

# Lessons learnt from children's participation in child poverty measurement research in South Africa

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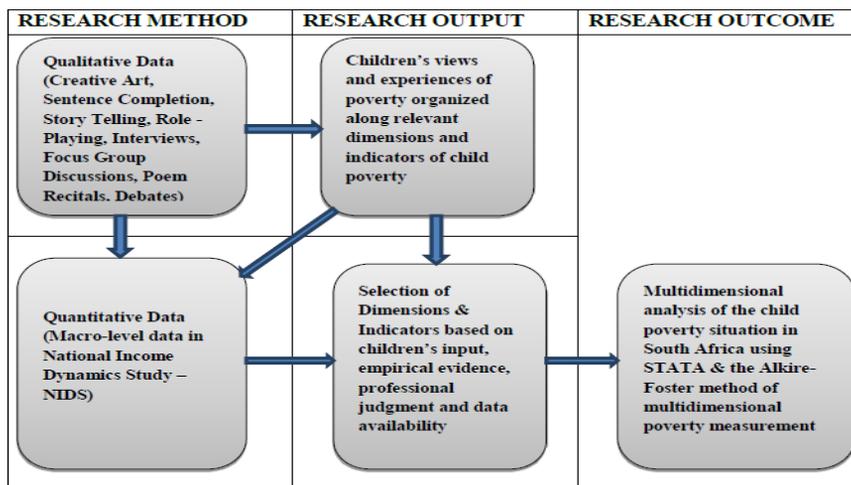
## INTRODUCTION – GENERAL TENDENCY

- Children as 'becomings' rather than 'beings' (Qvortrup 1994)
- Initial tendency: parents/guardians as proxy voices; appendages to HHs ; power relations
- Change: (f)= New sociology of childhood school (active social agents); CRC 1989 legal backing for child participation & Success of piloting participatory child research studies

# INTRODUCTION – THIS RESEARCH

- Poverty: lived reality & subjective/personal experience e.g. Goose pimples
- Relative exclusion of children in child poverty research
- Validity of children’s voices - empirical proof
- General relevance: Poverty eradication central to Development agenda – cause & consequence
- Particular relevance: Moral priority & Legal obligation; logic of addressing poverty while it is young
- Theoretical/Methodological: Multidimensional vs. Money metric & Participatory vs. ‘Expert & Adult’

# RESEARCH FLOW SUMMARY



## SITE PROFILES

	Khayelitsha	Lynedoch
Race	Black	Black & Colored
Location/Setting	Home in neighborhood	Classroom (Grade 7)
Sample Size	25	29
Age Range	8 - 17	13 - 16
Times	Saturdays	Mondays (Class Period)
Interactional Culture	Deference	Equality

## DO'S – WHAT HAS WORKED - CORE

### Pre-fieldwork

- Gain their trust: explain the project in **simple** terms (e.g. Children's understandings of ...)
- Buy-in: Involve them as stakeholders: Assent Seeking ; "Learn from you"
- Lay your ground rules

### Fieldwork

- Gradually introduce them into the research process: My 2 phases (pre-formal & formal) : recorder shyness.
- Flexibility: Abandon your preconceptions & Modify your methods as needed - e.g. sentence completion for older children, Debate Challenge (remodify)
- Manage them differently: 'Eager-ites', 'Non-chalant-ites', 'Shy-ites' & 'No-way-ites'.
- 'Use' not 'break' the ringleader: Change seating structures
- Be involved: ambitions (Bravery & UCT), walk to Shoprite together; know their world

## DO'S – WHAT HAS WORKED – CORE...contd

- Sensitive wording: e.g. discuss child poverty in third person : Ethics/Moral rightness
- Role Transit: Adult Researcher & 'A buddy'
- Reinvent questions/exercises for more breadth
- Simplicity: talk vs. discuss ; story vs. composition; less volume = more results
- No right or wrong answer: your opinion

### Post-fieldwork

- Keep your promises e.g. excursion, personal work mementos, keep in touch

### Others

- Recognize fatigue/boredom and treat it: Change of environment, Ice-breakers: sand games
- Expect the unexpected: Manage and contain their expectations – define 'what's in it for me' from the onset
- 'Reward' them
- **Do not** lose control ... **do not** show it

## CAVEAT & CONCLUSION

- Focus not on outcomes but lessons learnt
- Application: Subject to project resources, time and other constraints
- ~~Generalization~~ : Contexts differ

Thank you

## OUTCOMES...SO FAR

- Children don't see poverty in race or color?...until age? Though they recognize difference (socially aware). But maybe exposure?
- Poverty as social exclusion
- Us vs. Them (3<sup>rd</sup> party poor) – maybe (f) framing
- Important dimensions: Housing (access & area), Education, Family & Friends, Food/Nutrition, Money.
- Prioritization: Family/Social belonging vs. Money
- Education as way out and into future
- Expectations – what's in it for me? Angie & The Cake