Youth Engagement Methods: Community-University Partnerships for Social Entrepreneurship in Resource Poor Communities

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Abstract

The university can be an enabler of positive transformation by engaging with various communities. By describing a methodological process followed in a doctoral study, this paper presents a participatory research approach with youth in a resource-poor context to illustrate methodological pathways of inclusion. The paper also problematises the notion of social entrepreneurship and stresses the definitional challenges associated with the term. This is important to show the possibility of expanding the scholarly footprint of social entrepreneurship and universities' important role and options in framing new approaches and methodologies within community university partnerships. A methodological primer is presented to show the methodological process, embedded in qualitative participatory research, that informed the study. The methodological process is rooted in the participants' lifeworld and seeks to amplify local concerns and solutions. Community-university partnerships that respect aspirations and agendas of local communities inspired by collaborative, dialogical, transforming and respectful processes are identified in the paper as enablers of successful university-community engagements.

Keywords: *Participatory methodologies, community-university partnerships, youth engagement and social entrepreneurship*

Introduction

This paper illustrates a methodological approach for collaboratively engaging youth in a social entrepreneurship (SE) project. It explores a methodological approach applied in a doctoral study to demonstrate a youth engagement process in a rural area. The main research

question in this paper is: What methodological processes can social entrepreneurship ideation follow to enable youth engagement in resource-poor communities? To answer this question, the study applied a qualitative and participatory approach to buttress its methodological focus. This participatory approach is premised on an enactive research effort that captures and describes moments in the worldview of participating youths to craft an SE approach (Cargo and Mercer, 2008). The approach is assessed for its potential to evolve the methodological application of community-university partnerships (CUPs) with resource-poor communities. Effective and impactful CUPs for community engagement must be embedded in collegial, emergent and co-creative methodological applications supporting innovation and positive change.

The study is rooted in the work of Steyaert and Bachmann (2012), who note that SE research must be conducted with inclusive, fluid, and innovative methods to capture moments that enable transformative possibilities and strengthen stakeholder relationships. The methodological approach narrates a research process that creates opportunities for youth to identify transformative strategies rooted in SE and critically discusses the social ecology of youth in South Africa to position SE as a potential youth development approach. The paper begins with a description of the social ecology of youth and social entrepreneurship followed by the methodological context of youth engagement incorporating participatory research as a strategy. Details of the study and research process is presented next, followed by a discussion on the methodological implications for CUPS and finally the conclusion.

The social ecology of youth and social entrepreneurship

An understanding of the social ecology of youth and SE as an intervention strategy enables CUPs to collaborate on local agenda setting and problem solving effectively. This study critically engaged with the social ecology of youth within rural Thibella in Qwa Qwa, Eastern Free State Province, to address the youth situation in an economically marginalised area and suggest pragmatic solutions to young people's lived realities. Official documentation defines youth as individuals between the ages of 14 and 35, as officially enunciated in the youth policy documentation (Republic of South Africa, 2015). Despite a sound policy architecture in South Africa, the sad reality is that there seems to be an inadequate provision of social services for this demographic group. Mtwesi (2014, p. 39) bemoans that "the non-delivery on the part of government departments and youth institutions on their mandate with regard to youth programmes is a lost opportunity and represents a failure to fully comprehend the role youth play in society." Despite this, South Africa is regarded as a potential entrepreneurial leader and, in some contexts, the gateway into Africa due to having a comparatively advanced economy (Mail & Guardian, 2019).

But as a middle income African country, South Africa is plagued with vast levels of inequality and poverty, characterised by a stubbornly high poverty indices of 55% (StatsSA, 2017), a Gini Index of 0.70 (Radermacher & Herlyn, 2018), low national skill and education levels, a high HIV prevalence rate estimated at 19% (Zuma et al., 2022) and high crime

rate. Unemployment was pegged at 32.5% in the last quarter of 2020, and more than half of the youthful population is unemployed (StatsSA, 2021). In this context, a rising youth population accounts for slightly over 35% of the total population (StatsSA, 2021). It is in this context that the youth situation in South Africa can almost be described as distressed (Graham and Mlatsheni, 2021). The inability of young people to access employment poses the most significant threat and opportunity to South Africa's social stability. Consequently, there is an urgent need to identify pathways that enhance prosocial youth behaviour to mitigate a restless youth population. Therefore, social entrepreneurship is suggested as a pathway towards positive youth development.

However, Weerawaderna and Mort (2006, p. 21) note that although "... there has been an upsurge of interest in social entrepreneurship...a substantial controversy remains in the conceptualisation of the social entrepreneurship construct". This is because the concept means different things to different people and institutions so much so that SE is regarded as a contested concept (Choi and Majumdar, 2014; Slee et al., 2021) with multiple definitions emerging from public policy (Hjorth, 2013; Morris et al., 2021), cooperative movement (Thomas, 2006; Bose et al., 2019), entrepreneurship and business management (Mair and Marti et al., 2012), among others. Short et al. (2009, p. 162) assert, "a lack of a unified definition makes establishing the legitimacy of a field or construct difficult" which "hinders empirical research seeking to examine the antecedents and consequences of social entrepreneurship."

On the one hand, authors have perceived SE as a powerful poverty reduction tool (Ghauri, Tasavori, & Zaefarian, 2014), socio-economic upliftment of women (Datta & Gailey, 2012) and an institutional transformation tool (Nicholls, 2009). Saebi et al. (2019 p. 2) assert that "because of the heterogeneity in phenomena and approaches, the SE literature is challenging to grasp." This paper is located in this space, not only to illustrate the tensions characteristic of a field framing its nascent identity but also to affirm the importance of empirical processes embedded in functional CUPs that contribute to the application of SE in resource-poor communities. In seeking a comprehensive conceptual framework, the paper is guided by the pragmatic definition of Martin and Osberg (2007, p. 35), who stress that SE has three components:

i. identifying a stable but inherently unjust equilibrium that causes the exclusion, marginalisation, or suffering of a segment of humanity that lacks the financial means or political clout to achieve any transformative benefit on its own;

ii. identifying an opportunity in this unjust equilibrium, developing a social value proposition, and bringing to bear inspiration, creativity, direct action, courage, and fortitude, thereby challenging the stable state's hegemony and;

iii. forging a new, stable equilibrium that releases trapped potential or alleviates the suffering of the targeted group, and through imitation and the creation of a stable ecosystem around the new equilibrium, ensuring a better future for the targeted group and society.

This definition conceptually breaks down the processes of transforming a social challenge using the SE approach to positively impact the evolution and collaborative intentions of CUPs and youth development. It creates methodological options, discussed below, that can be applied within CUPs to transform the youth context in resource-poor communities.

Methodological context of youth engagement

Youth poverty is a documented social problem in South Africa (Crause and Booyens, 2010), yet there is a dearth of approaches to deal with it. Youth engagement in this paper refers to the numerous methodological processes followed to collaborate with young people to support their development. These processes are embedded in young people's lived realities. Van Blerk (2023) stresses that knowledge and research are needed to accurately map how young people can play an increasingly important role in social development. In conducting this research, it became clear to prioritise moral and ethical concerns, as the livelihood outcome for research participants became intertwined with the research process. In a candid view of the horizons of qualitative research that inform this paper, Morrow (2007, p. 288) states:

> *I envision qualitative inquiry as a central tool for bridging community and academe by bringing research participants as co-researchers in matters that concern their everyday lives … Human agency and human rights would become increasingly important topics for inquiry, and research would be transformed into social action.*

To fully engage with young people, the study is situated in a participatory research approach as part of a research continuum to create opportunities that may potentially transform the lives of poor, rural and marginalised youth. This strategy is premised on three key principles, which are: firstly, an exploration of locally informed worldviews about and involving young people, secondly, co-constructing knowledge with them, and thirdly, using that knowledge to identify opportunities to transform their local contexts.

Participatory Research (PR) Strategy

PR may be described as an umbrella term for an overlapping range of research designs that facilitate direct collaboration with the groups affected by an issue (Vaughn and Jacquez, 2020). It is therefore a systematic inquiry designed to influence action and change with those directly affected by the situation. In this study, youth interested in the social upliftment of their community were identified to bridge the gap between research and practice while addressing social justice and change (Cargo and Mercer, 2008; Denvall et al., 2021). Scholars argue for a research paradigm that magnifies situated knowledge by considering local priorities and creating capacity-building pathways at the research site (Trickett et al., 2011; Ramanadhan et al., 2020). The PR perspective in this study relates to the empowerment outcome in which research becomes a means for capacity building and

social transformation in the research site (Vernooy and McDougall, 2003; Mertens, 2021). By delving into the life-stories of the research participants, together with them, the research collaborators were able to co-identify pathways to transform their livelihood strategies and enable enlightenment to the local conditions and identification of action pathways (Islam, 2020). Furthermore, this paper is guided by the belief that the generation and consumption of knowledge should not be independent of its use in planning and implementation. The SE aspirations of the youth are viewed as opportunities for future action in a resource-poor community.

The study and research process

The study was conducted during the period 2018–2019, and faculty approval to conduct the study had been obtained in 2017. PR is illustrated by the practice of co-creating a context-specific youth development approach that outlines SE-based interventions for rural marginalised youth. As a methodological pathway, the research used multiple qualitative techniques to engage with young people to:

- Explore youth actions at the local community level
- Identify opportunities for actions based on local development agendas

The steps above reflect a need to show a structured research process embedded in local communities' voices and agendas.

Study Location

Thibella is a village in the eastern Free State, located below the beautiful Drakensberg range of mountains. This village is situated in the Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality (MAP). It is one of the rural villages occupying tribal land administered by the Department of Land Affairs (Maluti-A-Phofung, 2016). The research participants describe Thibella as poor, isolated, and underdeveloped. This has primarily been attributed to the apartheid era, when QwaQwa was designated a Basotho homeland. Ramutsindela (2001) notes that the transformation and characterisation of a space as a Bantustan had negative connotations for its future development. Thibella formed part of a constellation of spaces negatively impacted by the unequal development due to the 'homeland' identity (Ramutsindela, 2001)

Sampling Strategy and Study Sample

The process of locating research participants is complex and involves preparatory work, which includes finding informants, making initial contact and developing rapport. As a result of an agreement between the researcher's university and the Department of Social Development (DSD), the researcher (first author) requested a meeting with the DSD to negotiate access to specific areas of QwaQwa. In many ways, Thibella was conveniently

selected to suit the research needs. Rather than use a singular criterion for choosing the research site, the inquiry adopted Goetz and LeCompte's (1984, p. 77) criterion-based sampling to "establish the criteria, bases, or standards necessary for units to be included". Criterion-based sampling has similar qualities to purposive sampling, as the criteria are usually those that the researcher would have regarded as essential and critical for site selection. In this instance, the requirements for choosing Thibella is that it was part of a ward under one manager from the DSD, which was experiencing high incidences of youth poverty and was ultimately rural.

A priori criterion for the research participants in line with the national definition of youth (Policy document, 2015–2019) was chosen to enable selection based on criterion sampling. This criterion enabled a more manageable selection of participants, together with the criteria below:

- an understanding of English
- currently not participating in any government-funded initiatives
- a willingness to engage in new initiatives and projects
- be a South African citizen or permanent resident

A maximum of ten research participants were conveniently chosen from the site through snowball sampling. Patton (1990, p. 169) reaffirms this approach and rightfully notes that "qualitative enquiry typically focuses on relatively small samples, even single cases selected purposefully." Ten participants were sufficient to test the engagement methods with youth for whom "social exclusion is a daily experience" (Crause and Booyens, 2010. p. 6). Given the in-depth nature of the research, it was necessary to limit the number of participants to get a full description and analysis of the research context. An English language criterion was added to remove the need for a translator as the researcher was not conversant in the local Sesotho language.

Data Collection

This study used multi-modal data collection methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, photovoice, collage and storytelling to collect and analyse various perspectives and moments in the lives of young people in QwaQwa.

In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were used to understand the experiential and daily realities of youth poverty, marginality, and emergent challenges. This study used an open-ended interview approach modelled along Seidman's (2006) three interview process. Seidman (2006, p. 4) posits that interview:

provides access to the context of people's behaviour and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behaviour... Interviewing allows us to put behaviour in context and provides access to understanding their action.

In his presentation of the three stages, Seidman (2006) states that the first stage is where the researcher establishes the context of the participant's experience by making the participant's life history the focal point. To unlock conversations, collages (explained below) were used as a narrative enabler with the youth to get descriptions of their life histories. For this reason, the first interview gleaned much about their aspirations, current life situation, and, most importantly, where they position themselves within the interests of their communities.

The second interview focused on the aspects of the research participants' present experiences, and Seidman (2006) advocates encouraging the respondent to tell stories to elicit detailed information. Photovoice was then used as a dialogical method for engagement. The third interview, which happened towards the end of the research project, encouraged the participants to reflect on their understandings of their experiences. In the third interview, it was essential to understand how research participants regard possibilities before them and explore issues that arose during the research process. The three interview process forms part of a plural data collection method. It also ensures that each interview has a distinct purpose, ensuring that context, details and reflected meanings emerge during each interview (Seidman, 2006). All in-depth interviews were recorded on a digital tape recorder, transcribed, and the narrations given to the interviewees for verification and confirmation. In this study, all ten participants were engaged in three in-depth interviews following Seidman's (2006) three-stage interview process. After the first in-depth individual interviews, the urgency to create a group synergy necessitated a shift to focus group discussions, as explained below.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

This study applies the critical tenets of Touraine's (1981) focus group approach. FGDS, as discussed by Touraine, occur through three key stages: the first stage of constituting the groups, the second stage of meetings with interlocutors, and the third stage of self-analysis and interventions of the researchers. Hamel (2001, p. 343) defines FGDS as discussions that "aim at a collective definition of problems and at remedying them through concrete action formulated as the analysis unfolds." This study organised 12 FGDs with the cohort of research participants. Each FGD was about 45–60 minutes long, and all the FGDS were recorded and transcribed. The sections below explain how the FGDs were applied in this study.

Stage 1: Constituting groups

Touraine (1981) states that the FGD strategy entails forming groups that meet continuously to reflect on their experiences. In this study, participating youths formed a single group of ten individuals from QwaQwa, where youth poverty and the pathways SE may offer them were extensively discussed. In this space, young people could discursively engage with each other about possibilities within their community context to better their material positions and reduce their marginality. The first FGD was deliberately arranged immediately after the first in-depth interviews, as this interview enabled the researcher to generate common themes as a launchpad for further discussions. During the first FGD, confirming the commonalities emerging from the first in-depth interviews was essential. This study collaborated with youth whose experience of poverty enabled them to form a 'witness group' (Touraine, 1981) which can be a critical support base for each other as they manoeuvre their life situation.

Stage 2: Meeting with interlocutors

Touraine (1981) notes that during the second stage, the focus is on the recreation of a social situation. He goes on to state that, "rather than simply being confronted with questions, the group is forced to interact with actual partners who hold positive or negative positions to itself" (Touraine, 1981, p. 906). Based on the issues identified in stage one, two individuals with different ideas of community development and SE were invited to address the participants. The first was an established and wealthy businessman (Mr T), and the other (Ms P) was managing a non-governmental organisation in another part of Qwaqwa. These critical meetings with interlocutors were necessary as they highlighted different and contrasting views of development: How can poverty reduction be pursued in a resource-poor community like QwaQwa?

The contestations enabled critical reflections as the two interlocutors engaged thoroughly with the youth on the nature and form of intervention applicable in their community. Mr T did not see value in a venture that did not make a profit, as it did not make business sense. On the other hand, Ms P saw sense in a limited profit and appealed to the youth to focus on the common good of their communities. At this stage of the FGDS, it was essential to ensure that the group engaged with real issues about what sort of social innovations they could be engaged in.

Photovoice Approach

This approach was spurred more by a need to identify needs in a participatory manner by collaborating with individuals who have expertise and insights into their communities (Wang and Burris, 1997). Wang, Cash and Powers (2000, p. 82) define photovoice as a "process by which people can identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique". Rooted in both feminist and Freirean epistemologies,

photovoice is "a participatory research approach that creates spaces and opportunities for marginalised voices to be heard" (Plunkett, Leipert and Smith, 2013, p. 2). Photovoice in this study was used to reduce the epistemological silence of young people and to enhance engagement possibilities. The study used the SHOWed method (Wang and Burris,1997), which is a questioning technique used during the FGD to enable the participants to describe their pictures. SHOWed is guided by the following questions to facilitate the discussion, and these are:

i. What do you **s**ee happening here?

ii. What is really **h**appening here?

iii. How does this relate to **o**ur lives as young people?

iv. **W**hy does this situation exist?

v. How could this image **e**ducate the community?

vi. What can we **d**o about it?

While this process was overly discursive and descriptive, the six simple questions above allowed the research participants to offer critical and embedded narratives of their situation. Like Wang and Burris (1997), this study also had three goals when the photovoice approach was used:

- To enable research participants to record and reflect on their community's strengths and concerns.
- To promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues.
- To catalyse hope in a resource-poor community to illustrate possibilities before them.

The rest of this section will discuss how these goals were used to engage participants through the photovoice approach.

Goal 1: Research participants record and reflect on the community's strengths and concerns

While the collages were about the research participants, their life experiences, and their narratives, the photovoice was about how they viewed their community. Disposable cameras were introduced during a group session. The researcher explained how they are used and their importance as a tool to achieve Goal 1. During the camera orientation workshop, the research participants also received training on using and handling the cameras. One of the noticeable hallmarks of the photovoice approach is to "entrust cameras to the hands of people to enable them to act as recorders and potential catalysts for change in their communities" (Wang and Burris, 1997, p. 369). It was agreed with the participants that

after 21 days the cameras would be returned for developing the photographs. The decisions to take or not to take a picture mirror the rhythmic patterns of a community's way of life. Getting an insider view was critical to appreciate the realities of research participants. The activity below determined the photographs:

Take pictures that show your community's challenges, assets (both tangible and intangible) and opportunities.

This research stage was critical as it gave the youth a space and an opportunity to break from the monotony of interviews and confirm their developed social moralities. The following section outlines how the study sought to achieve goal 2 of the photovoice approach.

Goal 2: *To promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues*

Goal 2 created critical dialogues to enable youth participants to analyse their social context (Warne, Snyder and Gadin, 2012). Informed by Wang and Burris (1997), FGD nine and ten were done to enable the research participants to engage in conversations about the images they had taken. This was very important as it ensured the research participants could situate truth claims from their experiential standpoints (Stoezler and Yuval-Davis, 2002). Informed by the SHOWed method, participants actively discussed their photographs.

This study adopted a three-stage process of analysis as suggested by Wang and Burris (1997) and forms an essential framework of selection, contextualising or storytelling, and codifying. The first stage, selecting, was characterised by the participants picking out pictures to be discussed using the SHOWed method above. This exercise pre-empted the framework's second stage, contextualising or storytelling. It was important for the participants to narrate the meanings of their pictures in the group, write captions for them, and allow robust discussions to occur regarding the prioritised selected pictures whose stories were being told. Wang and Burris (1997) argue that photographs alone outside the context and voices of the takers contradict the essence of photovoice. To generate the rich contextual and narrative data, it was necessary to allow discourse around the multiple meanings of some photographs, coupled with the challenges of writing inscriptions on them. The third and final stage was dependent on and directly resulted from the second phase, codifying. Codifying laid the groundwork for the preliminary analysis of the participants' needs for their community. A pairwise ranking was also accompanied by codifying, and the participants could select the most critical photographs by merely putting a number from 1 to 5 on each picture. The cumulative total from all ten research participants was then used to rank the importance of the photograph.

Life-History Collage

The researcher used the life history collage to critically explore how the research participants position themselves in their social spheres, their inherent aspirations and strategies to highlight their survival competencies. Van Schalkwyk (2010, p. 678) defines a collage as a:

> *poster or visual representation in which the participant makes use of photos, pictures and cuttings (also text) from magazines and other media, and any other print material that says something about her or him as a person.*

To utilise discursive triggers, the life-history collage was used as a dialogical stimulus into how they make sense of "past selves, past events and past circumstances … " (Van Schalkwyk, 2010: 277). This would enable the researcher to narrate their life stories within a discourse highlighting how structure-agency dynamics interact in their social world. A life-history collage, therefore, became a purposive tool to unravel the fluid, local social grammar and temporal contexts (Goodbody and Burns, 2011) which constitute the social environment of the research participants. It values non-dominant ways of generating knowledge and espouses multiple understandings of reality. In addition, there was an urgent need to build rapport and provoke thought in the research participants' activities to ensure an active, communal and participative approach to data generation. A collage research approach, therefore, creates possibilities for exploration, inclusivity and participation in terms of the discursive and analytical pathways that the research could pursue. Inspired by an inherent need for an open-ended research approach that would allow the study to create spaces for participation and conversation, a life-history collage became a tool through which the study could transcend spaces and scripts to produce embedded lived narratives.

Informed by the definition and justifications above, the participants were requested to do a collage describing their aspirations, identity, hopes, failures, and joys, among other self-descriptions. The collage method was based on adapting the Collage Life Elicitation Technique (CLET). CLET is a hybrid qualitative method that facilitates the narrativisation of deep cognitive constructs. It uses in-depth personal interviews to extensively probe a person's subjectivities on specific issues. Van Schalkwyk (2010, p. 676) posits that CLET "scaffolds the process of narrating life experiences…" therefore making it a "valid social action…involving what we think and say (dialogue)…". CLET is a research technique geared towards a deeper comprehension of the symbolism informing meaning-making in narratives. This study did not use all the steps suggested by CLET, but it adapted two phases, specifically collage making and storytelling, which are described below.

Step 1: Collage making

Informed by the CLET method, all ten research participants were given new and old newspapers and magazines together with scissors, some glue for sticking, and two A3 blank sheets of paper. Each participant was requested to return the collages after 10 days.

Zaltman and Coulter (1995) stress that it is necessary to allow participants time to mull over the stimuli they want to produce for the interviews, as this enables the researcher to engage with participants with a heightened cognitive experience. The primary collage task was for the participants to:

> Create a collage defining yourself, your motivations, aspirations, and future goals. Explain the collage in the context of your individuality and how that connects with your hopes for your community.

It was important for the participating youth to actively develop self-authoring skills informed by an authentic reflection of their lives and life situations. The narrative basis of this strategy can serve an auto-epistemological function whereby the sense of self is developed, and connections with others are also known. This research form evokes emotional responses and enables a deep engagement below the level of self-awareness in a participatory manner through the collage-making process.

Step 2: Storytelling

In the storytelling step, it was essential to discover the underlying narratives that describe the research participants. The study engaged in open-ended descriptive dialogues that enabled the research participants to offer in-depth explanations about their collages. Following Seidman (2006), the collages were used during the first in-depth interview in the three series of interviews as described. The first in-depth interview formed the basis for a focused life-history underpinned by the collage as a reference. The researcher gleaned their daily struggles, hopes, aspirations and frustrations using the collage. Initially beginning with a question like 'describe to me what I am seeing here', the participants beamed at the prospect of showing off their handiwork. It was also an opportunity to get an intimate insight into how they position themselves in their self-generated autobiographical artefacts. This life story narrativisation was very important in this study as it enabled the researcher to 'get into' the lifeworld that the participants saw fit for the researcher to see.

Data Analysis

To make sense of the corpus of data that had been collected, the study engaged in a theoretical coding process to generate labels that were conceptually congruent with the theoretical context informing the research. This is adapted from Strauss and Corbin's (1990) open, axial and selective coding approaches and includes other coding approaches to supplement the above to enrich the data analysis and interpretation. Open coding was the most time-consuming and iterative process as it involved searching for similarities and differences in the transcripts to develop conceptual categories. As the codes were created, this process was supplemented with memo-writing, particularly theoretical memo-writing, to enhance the researcher's discussion with self and data. In effect, memo-writing created a dialogical space to question data by posing problems and asking theoretical questions

for concept indicator linkages that allow for theory proposition generation from the data. Memos offered the researcher a reasoned pathway towards theoretical writing and justification, although the inner logic of theoretical writing lay in creating typologies. The study developed numerous typologies to justify the conglomeration of multiple themes and patterns and the connections and disconnections between different stages of the data transcripts. Examples of typologies include youth life worlds, local theories of social transformation, perceptions of place, perceptions of community and a typology of youth agency, among others.

Results of multi-modal participatory processes

Given the messiness of qualitative research and the large corpus of data collected, it was necessary to organise the results chronologically to support analysis. It's important to note that engagement approaches in this study sought to emphasise local theories of social change by initiating local agendas and descriptions of social entrepreneurship to enhance community well-being. While social entrepreneurship intentions were the endgame, the description of the process is important.

Step 1: Conceptualisation of SE in Thibella

The notion of SE was new to the research participants in Thibella, and there was a need to have a local definition and understanding of the concept. The contested meanings of SE were also reflected among the participants, for example Lebo regarded SE as "projects that help the community with social issues that cannot be solved by anyone else." At the same time, Tumelo described it as "activities that uplift the community by assisting people that can't help themselves." Mosia, on the other hand, felt that SE refers to "projects that we can do to create jobs for ourselves and for others." The lack of conceptual clarity at the community level necessitated a need to establish a local conceptualisation of SE and it was agreed that a local context-specific definition of SE must be framed. The youth participants agreed that SE is "activities that serve the needs of poor people that are currently not being provided by any other organisations. This service should be provided at a very low cost to enable as many people as possible to benefit from it."

The definition that emerged from the FGDs with the youth also mirrors the definition of Martin and Osberg (2007). Firstly, the youth sought to identify a social disequilibrium that affects the lives and livelihoods of poor people; secondly, the social disequilibrium is currently not being satisfied by anyone; thirdly, they seek to put a cost to the service they will provide and lastly, it must benefit as many people as possible. This was mentioned by Matshidiso when she mentioned how ".. there are so many people that is poor (sic) in Thibella, our project must help them so that they are not worse." This extends the focus of SE in mainstream literature by introducing a component of compassion. In poor communities like Thibella, compassion seems to be a driving force amongst the youth and

their SE aspirations. The next step discusses the processes of acceptance by the research stakeholders as a critical indicator of legitimacy.

Step 2: Local legitimation

Legitimation occurs at various levels and phases as dictated by the research. In a study that prioritises SE opportunity identification, there was a need for the youth to accept the research processes, tools, outcomes and activities. Prior workshopping of the research tools ensured their acceptance. Local legitimation entails the acceptance of an SE project not only by the research participants but also by the local community, given the social disequilibrium that the project is analysing. During the photovoice sessions, the study catalysed conversations in the community, as numerous community members began to show the research participants where to take pictures as possible opportunities for intervention. Tumelo noted this in the FGD and asked the group if "they had been approached by people so that they come take pictures of social challenges?" Ntsoaki stated that "her camera would have gotten full if she had taken every picture requested." This highlights that there were many possible opportunities in the community, but through a reflective emphasis, the youth had decided to take what would ultimately have a positive community outcome. This legitimation was critical for the further steps to be followed as it highlighted local community acceptance. Getting critical stakeholders on board is vital for coalition building, which is important for SE creation.

Step 3: Recognition of opportunities

The process of opportunity recognition is closely tied to methodological techniques in this study. The research participants had to identify opportunities in their communities using cameras. Lebo wished "the cameras could take more pictures because I had to constantly think before deciding to shoot" and Seipati confirmed this when she stated that "I did not want to take any picture in case something better comes up." Opportunity recognition was done through the photovoice approach when the youth took photographs of social challenges that they regarded as possible opportunities.

Table 1 shows the opportunities for SE intervention identified by the youth. A dialogical exercise was done, in which the SHOWed method was used to initiate conversations on the photographs.

Table 1: Top ten opportunities identified

Photograph no.	Brief description	Issue depicted by picture
14	Children in school uniform drinking alcohol and gambling outside a bottle store	Underage drinking and substance abuse
29	Raw sewage flowing from a burst pipe that is seen as a health hazard	Health hazard
66	A grandmother waiting at a queue at the clinic and looking very tired as the queue is very long	Poor health service delivery
105	A run-down community building that is not being used but has many possibilities if it is refurbished	Site for possible social business
119	A picture of a house where there are four bedridden family members.	Impact of disease on family
133	An open sewage that is a risk to children and animals	Health and safety hazard
188	An unsecured dumpsite that has rubbish strewn all over	Health hazard
201	An artificial waterfall flowing into a dam	Tourism attraction
207	An open green area that can be converted into a park	Communal spaces for interaction and relaxation
226	A closed police post that looks run down	Crime and safety

The next section shows how the top 10 opportunities were further screened using a participatory ranking exercise to have the top two ideas for an SE in Thibella.

Step 4: Evaluation of selected opportunities

Evaluating selected opportunities to a manageable number is a process of engageent informed by the abovementioned participatory logics. A participatory ranking exercise was a valuable conduit to ascertain the preferences of the youth as informed by their context. Informed by the classic participatory work of Rietbergen-McCracken and Narayan-Parker (1998), a pairwise ranking exercise was used to recommend the most accessible opportunity the youth could undertake. The pairwise ranking exercise prioritised the preferences of research participants and assisted them in deciding on the most critical options from among their options. The process entailed the creation of a ranking summary grid that was co-constructed with the youths, showing on the left a descending list of all the opportunities they had identified, and repeated across the top as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Pairwise Ranking

Opportunity Identified	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Score	Rank
Underage drinking		1	3	4	5	1	1	1	1	1	6	4
Raw sewage flowing from a burst pipe	1		3	4	5	2	1	2	2	2	4	5
Long queues at local clinic	3	3		3	5	3	3	3	3	3	7	3
Run-down community building	4	4	4		5	4	4	4	4	4	8	2
House with terminally ill community members	5	5	5	5		5	5	5	5	5	9	1
An open sewage that is a risk to children and animals	1	6	3	4	5		7	6	9	10	2	7
An unsecured dumpsite	1	2	3	4	5	6		7	7	10	2	7
An artificial waterfall flowing into a dam	1	2	3	4	5	6	6		9	10	0	9
An open green area that can be converted into a park	9	2	3	4	5	9	9	9		10	4	5
A closed police post that looks run down	1	2	3	4	5	10	7	8	10		1	8

The grid was completed using a simple step-by-step process that resonated well with research participants. Participants were asked to compare two preferences and justify their choice to convince the group. In each cell where the issues intersected, the preferred option was identified. After the process, a score was determined by counting the times an issue was deemed more valuable. The eighth FGD was held to discuss the outcome of the ranking and whether they felt that it truly reflected their expectations and those of their community. The issue of bedridden terminally ill community members and the run-down community building became the two top priorities. The most illuminating outcome from this process was that the participatory ranking enabled capacity building and identification of local opportunities in a manner that accounts for local development priorities and enables insight into the contextual structuredness of meaning.

Step 5: SE ideation in Thibella

Identifying two potential SE opportunities was a moment of celebration for the research participants. It also provided opportunities to further ideate on the two opportunities to

consolidate the social value and ascertain the social mission outlined in their SE definition. During FGD 7, Thembi revealed how "these two top opportunities need us to think how we can properly plan for them", and this was also affirmed by Baholo when she showed a personal circumstance how she has "… a sick auntie at home and I have to go get her medication from the clinic there is no service for her." There was, therefore, a need to separate issues and ensure that the conceptualisation of each opportunity was informed not only by need but also by sustainability. The university's role was to enable and facilitate the ability of young people to capture, describe and ultimately offer solutions to their own challenges. Although this was a doctoral study, the process followed has implications for establishing methodological innovations in CUPs for community engagement and development. The next section outlines implications for CUPs.

Methodological implications for CUPs

The above results and methodological processes have some implications for CUPs. Community-university partnerships (CUPS) are integral for realising transformative aspirations in university-community relationships. They are "the coming together of diverse interests and people to achieve a common purpose via interactions, information sharing, and coordinated activities" (Jassawalla and Sashittal, 1998, p. 239). Curwood et al. (2011, p. 16) offer a more succinct definition, regarding CUPS "… as collaborations between community organisations and institutions of higher learning to achieve an identified social change goal through community-engaged scholarship…". The notion of collaboration is embedded in the broader logic of engagement, which is a critical enabler of mutual liaisons with the larger public or communities outside the university system. These liaisons are crucial for collaborative partnerships that enhance the connections, common agenda settings and transformation pathways with communities. Based on this engagement ideal, CUPs can be hubs for methodological experimentation that acknowledges and respects local knowledge to create an inclusive knowledge praxis to solve local and global challenges.

Social entrepreneurship thinking and the method suggested in this paper, rooted in participatory processes that prioritise local voices, is a way to strengthen and amplify solutions-seeking methodological processes supported by CUPs. The study affirms that SE with youth can provide accessible and viable employment opportunities. Urban (2008) identified that, "given the sustainable development challenges the country faces, SE can be a critical facet of social life" (Urban, 2008, p. 347). This paper recommends CUPs be embedded in community-informed knowledge generation processes that ultimately solve local challenges or facilitate the community to identify, describe, or potentially solve its challenges and enhance sustainability using local theories of social change.

Despite the messiness of qualitative research, CUPS must facilitate order underpinned by a collaborative emphasis. For this reason, Eisner (2008) stresses that the multiplicity of ways to make and discover knowledge requires researchers to increase the range of ways in which knowledge with youth can be discovered, described and interpreted. This study

uses narratives, photographs and collages to understand the social dynamics of youthhood. The researcher noticed that data collection methods affect the nature, form and quality of the research engagement with young people. Therefore, it was necessary to utilise multiple data collection methods, as it was becoming ".. increasingly clear....that knowledge or understanding is not always reducible to language...". (Eisner, 2008, p. 5). Not only was this multimodal data collection approach beneficial for the variety of data it produced, but, like Pink (2007) notes, it inculcates agency as it develops new ways of understanding people and social science knowledge.

Likewise, this study used multimodal data gathering techniques to complement the narrative basis of this inquiry, go beyond language, and use art-based approaches to help youth elucidate their social realities. Although dialogue and conversation are fundamental to this study, it was necessary to use conversation triggers that enabled the research to explore and inquire about pertinent issues within the youthscape. Weber (2008, p. 45) argues for using image-based data forms because of the "...ability of the image to convey multiple messages, to pose questions, and to point to both abstract and concrete thoughts in so economical a fashion that makes image-based media highly appropriate for communication...". This study used life history collages and photographs to enable young people to define what they deem valuable and expand dialogical possibilities selectively.

This study stresses that young people are competent and responsible beings in their own right, capable of making decisions in the research that would impact their lives. Life history narratives, collages and photovoice approaches used in this study enhanced self-empowerment and conscientised youth about their situation. The use of life histories collages and photovoice techniques created a space for young people to not only bring these nuances to the fore but also craft an alternative youthhood filled with hope and optimism for the future. Art-based data sources are sociologically significant as they carefully negotiate youthhood by "....revealing what is universal by examining in detail what is particular" (Eisner, 2008).

Conclusion

This paper presents a methodological primer for youth engagement on a project on social entrepreneurship. The paper shows how locally contextual research approaches enhance youth engagement by showing the methodological details. It has attempted to expansively explain the methodological process for engaging young people in resource-poor communities like QwaQwa. The paper has embedded this methodological paper in the context of CUPS as critical sites for operationalising engagement between universities and communities on community-led and determined issues. CUPs can be framed to engage with youth on principles of praxis underpinned by respect for local knowledge, collaboration, dialogical engagement and ultimately a shared aspiration for positive and impactful transformation informed by local needs and solutions.

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