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ACTION-RESEARCH USING PARTICIPATORY VIDEO. A LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN SAN LORENZO, CASTELLÓN, SPAIN

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INVESTIGACIÓN-ACCIÓN A TRAVÉS DEL VIDEO PARTICIPATIVO. UNA EXPERIENCIA DE APRENDIZAJE EN SAN LORENZO, CASTELLÓN, ESPAÑA.

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse a Participatory Action Research (PAR) process undertook as part of a summer school in 2014, in the neighbourhood of San Lorenzo, Castellón–Spain. The methodology of Participatory Video (PV) was used to introduce action learning amongst attending international students; to visualize the work of local practitioners and to enhance the voice of the local community. To carry out the analysis of this experience, an original framework is developed (the ePARC cube). The cube features three axes that represent the dimensions the PV process touches upon: 1. participation, 2. knowledge, and 3. public deliberation. From this three dimensional perspective, we argue that a genuine participatory process raises issues that often cross-cut. We conclude that to take full advantage of the momentum a PV process could reach in a community to affect social change; more engagement from policy makers should be sought.

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es analizar una experiencia de investigación-acción participativa (IAP) desarrollada en el año 2014, en el barrio San Lorenzo de Castellón, España dentro del marco de una escuela de verano. El Video Participativo (VP) fue usado para generar aprendizajes entre los y las estudiantes internacionales participantes, así como para visualizar el trabajo social de profesionales locales y amplificar la voz de la comunidad. El artículo presenta un nuevo marco de análisis, el "Cubo ePARC", para identificar los aprendizajes más relevantes. Los tres ejes del cubo representan las dimensiones en las que consiste el proceso de VP: 1. participación 2. Conocimiento y 3. Deliberación pública. Desde esta perspectiva tridimensional, el artículo sugiere que en un proceso participativo genuino muy frecuentemente estas dimensiones se superponen. El texto concluye que para sacar el máximo provecho del proceso de VP en una comunidad es necesaria la implicación activa de los responsables de políticas públicas en el proceso.

Keywords

Participatory Video, Action Learning, Higher Education, Practitioners.

Palabras clave

Video Participativo, Aprendizaje en la Acción, Educación Superior, Profesionales.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to analyse a Participatory Action Research (PAR) process that took place in 2014 in the neighbourhood of San Lorenzo in Castellon - Spain. Developed as a fourteen-day summer school, 30 students from seven different European Masters programmes focused on the development field, were brought together to listen to the stories from the residents of San Lorenzo, and to identify powerful narratives. The students were tasked with producing a series of short videos illustrating the narratives. The final videos would then be shown back to the general community in a public screening at the end of the process.

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This experience is considered a Participatory Video (PV) activity. A method and a process that has largely been used with the objective of empowering individuals and communities through sharing stories and making videos depicting people's own realities, challenges and aspirations for the future (White, 2003). PV can be considered as one of the many manifestations of the relationship between media and development (Scott, 2014) and also as a tool under the umbrella of participatory action methodologies.

PV is a wide field, which allows a wide range of approaches and perspectives (High *et al*, 2012): some use it as a method for research (Oliver *et al*, 2012), others regard it as a tool and a process to foster awareness for local communities (White, 2003; Plush, 2012) but some others have initiated it with the aim to influence policy making (Wheeler, 2012). Within the same experience, a PV process could aim to achieve more than one of the aforementioned goals. According to Shaw (2013) there is neither a single nor correct method to approach a PV process and what happens in each experience is very contextual and could lead to very different outcomes.

PV in the Spanish context has not been widely explored if compared with countries such as India or Bangladesh, where experiences date back to the 80s. However, the theoretical analysis of Montero and Moreno (2015) provides an interesting perspective to analyze the PV process considering the tensions that arise in the intersection between the participatory process, outputs and communication aims. Also, using a more practical approach, two different organizations: La Cosecha (http://www.lacosechaweb.com/) and Toma Social (https://tomasocialupv.wordpress.com) are developing PV projects with the objective of expanding, in the case of La Cosecha, their artistic and cultural commitment and in the case of Toma Social, their political and social perspective.

What all these experiences string together is the importance of communication for social change. Thus, opposite to a vertical communication, where people are mere recipients of information, communication for social change opens up horizontal communication processes, engendered from individuals and organizations and having as main components local contents. Furthermore, communication for social change boosts participatory methodologies, which are based on processes that foster dialogue, debate and negotiation, and promote communitarian identity (Gumucio-Dagron, 2002).

Following the principles of horizontal and participative communication, we used the PV as an action-learning experience that aimed at equipping participants to the summer school with the necessary skills to use participatory tools and put them in practice in a real social context. Also, for the local practitioners, who were involved along the process and acted as a bridge between participants and San Lorenzo's community, the summer school provided a space for discussion and self-reflection of their own work within the neighbourhood. For the authors of this paper, who acted as facilitators, this project was an opportunity to expand their understanding of the role that participatory tools can play in a real, multicultural and multidisciplinary context. San Lorenzo's community did not participate in a direct way in the different stages of the PV (see section three), however, as stated above, the local practitioners were key to the interaction between the community and the participants and facilitators in several moments along the video. In that way, the narratives captured by the participants reflect honest accounts of visions and aspirations of San Lorenzo's dwellers.

Similar experiences of action-learning have been developed in other university contexts. Especially inspirational to the summer school has been the approach used in the Master Programme Social Development in Practice taught at the University College of London. Through a field trip experience, students get to work with urban communities in contexts of cities in the Global South leveraging innovative participatory tools (Frediani *et al*, 2015). The main difference between their approach and the summer schools is the use of audio-visualsas central thread to the process.

Another innovative contribution of this paper is the analytical framework developed: the Digital Participatory Research Cube (ePARC), which takes inspiration from Participatory Action Research Scholars such as Gaventa (2006a and PV researchers such as Wheeler (2009), Plush (2012; 2015a) and Shaw (2013). The ePARC tries to capture the different dimensions of a PV experience; the extent to which the process is meaningful and empowering for the participants; the transformative character of the knowledge produced and the public deliberation spaces opened by the process that could be influential in policy making.

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The structure of this paper is as follows: in section two we present the context and the participants of the summer school. In section three we detail the PV approach followed throughout the summer school. In section four, we develop the original framework used to analyze the experience, the ePARC, and the methodology used to collect the evidence, which will be discussed then in section five. Finally, in section six, we present our reflections and suggest some conclusive ideas that could be useful for scholars and practitioners using (or considering using) participatory methodologies. The authors are aware of the limitations of this analysis: it is a single case study and the core of the Action Learning lasted twelve days. However, the experience was unique and has some ingredients that render it interesting for analysis. For instance, the interaction between a multicultural and international group; the use of an action-learning methodology such as PV and the use of the ePARC framework for analysis with the intent of building a more comprehensive understanding of a process of this kind.

2. Context and participants of the summer school

The summer school was conducted in San Lorenzo, a neighbourhood located to the west side of the city of Castellon in Spain. It is one of the neighbourhoods with the highest indicators of unemployment and marginalisation in the city. Historically, within its boundaries, spatial conflict issues have existed, which have helped to reinforce social divisions in the area. The first wave of residents of San Lorenzo arrived during the 1960s as migrant workers from different parts of Spain, they built their own houses, planned basic sanitation and mobility infrastructure, and built social spaces such as the church and the school. In the mid-1980s, six blocks of social housing flats were built under a new programme implemented by the Valencia Housing Institute. They were aimed at housing very low or non-income gypsy families being relocated from slums elsewhere in the city. This process generated a sharp divide in the area. The lack of consultation on behalf of the housing institute in San Lorenzo, left residents with no other option than to accept the newcomers who, as gypsies, were seen by the existing community as difficult to integrate, 'dangerous' and 'uneducated'. In general, gypsies were regarded in the area as people who did not have the same ideals and status of the first wave of residents.

In San Lorenzo, gypsies and 'payos' – a word used by the gypsy community to describe anyone who does not belong to their culture – live in constant disagreement. Social spaces are divided and appropriated by specific groups. Due to this situation, over recent years, the local government of Castellon and local NGOs have channelled resources to fund programmes that help in

promoting dialogue and improving the communication between the divided communities. The initiatives have been implemented by social workers who, as a result of the longevity of the programmes, have themselves became almost like residents of the neighbourhood. The programmes developed in San Lorenzo range from teaching new skills to marginalised women and engaging with the elderly, to teaching alternative skills for youth empowerment. This on-going engagement led to the creation of 'La Taula', a representative structure that aims at nurturing the dialogue between local residents and government actors while facilitating the coordination among the initiatives being implemented. However, the context became particularly complex within the framework of a Spanish economic crisis combined with a social housing crisis. This has meant for local residents to feel like living in a constant economic uncertainty stressed by the local government's attempt to reduce costs, which has led to massive funding cuts for social projects.

The participants of the summer school, also considered co-researchers throughout were thirty students representing seven master programmes related to the fields of development and international cooperation from universities in Italy, United Kingdom, Romania and Spain. Three academics from participating universities served as facilitators of participatory methodologies and who, along with other lecturers, offered up support by bringing together theoretical insights on development as well as on the community's specific issues that would then form the basis for the video narratives. Local lecturers facilitated the contact with local associations and were in charge of the practicalities of the summer school, although none of them played a role as facilitator of the process. Other participants involved were the local practitioners working in San Lorenzo. Two of them played a crucial role all throughout the fieldwork for their substantial knowledge about the social complexities in San Lorenzo: one was the head of the Municipal Social Services in San Lorenzo and the other was the teacher of a gardening course that has been central to youth development in the area. The latter encouraged her group of current gardening students (mostly gypsies) to take part in the process as community guides to the international participants as they would have great knowledge on the area. Their participation contributed remarkably to the immersion international students had in the multi-layered dynamics of San Lorenzo. Although the authors do not consider this group of young people as co-researchers, the interaction they had with the international students was valued as really positive during the PV activity (INCYDE, 2014).

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3. The PV process

For the summer school, a research-led approach to PV was used. Meaning that while providing training to international participants to become facilitators of PV and participatory methodologies, they were seen as main co-researchers working on a real case scenario.

In preparation for the summer school, facilitators, local practitioners in San Lorenzo and partners from the local university (Jaume I) got together to identify key themes or 'entry points' that would guide the participants in navigating stories that could turn out into powerful narratives for the videos. However, once the school started, the formed groups were invited to be open and flexible with their entry points in case themselves identified more relevant issues during the diagnosis stage of the workshop. The issues prioritised during the engagement were five: 1) challenges associated with housing 2) potential of local public spaces to bring about social inclusion and the improvement of quality of life 3) livelihood opportunities for local residents, paying particular attention to gender relations 4) education aspirations of the youth and the challenges they face in pursuing these and 5) the needs and aspirations of the elderly. All these 'entry points' were related to the programmes and social activities being undertaken by local organizations and members of La Taula. Figure 1 below illustrates the different stages in which the PV process developed.

The first phase was diagnosis in which different techniques were put in practice (mapping, transect walks, collective interviews with local practitioners and members of the community, etc.) to develop an in-depth idea of the neighbourhood and the issues that could be explored through the videos.

Figure 1: Stages of Participatory Video Development
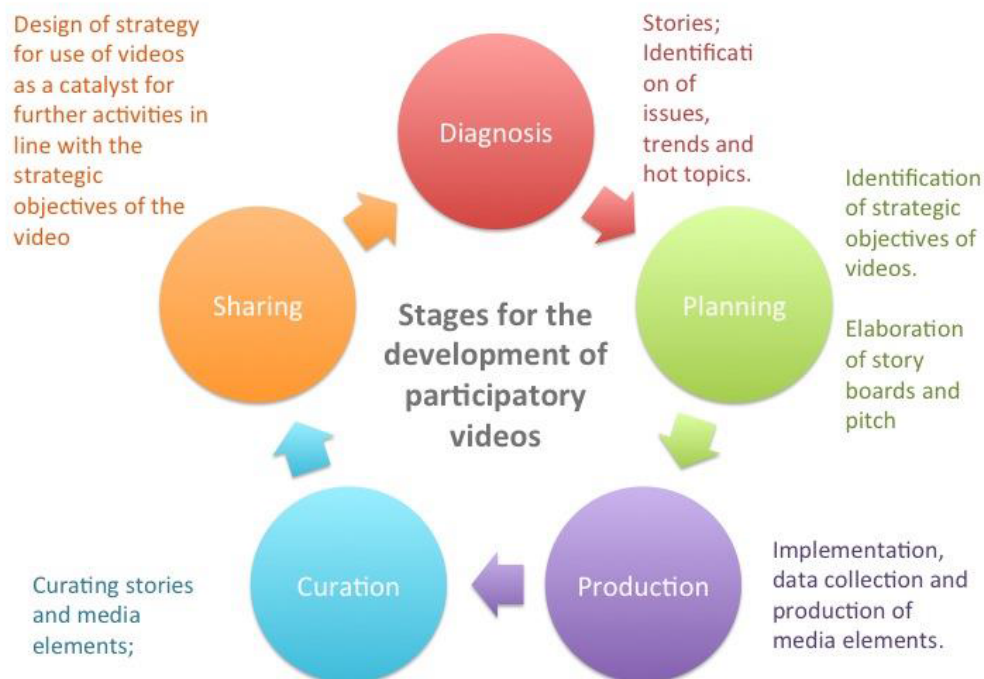
Source: Millan and Frediani, 2014

The second phase was *planning*; in this stage participants elaborated storyboards and using 'the pitch' technique, they presented their ideas for the video narratives to the whole group including the local practitioners. By bringing together the different voices for comment and feedback we opened an unique space for discussion where particular sensitive issues, that we may have not understood properly and that could have created tensions if shown back to the whole community, could be addressed.

The third phase was *video production* in which co-researchers, with the support from facilitators, recorded stories relevant to the local community. In almost a simultaneous way, the fourth phase, curation, started. While recording, downloading and playing the images back in the computers, participants

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would identify information gaps and the need for more images which would help to complement the narratives. A preliminary version of the final videos was presented internally to the local practitioners to elicit their final comments and suggestions. With a series of five videos produced and ready to be showcased, we entered the final stage of *sharing*. A public screening was hosted at the community centre of San Lorenzo where everyone was invited to watch, discuss and enjoy in an afternoon that we called "social integration". With this, the summer school came to a close after twelve days of interaction.
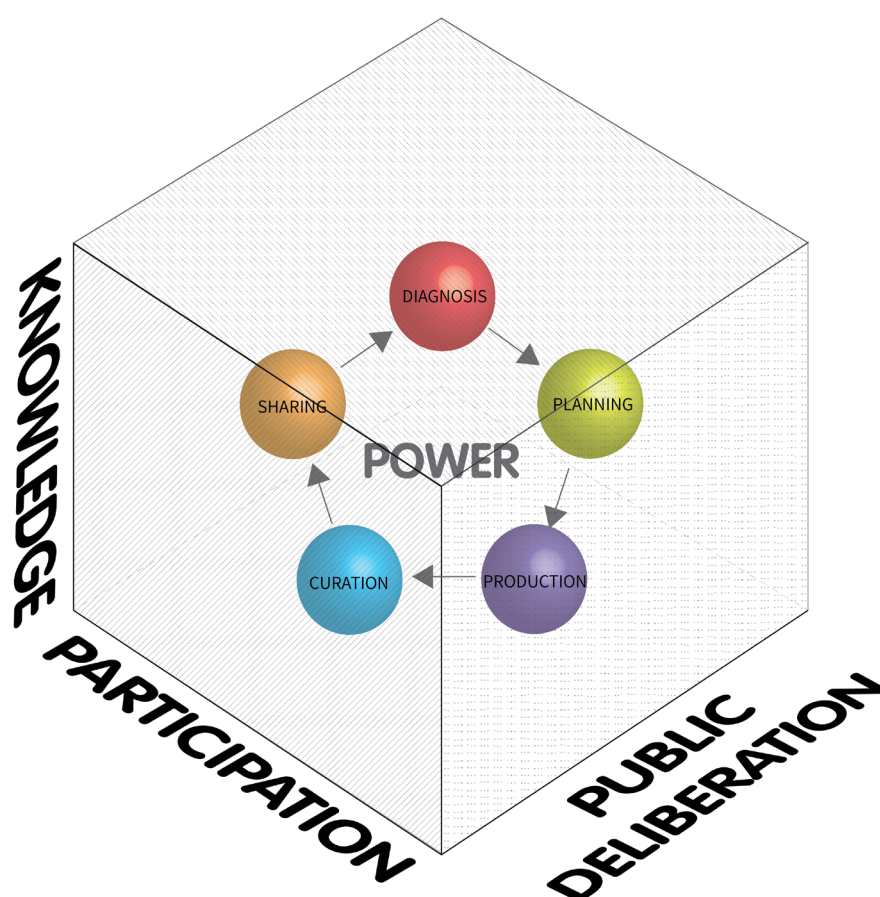
4. Framework for analysis

4.1. The ePARC cube

To conduct an analysis of this experience we will use a framework, developed in more detail in another contribution (Boni, A., & Walker, M, (2016), to capture the participatory action research process. This framework uses three main categories, frequently mentioned as significant in the participatory action research literature. The first category is participation. According to Bradbury-Huang (2010: 104), participation can be considered in a broad spectrum: from a minimum involvement of practitioners (for example, in a needed consultation) to having those practitioners as co-researchers and co-designers. As in other participatory action approaches (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006), analysis of power imbalances is paramount. The second category is knowledge that is assumed to not only be the understandings of the topics addressed, but also practical knowledge (the skills developed) and the values that underpin the knowledge produced (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). We assume that in order to be transformative this knowledge has to be aligned with some of the following characteristics: a concern with values related to social justice (participation, equity, diversity, solidarity, etc.); a multidimensional and plural vision of well-being; an understanding of the interdependences between the local and the global, between micro and macro politics; a consideration of structural conditions that hinders the possibilities and aspirations of the community, and finally; a historical analysis of those conditions. As with the participatory axis, a power analysis should be undertaken. In the knowledge production dimension, it is important that those excluded voices, or voices with fewer opportunities to be heard, are included in the knowledge base (Plush, 2015a). The third category is public deliberation. Here the main question is: what kind of public deliberation spaces is possible to open up during and after the research process? (Wheeler, 2012). The debate on 'deepening

democracy' presented by Gaventa (2006) is useful to illustrate this point. Gaventa argues that the critical challenge for democracies nowadays is how to deepen their inclusiveness and substance, especially in terms of how citizens engage within democratic spaces to create more just and equitable states and societies. In Gaventa's view, democracy may be seen as constantly contested and under construction. The issue is not replicating one version of democracy as a standard set of institutions and practices, but to construct and deepen democracies, which may work differently in different places and to find the most effective entry points for doing so, based on the local contexts. Under this perspective, a relevant contribution to a PV process can be to facilitate the deliberative entry points Gaventa refers to, both in local and in global spheres.

Figure 2: The ePARC framework

Source: prepared by the authors based on Boni and Walker, 2016

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Figure 2 illustrates the three-dimensional image that represents how knowledge, participation and deliberation can be used to analyse PV processes. We name it ePARC: digital PARticipatory Cube. The idea of depicting a cube is to stress the importance of paying attention to interactions between the three axes to try to capture communicative process that can be aligned with the idea of communication for social change mentioned in section one. A genuine participatory process creates spaces for public deliberation and makes the knowledge created more transformative. Relevant knowledge co-created through PV enhances spaces for democratic deliberation that extends beyond the timeline of a particular participatory research process. If we consider that the goal of a PV process is to boost public deliberation, this would influence how the whole process is designed to reach this goal and the way the knowledge created is disseminated. We will see how these interactions happen in practice in the analysis of the summer school.

4.2. Qualitative research methods used to collect evidences

We base this analysis on three main sources: the first one is a participative evaluation conducted by an external organisation called INCYDE, which was commissioned to observed the project from the outside perspective to then provide insights on the process. They reviewed all the preparation documents including the terms of reference, interviewed ten international participants, the three facilitators, five Spanish lectures and nine local practitioners members of 'La Taula'.

Secondly, a thorough analysis of the content of the five videos produced during the process was undertaken in order to identify recurring concerns raised by interviewees (These videos are available at http://globcons.uji.es/projects/global_id).

Thirdly, we use our insights an accounts as facilitators of the summer school. Our comments regarding the impact of the PV in ourselves are influenced by our own interpretation. Nonetheless, as authors of this paper we have tried to bring balance to this bias by discussing perceptions with the third facilitator and comparing them with the observations made in INCYDE's final report.

To adhere to ethical procedures, the evaluation followed an informed consent. Moreover, all the narratives considered in the production and curation of videos were permanently discussed with the local practitioners to be mindful to sensitive issues.

5. Evidence

Using our ePARC framework, we will now present our analysis of the process. Firstly, we discuss the results of the participatory axis considering the three main groups of co-researchers: 1) international participants, 2) three facilitators and 3) local practitioners. Secondly, we go into a more detailed analysis of the knowledge produced and see to what extent it resonates with the main elements that make knowledge transformative. Thirdly, we focus on the moments of public deliberation that were regarded by the participants as especially empowering. As we will see, the analysis of each axis interacts with the other; for instance, in participative encounters new knowledge is consolidated by the act of collective public deliberation and so on.

5.1. Participatory axis

One of the issues that strongly emerged from INCYDE's evaluation is that students felt that they have gained a new knowledge relevant to their professional practice. They explained that they have acquired a new understanding and awareness of what participation means in practice and which are the most common barriers to participatory processes. Two aspects were specially highlighted: 1) the importance of having good knowledge of the context in which the action learning is going to take place and 2) allow the time to develop confidence and stronger relations with the local community. Some of the participants noted that they experienced constrains regarding those issues because 'everything was too compressed and this put a barrier to understand the context, to develop a different relationship with local people and to identify the power dynamics at stake' (INCYDE, 2014). Some of the students even perceived themselves as 'landing' in San Lorenzo for a social experiment.

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The vision of the participants is confronted with the perceptions of some of the interviewed inhabitants of San Lorenzo. They regarded their engagement in the process in a very positive way: they enjoyed being the main characters in narratives, telling their stories, and conveying their vision of San Lorenzo in the video format. Some local women felt their work and presence in the neighbourhood more recognized and residents interviewed acknowledged the importance of spaces for public discussion created throughout the process (INCYDE, 2014). There was a general agreement to valuing the attitude of respect and responsibility of the international participants towards the community. There is not information to further explain the negative perceptions of the process among some participants, but we can relate it to possible self-criticism, frustration with the participatory process and the feeling of stress as a consequence of a very tight timeframe.

The importance of having a good command of the local language was also highlighted. The official language of the summer school was English as it was common for all international participants; this resulted in a barrier for participants from the local universities to follow the theoretical explanations. For those able to communicate in Spanish and English it was a much more satisfactory experience, as they were able to act as translators between the local community and the rest of the group. However, interesting reflections from some of the students pointed out that the language barrier is a common issue in the international development field and being aware of that was already considered a significant learning for them (INCYDE, 2014).

Other reflections are linked to teaching and learning. Most of the participants appreciated the coherent way of teaching by the facilitators (who managed to create a horizontal relationship with them; encouraged teamwork; identified tensions among the groups and acted as mediators). Some lecturers, on the contrary, followed a 'banking' way of lecturing, making participants feel uncomfortable. However, participants were also critical about their own capacity to working groups and interact with others to solve problems and assume tasks. For others, power dynamics inside groups were barriers for a good teamwork, as it was the excessive focus on the product (the final video) instead of on the process. Open attitude, flexibility and inclusive leadership were seen as the ways to overcome these challenges.

Finally, the PV process facilitated the learning of the audio-visual language among participants. Using video challenged the students to think how to express ideas and concepts in a visual way as well as developing powerful and critical narratives. However, they acknowledged this was not always a very smooth process.

If we analyse participation with regard to facilitators, the three lecturers that acted as facilitators valued their experience highly, although they acknowledge it was demanding. The interactions amongst themselves, with the local practitioners and with the community allowed them to better understand the context and be aware of power dynamics and stigmas. However, dealing with the multi-actor nature of the summer school posed on-the-spot challenges that required quick thinking and action. The facilitators shared the common understanding of PV as a methodology that enables collaborative and participatory learning. As one of them said, 'PV offers an affordable technology that is appealing to people and opens new communication possibilities at a more global scale' (INCYDE, 2014). They valued PV for its potential to integrate many people and skills at different stages of the process. For example, the participants deepen their technical abilities using PV; the local practitioners reflected their own practice, expressed their opinions and provided feedback, and the local community shared their stories and heard of others.

Other key learnings underlined were: to have became familiar with the intersection between human development and participatory methods and digital technologies; to be more aware of the links between local and global relations that digital technologies can open up and; to translate knowledge informed by practice into theory and vice-versa.

The local practitioners also had a positive evaluation of the summer school. They acknowledged to have enriched their ability to engage with a multicultural and diverse group. Also, they learned another participative method to interact with academia, government and civil society. The use of video was perceived positively as a medium that helped in respectfully conveying the messages people wanted to send out. They commended the involvement of the youth, being trained in gardening, in the welcoming and guidance around San Lorenzo to the International participants. Also, local practitioners valued the presence of the international participants in the area as 'it was an opportunity to see other faces, hear other languages, and get familiar with other realities […] this could enable openness, respect for the differences and commitment from the residents' they said. (INCYDE: 2014).

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Finally, we argue that for some of the local practitioners, the summer school was especially powerful to reposition their professional practice. One of the social workers admitted that the PV process challenged her to rethink her own narrative about gypsies and non-gypsies, questioning her own reflections on diversity. They admitted that the experience enabled an exchange of knowledge of a different kind between the local university, the community, and them as practitioners.

5.2. Knowledge axis

Five videos where produced during the summer school: 'Ven a vivir a mi barrio' (Come and live in my neighbourhood); 'Sembrando' (Sowing); 'Aspiraciones de las mujeres' (Women's aspirations); 'Aprendiendo del pasado' (Learning from the past) and 'Voces de la juventud' (Voices of the youth in San Lorenzo). Even though each video follows different narratives, all of them depict an honest account of the everyday challenges of local residents (mainly gypsies) and of practitioners and educators working in San Lorenzo. They offer a positive view of the neighbourhood, deeming it is a good place to live because of the collaboration, friendship and social relations among residents. This counteracted the outsiders' perspective of San Lorenzo as a violent and insecure place to live in. While local conflict is still a reality, the students deliberately chose not to portray it in a direct way but instead tried to look for indirect manifestations of the issue in everyday practices of the residents. So that, when locals saw the videos, they could have the chance to reflect upon and look for connections that underline the issue.

Another narrative central to one of the videos is the lack of opportunities to access the labour market especially by young male gypsies who often feel discriminated against due to their ethnic identity. Similarly, young girls see very few opportunities available to them to pursuit a university degree, which in some cases is also seen as a way to escape early marriage and child bearing.

There was also a general acceptance that education is a way to increase professional opportunities and gain self-esteem, build discipline, confidence and respect. The young gypsies felt proud of their cultural identity and of their ability to play, dance and sing, however, the songs' lyrics would often speak

of gypsies as drunk and violent people, which in the context help to reinforce the general image that non-gypsy people have of them. 'Nobody is expecting anything from the gypsies' said one of them in the video.

5.3. Public deliberation axis

The PV process created spaces where different voices and perspectives were heard. The moments of interaction among the international participants and the facilitators were useful for reflecting on human development in practice. The assemblies and collective interviews with practitioners and the local residents produced interesting exchanges with the university group on future programmes for San Lorenzo. The interviews conducted for the videos where all technical equipment was present also sparked different level of conversation and interaction among those involved.

However, one of the most important and powerful moments of the summer school was the final public screening. As the reader can see in illustration 1, a broad representation of the community came together to watch the videos. One of the local practitioners pointed out that for some members of the gypsy community, this had been the first time in their lives attending a public event in a place regarded for non-gipsies and to have been warmly welcomed by them. During the screening, they felt proud to have their voices heard by local policy makers, who were also invited to the event, and by the international participants and scholars who had came from different parts of the world. This moment also marked an important precedent for local practitioners who, after working for many years in San Lorenzo, obtained public acknowledgment for the work they have being doing. In a very emotive way, one of them commented:

> "It was a dream, I have been working in San Lorenzo for more than twenty years[...] I was really happy to see my students and the neighbourhood participating [...] it is really exciting to see the videos with people from outside... it gives us life and energy"

(Public screening video available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKfv0CD0bkI).

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Illustration 1: Public screening in San Lorenzo

Source: Summer School web page http://globcons.uji.es/global_id

6. Discussion and Conclusions

From what we have described above, we consider that it is in the participatory axis where more relevant results of the process are found. We have seen how the main participants expressed to have developed a new practical and experiential knowledge on several aspects regarding participation, digital technologies, education and working in intercultural context, etc.

For facilitators and local practitioners the process instigated a deep reflection on their professional practice, 'an awareness process' as defined by Gaventa

and Cornwall (2006), which is also a relevant impact of a participatory action research and PV experiences (Plush, 2012; Yang, 2012). Among the students, we have appreciated a different level of reflexivity; for some of them the process clearly illustrated the characteristics of a real development context, where language barriers, power imbalances, poor diagnosis, time constraints are common. For others, all of them were identified as obstacles to produce videos without establishing links with development practices.

The knowledge axis shed lights and cast shadows of the PV process. On one side, the videos included features of transformative knowledge. Firstly, because the most prominent voices in the narratives are those whom are often unheard. Also, they revealed a multidimensional understanding of what quality of life means for young people in San Lorenzo. On the other side, some voices went unheard due to time constrains and the very nature of the video setting (which very often makes people nervous and embarrassed to talk in front of a camera). In addition, in most of the videos we perceived a 'naïve' impression of the community with no reference to historical and structural constrains of the neighbourhood.

However, we should acknowledge that this positive and 'naïve' outlook of the neighbourhood was developed through conversations and discussions with local practitioners. They emphasised the importance of transmitting a positive view of the neighbourhood as a way to challenge stigma from outside as a dangerous and dirty place and to enhance the sense of belonging among residents.

With regards to the public deliberation axis, even though we have described how the summer school nurtured moments of public discussion and debate, we believe that the potential for tighter relations between practitioners and the local university could have been further explored. Apart from the videos, the production of policy and practical recommendations based in the evidence collected during the process, and endorsed by the participating universities, could have been helpful to opening spaces of discussion with local authorities and policy makers outside San Lorenzo, however we don't have the record that this has happened.

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Turning to the issue of communication for social change that we mentioned at the beginning of this article, we can note that the PV process has functioned as a good action-learning space, as it was initially designed. Learning has happened not only among international participants but also among the local facilitators and practitioners. In addition to acquiring skills and knowledge, the process has served to rethink their practice, which, according to Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) is one of the principal goals of a transformative participatory - action research.

However, the action-learning design has not had any impact on local policies so far, having a priori, a certain potential to do so, given the involvement of the local university with the team of local practitioners of San Lorenzo, some of them working for the local municipality. Why hasn't this happened? As it is described by Plush (2015b) in many cases PV processes do not show a long standing commitment with local communities, neither a clear idea of how to use PV process to influence public policy (Wheeler, 2012). In this sense, what we take from our experience is that when the action of the PVis being designed and implemented, it is important to budget in, as part of the process, a commitment during and after the action with the local community, in our case represented by the team of facilitators. Also, if the aim is to contribute to open up spaces for public deliberation with other actors beyond those who participate directly in the PV –like public decision-makers–, then this has to be specially designed, agreed and developed during and after the PV. Of course this may not be enough, as many other factors can be influential in changing policy, but it is a crucial ingredient towards social transformation.

To conclude, we have shown how a PV process could be helpful to co-create practical and experiential knowledge among participants, as well as to foster skills and abilities to take part in a participatory process. We have also reflected on the main narratives of the videos produced and have highlighted how they presented a positive vision of the neighbourhood sometimes obscuring other historical and structural constrains. We have pointed out that although public deliberations spaces were nurtured during the process, an opportunity towards a more political engagement with local authorities has been missed. Finally, the use of the ePARC framework has proved to be an effective analytical tool to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the different dimensions of a PV process.

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