010) draws attention to three themes that are 'intertwined': "multiple relations to school knowledge; the blurring of categories of youth and adult through circulations of sexuality; and the dislocation of desire from the predictable categories of identity" (p. 53). Applying her analysis to the film The History Boys based on Alan Bennett's Tony award-winning play of the same name, Talburt writes about the development of the understanding of subjectivities and how sexualities are often rigidly defined—while making a connection to temporality.*

[2] *Leclerc-Madlala is seeing a potential shift in the meaning of Sugar Daddies. The flattery aspect and attention to the young women removes their agency to act once the gifts have been given, the young women trade on their physical body as currency in return. Leclerc-Madlala believes this could continue to increase the HIV-epidemic and her research findings cite that for "every year's increase in the age difference between the partners, there was a 28% increase in the odds of having unprotected sex" (2008, p.1). The media interpretation of a high-risk game is de-contextualized, making it appear financial on the surface (media interpretation; young women want men who have money to date them) yet the issues are about safe sex partners (Leclerc-Madlala, 2008). Leclerc-Madlala (2008) contextualizes youth sexuality and suggests that young women trade in an economic sense for a scale of benefits. This scale of benefits can be "food, school fees, rent…for others fashion accessories" (Leclerc-Madlala, 2008, p. 14), it is the consumerist actions that have become more noteworthy in this contemporary era and this has unsettled the younger male participants in the dating scene.*

Acknowledgement

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Conference Report

What Difference Does This Make? The Arts, Youth and HIV&AIDS. Conference Report on the Invitational Conference: Durban, South Africa, December 2011

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This conference was hosted by the Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change (UKZN), McGill University's Participatory Cultures Lab, and the Unit for Visual Methodologies for Social Change at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). It marked the 10th anniversary of the sponsoring research group's involvement in the use of participatory visual methodologies to address HIV and AIDS (see Walsh, Mitchell, and Smith, 2002).

Forty-nine national and international researchers along with youth, NGOs and policy makers gathered at the Salt Rock Beach Hotel north of Durban. Papers, posters and exhibitions related to "What difference does this make? The arts, youth and HIV&AIDS" had been invited, and the conference explored three questions:

- How are the visual arts being used to address youth, sexuality, and HIV and AIDS, and what approaches are being used to look at the impact of this work?

- What lessons can be drawn from visual and other arts-based approaches to addressing HIV and AIDS in work with youth in South Africa and within the global community over the past 10 years?

- How might we look forward and consolidate the integration of participatory visual and other arts-based methods into HIV- and AIDS-related work with youth in a variety of geographic and spatial contexts?

These questions guided the six themes around which conference presentations were clustered: *Fire and Hope*; Participatory visual methodologies; Performance art; Digital media in the age of AIDS; Arts-based methods; and What difference does this make?

Hosts, Claudia Mitchell (McGill), Relebohile Moletsane (UKZN) and Naydene de Lange (NMMU) opened the conference with a welcome and introductions. This was followed by a youth plenary, "In the frame of caring", in which Fumane Khanare (UKZN), with two learners from a rural school, presented on the use of photovoice to explore communities of care and caring in the context of a South African rural school.

The keynote address, "Pushing back from the margins: Youth, colonialism, and HIV", was presented by Jessica Yee, executive director of the Native Youth Sexual Health Network (USA and Canada). Yee described how indigenous and other racialised youth in North America are often labeled "marginalised", "vulnerable", and more "at-risk" in relation to HIV and AIDS. She posed a number of questions: Why is there no accountability when these concepts are used? How and why are people so labeled? What conversations and realities are needed to address the ongoing existence of colonialism that indigenous and other racialised youth experience? This thought-provoking keynote presented not only the "How?" and "Why?" of heightened statistics and narratives, but questioned our own complicity and accountability and what we can do to decolonise the solutions. After this very moving and emotional address we adjourned for dinner and networking.

The second day of the conference began with a panel presentation on the theme, "*Fire and Hope*", and was lead by Shannon Walsh (University of Johannesburg). The presentation, "Ten years later: Memory, pedagogy and social change in Cape Town", took up the narrative of a diverse group of young adults who, in 2002, when they were between 15 and 17 years of age, participated in an arts-based HIV prevention initiative. This involved using pedagogical approaches that actively engaged them in creative writing, video and photography projects. Almost ten years later they reflected on the remnants of this work and on what difference it has made in their lives. The participants were brought together to share where they are now and, as adults, to talk about their views on method, memory and social change.

Various participatory visual methodologies dominated the mid-morning session and five panellists presented diverse topics on this theme. The first panellist was Pholoho Morojele (UKZN) with "My journey to school: Photovoice accounts of rural children's everyday experiences in Lesotho". This journey represents places and spaces in the children's everyday experiences as in-between spaces outside the family, home and school and the accounts, inter alia, described the children's agency in overcoming obstacles they met along the rough terrain of their journey to school. The study illustrates how involving children in the choice of which aspects of their lives they wish to share in a research project could be a catalyst for policy change and social action to improve the schooling experiences of rural children. The second presentation, by Shomane Pillay (NMMU), explored how Indian female youth construct their sexuality in the age of AIDS. Pillay highlighted her use of visual participatory methodologies as a way of exploring how these girls learn to become responsible agents of choice in their lives. This was followed by "Calling the shots using photovoice: Young people as researchers" in which Ronika Mudaly (UKZN) presented some of the findings of a project in which power differentials between researcher and researched were minimised by engaging young people to participate in the research design and process, and to work as "deep insider" researchers in an HIV and AIDS project. Barbara Hunting (McGill) explored the everyday in a rural village in Malawi in the age of AIDS, bringing together insider and outsider perspectives. She examined ways in which experiential learning (involving Canadian students and rural youth and elders in Malawi) created an interchange of information that led to knowledge production— bridging the gap between youth and elders. The session was concluded with a paper on "Empowering young people to protect themselves against HIV: Challenges and possibilities" by Mathabo Khau (NMMU). Here the presenter discussed her experiences of working in the "New teachers for new times: Visual methodologies for social change in rural education in the age of HIV and AIDS" project which uses participatory visual methodologies to equip teachers in the Eastern Cape to engage young people in the fight against HIV.

The next panel, "Performance art", incorporated the work of five presenters. The first presentation, by Emma Durden (UKZN) and called "Hearing voices: Participation and meaning in theatre for HIV and AIDS", explored different levels of participation in HIV and AIDS theatre projects, and how greater participation can create greater meaning and impact for project participants and their communities. The second paper, "Using drama-in-education to create meaningful contexts for HIV and AIDS awareness amongst youth: A case study" by Logan Athiemoolam (NMMU), detailed how drama-in-education was incorporated into a

BEd undergraduate module to enhance student learning. In the third presentation, "Getting the message across through role-plays? Does it work?" Reshma Sathiparsad and five UKZN students discussed factors promoting student participation in role-plays and the barriers encountered. The team illustrated how role-plays can be a novel method for getting messages across. "Use of music, dance and poetry to raise HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention", presented by Yolisa Nompula (UKZN), reported on findings from an exploratory KwaZulu-Natal study which investigated how music and dance can create HIV awareness among youth. The study established that through participation in music making and dance, youth gain more knowledge about HIV and AIDS and become more open about the pandemic. The "Two-pronged service and community mobilization intervention to reduce gender-based violence and HIV vulnerability in rural South Africa" presentation by Andrew Gibbs (UKZN) took us through to lunch time. The presentation was based on the work of a six-member team's ten year involvement in a rural area of KwaZulu-Natal. They outlined the inter-linkages between gender-based violence and HIV in the area. The paper then reflected on the theoretical and practical background to intervening in these relationships, the problems the team foresees and the strengths of their approach, with a particular focus on the use of forum theatre for transforming gender relations.

Afternoon discussions addressed "Digital media in the age of AIDS". First, Ingrid Bruynse (UKZN) and Maijang Sam Mpherwane from the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) presented jointly on "Youth on screen: Television and HIV/AIDS initiatives in South Africa". This was a multimedia overview of SABC initiatives on television and radio over the past seven years as part of their mandate "to inform, to educate and to entertain". Posing the question, "Have educational television series for HIV/AIDS actually made a difference?", the presenters explored the increasing interest in how impact is measured in the educational media field. This was followed by "Staying viral: Studying the place of social networking in youth advocacy efforts for HIV awareness and prevention", organised around a case study of YAHAnet (Youth, the Arts and HIV&AIDS)—a social networking tool devoted to supporting the use of youth-focused and arts-based methodologies to address HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention. Interesting were the ways in which social networking tools are used with youth to address HIV and AIDS, and how to document "what counts as evidence" to evaluate overall effectiveness. Going viral is easy, John Murray, Claudia Mitchell and Lukas Labacher (McGill) argued, but staying viral is critical in the dynamic world of HIV and AIDS education.

"How can you persuade others to abstain? Encouraging peer educators not to ask questions like this by using participatory video, drama and toolkits in peer training" was the focus of the third presentation by Rob Pattman (Stellenbosch University) and Jean Stuart (UKZN), and was guided by the question, "What are some of the problems for engagement and empowerment when peer educators work with arts-based participatory drama and video workshops on campus and in schools?" The paper described a peer education training programme and peer educators' experiences of this, and then turned to their performances as peer educators in the schools. Drawing on one lesson which used drama as a participatory methodology, the presenters critically examined and evaluated the facilitative role of peer educators. They argued that drama was not used appropriately and effectively to address HIV and AIDS issues, nor to promote critical and reflective discussion. In the next presentation, "*Yesterday* as a study for tomorrow: On the use of film texts in addressing gender and HIV&AIDS with secondary youth in KwaZulu-Natal", Nokukhanya Ngcobo (UKZN) reported on preliminary findings from learners' responses to the South African film, *Yesterday*, a visual text that depicts a woman's life experiences in relation to HIV and AIDS. Nokukhanya discussed how she used the feature length film as an entry point to engage with secondary school youth on issues of gender and HIV and AIDS in the context of Zulu culture. To conclude, the fifth panellist, Lesley Wood (NMMU) presented "Masilingane – HIV prevention through the promotion of gender equality" which reported on learners' perceptions of gender inequalities and their ideas on prevention via a presentation and discussion of their material artefacts.

The afternoon wrapped up with Drama for Life Playback Theatre (DFL), an interactive dialogic process form directed by Wits University's Warren Nebe. Drama for Life includes a focus on capacity development in HIV and AIDS education, activism, and therapy. It provides the space for people to tell their life stories and gives shape and substance to what they have experienced. Their stories and lives are validated through "witnessing". After staging several pieces, the facilitator invited audience members to join in the performance by sharing a true personal story which was then performed impromptu by the DFL performers. The audience watched in awe as the stories came to life and, afterwards, they reflected on their experience.

"Arts-based methods" was the focus of the last day of the conference. A paper, "Metaphor drawings to initiate conceptualizing HIV&AIDS education integration in pre-service teacher education – what next?" presented by Linda van Laren (UKZN) was based on a study of UKZN final-year foundation and intermediate phase teachers who had been introduced to the integration of HIV and AIDS education with mathematics education by using metaphor drawings (diagrammatic, rather than textual, representations of a concept) followed by a handout containing possible integration activities that may be used in a mathematics classroom. While the structured support of the handout was of benefit to these pre-service teachers, Van Laren concluded that they required much more preparation to successfully integrate HIV and AIDS into their teaching. The presentation, "You, me and HIV", centred on the making of a material artifact and was presented by Liske van Laren (UKZN) and her student colleagues. The work was based on two interactive workshops for children aged between 6 and 16 years, which informed young people about the nature of HIV and AIDS, its transmission and prevention, and tried to dispel myths surrounding HIV and AIDS. Both the students and their audiences gained insight into the complex relationship between "You, me & HIV". The third paper on this theme, by Jutka Devenyi and Debbie Heustice, focused on "Experience Mzimela: Lessons learnt from working with the Ubunye Cultural Heritage and Eco-tourism Co-operative". Cooperative members are mainly high school students and unemployed young adults from the community. They offer drama performances depicting traditions, current life and concerns of the community. Some plays in their repertoire are *The New Style, The Lobola,* and *The Second Wife*. The plays focus mostly on current gender- and health-related concerns in the community. Performance has been mainly for tourists either on-site or with members travelling to various locations to perform.

This was followed by Sandra Glajchen's (UKZN) presentation, "Creating explorative spaces for youth to find their own voice: The unique role of the experiential expressive arts in building self-leadership skills". Drawing on a six-week pilot, experiential art-making experience with youth in and around Durban, Glajchen reflected on the positive value of the experience for youth towards achieving the objectives of self-leadership: building self-awareness, self-value and self-trust; building tolerance for personal and social uncertainty—strategies in self-support; and building skills in self/other interaction. In the last presentation around this theme, Maureen St John Ward (Wykeham Collegiate) reported on a work in progress, "Exploring the use of digital storytelling in the age of AIDS". The paper was informed by her work as a teacher in an independent girls' school in KwaZulu-Natal where, it seems to Ward, they function in a bubble, apparently not infected, nor affected, by HIV and AIDS. Her paper addressed the question, "What is it about digital storytelling in and of itself that is critical to knowledge production?" Given that KwaZulu-Natal has the highest rates of HIV and AIDS infection in South Africa, and that young girls between 14 and 19 years of age are most vulnerable, the paper discussed digital storytelling as a visual method to find out where they inserted themselves as a school in addressing the HIV and AIDS issues. It also considered how this methodology would give Grade 10 girls space to think critically about these issues.

The concluding session focused on "What difference does this make?" The first paper, "And so, how do we know what our arts-based 'doing' does?" by Naydene de Lange, explored the issue of what kind of evidence is useful and to whom. She also put forward some ideas about how to work out what our arts-based "doing" does—specifically, visual and arts-based participatory HIV and AIDS interventions. This was followed by the final presentation entitled "Youth and HIV and AIDS in my community: Assessing

participatory arts-based methods to explore youth's perspectives of HIV and AIDS in rural South Africa", in which Katie MacEntee (McGill) explored issues related to youth and HIV and AIDS in the community, using digital storytelling. The presentation reflected on the pilot use of different assessment methods to explore the practicality, challenges, and successes of participatory arts-based methodologies on HIV/AIDS education in the rural setting. At the end of the session the hosts facilitated discussion and working groups that tried to answer the question, "Where are we now?"

Tying everything up, June Larkin (University of Toronto) gave a closing keynote talk on "Youth, the arts and HIV/AIDS: Reflections and next steps". In it she posed three questions: What are the socially transformative possibilities of youth engagement with HIV and AIDS work? How do we determine the impact of arts-based research and education with youth? What are the possibilities and limitations of using the arts as a tool for social change in the age of AIDS? Larkin's presentation was informed by a series of youth projects in photovoice, drama, collage and other art forms to think through the following points: The motivation for using the arts in HIV prevention and education; What has been achieved/not achieved?; and What questions and issues might inform and deepen the next stages of our work?

The conference not only provided an opportunity for delegates to showcase their own work but also to engage in the richness of arts-based methodologies. Key points about whether such work makes a difference in the lives of youth, and about assessing or determining the impact thereof, were raised—which demonstrates clearly that this requires further discussion and research.

Reference

Walsh, S., Mitchell, C., & Smith, A. (2002). The Soft Cover Project: Youth Participation in HIV/AIDS Prevention. *Agenda*, 53, 106-112.

BOOK REVIEW

Picturing Research. Drawing as Visual Methodology

Linda Theron, Claudia Mitchell, Ann Smith and Jean Stuart (Eds.) Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2011. 244 pages.

Christa Beyers

The use of participatory visual methodologies has captured the attention of researchers in the social sciences as innovative approach: this book responds by identifying the need to widen the area of drawing, not only as visual methodology in itself, but also as a 'research as intervention' strategy (p.184). Indeed, the valuable use of drawing as methodology in this book emerges from a concern to "get at the inner world" (p.20) of children and adults especially when drawings can express what cannot be conveyed easily, if at all, in conventional language. The implications of this work in relation to social change are hugely significant along with its valuable contribution to education. The process of education is dynamic – a system characterized by constant change, activity or progress which has created the need not only for different strategies of teaching and learning, but also for different research methodologies that encourage social change. *Picturing Research. Drawing as Visual Methodology* recognises the intervention that drawings offer as well as the notion that drawings are a relatively unthreatening means of communication. An added benefit to making use of drawing as research method is that it leads to a reflective process in which participants have time to think about the issue at hand, and explore ideas related to this issue in order to make sense of their world.

The sixteen chapters are organised into two sections that reflect a double focus: 'The Drawing's the Thing: Critical Issues in the Use of Drawings in Social Science Research' and 'Illustrations from Practice: Drawing from Research'.

Mitchell, Theron, Smith and Stuart in their introductory chapter position themselves clearly as educators and researchers, speaking directly to practitioners who wish to explore significant social issues by making use of drawings which, according to Theron (p. 5), have the ability to "communicate complex messages in simple ways". The editors take the reader on a fascinating journey explaining how each came to use drawings in her work. What is really useful is the acknowledgement of limitations and challenges—information beneficial to the novice-researcher.

The first section of *Picturing Research* presents to the reader a comprehensive and detailed, yet easily accessible description of the use of drawing as an approach to Visual Participatory Methodology. This book traces the use of drawing in qualitative social science research by starting with a critical commentary on the use of drawing as method, moving on to the innovative use of drawing as method for self-study. It then proceeds to address ethical issues, such as generating and interpreting drawings from, for example, a

positive African approach; the politics of working with children's drawings in order to effect change in struggling communities; the use of children's drawings to contribute to policy change across different sectors such as education and health; and the critical importance of analysing the drawing data in a participatory way.

Although the methodology might make the use of drawing seem simple and self-evident, one is reminded every so often by the authors that drawing "should not be romanticised" (p. 186). Drawings do not necessarily show what is visible: it is the invisible that needs to be uncovered, and this involves participatory analysis and perhaps, at times, third party analysis, too. The authors aptly address related concerns and questions that they have experienced in the use of the methodology, as well as critical issues they anticipate.

In Section two readers are invited to consider examples of educators and researchers working with drawings. Nine research-based case-studies are presented which illustrate the richness of data obtained and gathered from drawings. With the high incidence of HIV in South Africa it is clear that the authors engage with issues related to HIV and AIDS in the hope of assisting teachers, community health workers, and other stakeholders in effecting social change in communities. Although most chapters in this section focus on research in South African contexts, it also includes work from Rwanda, Lesotho and Canada.

The implications of what social change could mean can be found in all chapters in this section. Areas and contexts in which drawing as methodology can be applied are offered. These include an exploration of male street youth resilience, using drawing to explore and depict what street youth view as contributing factors to their resilience. The impact of drawing becomes clear when we take into consideration that street youth, or at-risk learners, are often "illiterate or have low levels of literacy" (p. 106). Drawing is also used to explore how female teachers reflect on and position themselves within sexuality education classrooms. Integrating HIV and AIDS into curricula is a critical aspect of a response to the epidemic and drawing is offered as a simple but provocative entry point into integrating HIV and AIDS into Mathematics education. Drawing is also positioned as a visual arts-based method which offers powerful possibilities in the area of HIV and AIDS, and in the context of teacher education and development. The notion that drawing could enable members of a community, for example community health care workers, HIV-positive children and migrant teenagers to be heard, is explored as contributing to critical thinking and knowledge transfer. For example, HIV-positive children become "activist artists" (p. 202) by participating in the creation of a storybook to reach out and teach their peers about HIV. The use of drawing offers the drawers/artists an opportunity to reveal their feelings, attitudes, beliefs and so on in a relatively simple low-cost way. It is however useful, if not essential, to elicit some textual or verbal explanation to accompany the drawing. It is the analysis of the drawings and the practical applications of using drawing in these different areas and in different ways that gives this section its strength.

This section also points to other genres of drawing such as cartoons and storyboarding. Using different genres does enable researchers to relinquish some control over the research process: *Picturing Research* stresses the role of the researcher in enabling participants to engage in the research process through effective communication and within supportive structures. If drawing as research method is managed effectively, it has a potentially great impact on the lives of participants and on members of the community.

This exciting and innovative book will prove invaluable to both novice and experienced researchers, teachers, teacher-educators and community healthcare workers who wish to use drawing as research methodology. It will also find a receptive audience amongst those who are interested in expanding the theory and practice of research: *Picturing Research* offers a fresh and productive vision of what research can be.