
CONFRONT

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Participatory research



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Participatory research: *what is it?*

- Addresses **power imbalances** between researcher & researched, and tries to alleviate them...
- ...by **involving** research population in research, from beginning (formulation research question) till the end (distribution knowledge) of the research...
- ...and as such deriving **emic** knowledge (from the inside) rather than **etic**...
- ...with more **cultural sensitivity** than usual.

Participatory research: *why did we do it?*

- Roma context: possible ‘allergic reactions’ to researchers ‘in power’ – **empower Roma** to define character of research & how to conduct it;
- **Culturally sensitive**: pay due attention to Roma language, terminology, cultural values, sensitivities;
- Reduces chances of **stigmatization**;
- Ensures that Roma are **first to profit** from research results

Participatory research: *how did we do it?*

- Train Roma community members as researchers
- Use participatory methods like letting Roma mothers rank the problems they perceive in their communities
- Focus groups
- Community mapping

Challenges:

- **Taboo** on child trafficking in Roma communities
- ‘a danger arises that using indigenous forms of participation will **further cement existing inequities**, such as gender imbalances’ (Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008: 435)
- ‘This shift in thinking towards **seeing children as having the capacity to be actively involved in assessment and decision-making** is essential in moving away from ascribing (...) passive and subordinate roles to children.’ (Fern 2014: 19)

Next step in similar projects:

- How to **involve children** in generating knowledge on their own exploitation?
- And: how to **prevent tensions** with parents/ caretakers when involving children?
- How to **translate emic** knowledge to policy jargon & actions? How to bridge gap between policy makers' needs and Roma needs?

Questions?