

Community-led Participation for Impact and Evaluation

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What we will cover

What participatory approaches are and the diverse forms of participation

Challenges and facilitators to meaningful participation

Case study task applying participatory approaches in action



Participatory approaches

Shifting degrees of power away from ourselves to participants to ensure that programmes are shaped by those who engage with/benefit from them (Cornwell & Jewkes, 1996).

The meaningful involvement of participants in elements of programme design, delivery, evaluation; research, dissemination, policy development etc

participatory-research
co-design

youth-voice

participation

co-production
Lived-experience

bottoms-up

peer-research

par
collaborative-evaluation

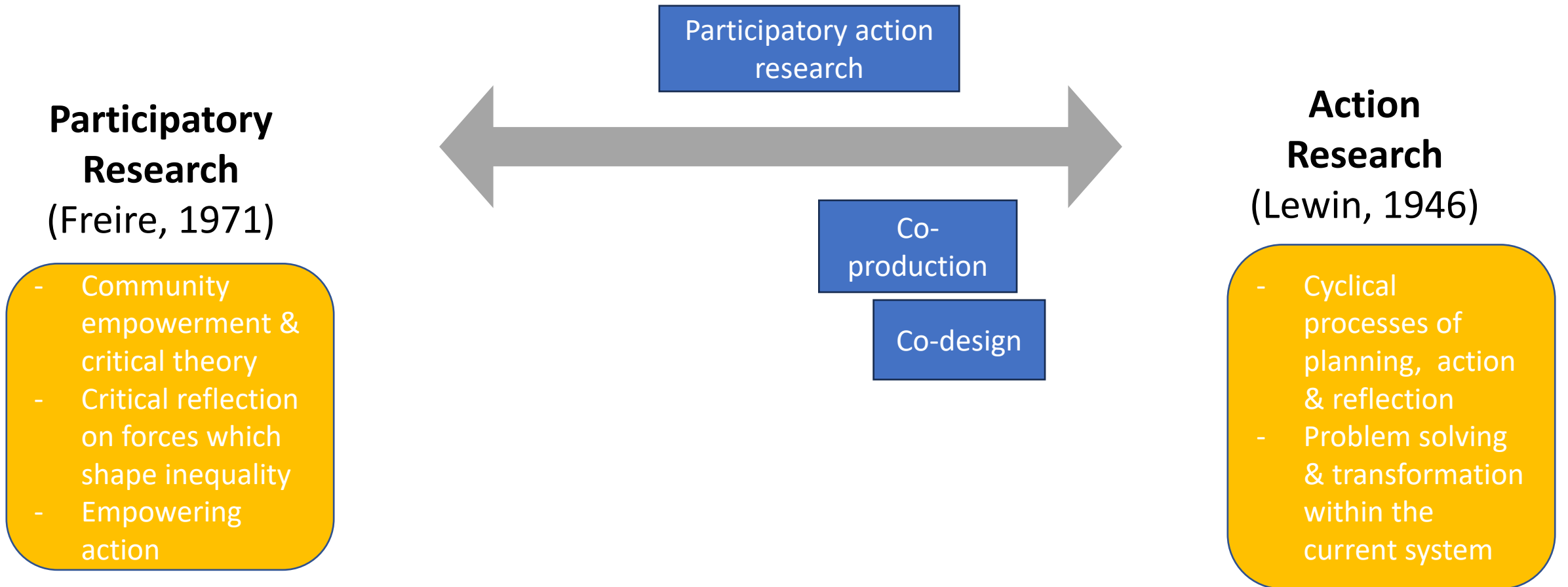
action-research action

stakeholder-engagement

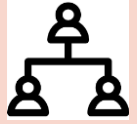
community-based



The origins of participatory approaches



Key principles



Power sharing and inclusive decision making



Valuing diverse lived experience



Trusting and reciprocal relationships/partnerships



Capacity building and empowerment



Reflexivity & ethics



Participation is not just a nice thing to have

It is essential for addressing inequalities in sport, physical education, and physical activity among marginalized women and girls.



Everybody benefits

Women and girls

- Foster belonging
- Enhancing skills, capacity & agency
- Feeling valued and heard
- Supporting lifelong engagement & participation

Sport organisations

- Improved programming that meets needs
- Enhanced engagement
- Transparency & accountability
- Develop current and future workforce
- Understanding what works/ doesn't
- Measuring & demonstrating impact
- Drive innovation and change

Researchers

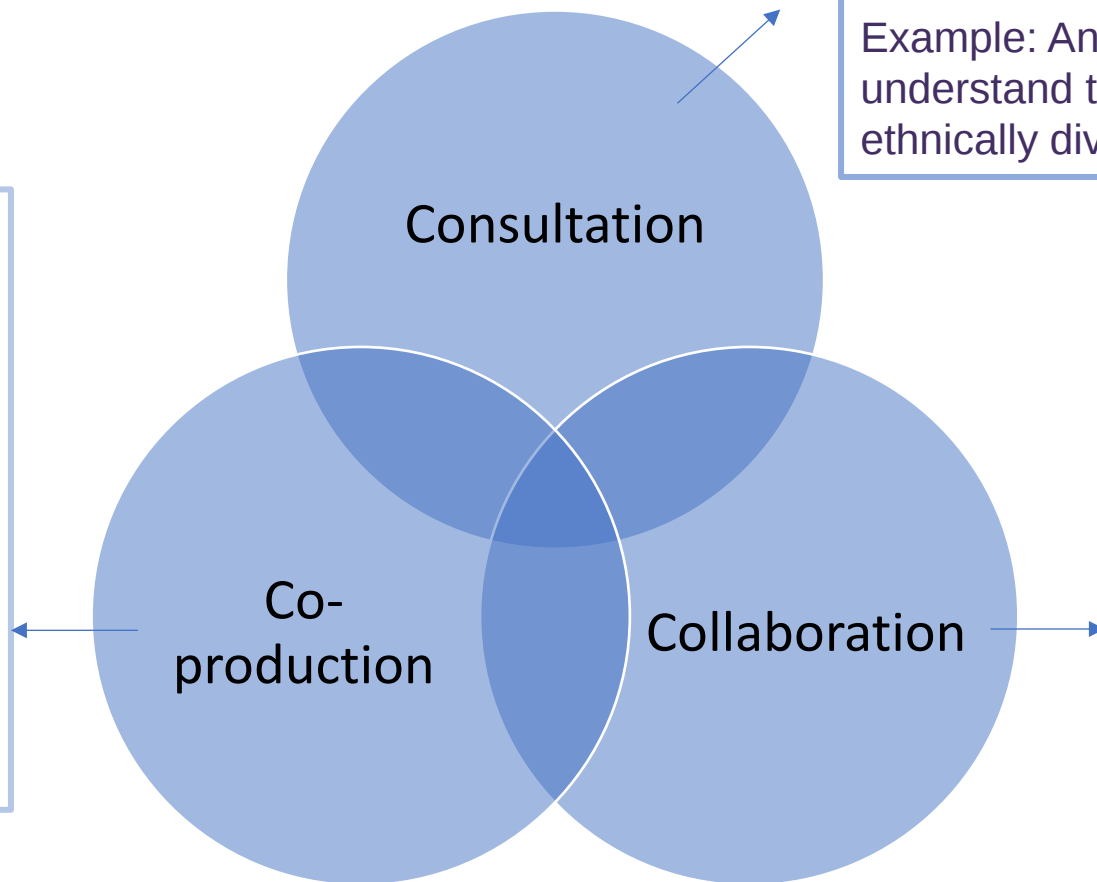
- Increased relevance & originality
- Ethics
- Trusted relationships
- Rich insights into lived experience
- Creative & usable outputs
- Enhanced impact



Participation can be many things

Enabling women and girls to **design/deliver** activities, projects or services.

Example: A SfD organization training young women participants as peer researchers to evaluate the programme and disseminate findings.



Seeking the views of women and girls and supporting them to share their feelings, thoughts, ideas and experiences.

Example: An NGB holding focus groups to understand the views and experiences of ethnically diverse women.

Meaningfully involving women and girls in collaboratively **making decisions** about topics/issues that affect them.

Example: A PE department setting up an advisory group with students that meets each term to discuss and advise on key issues.



	Lighter touch ←		→ Deeper dive		
Consultation 	During PE lessons, teachers use active voting, e.g., run to red, yellow or green cones, to gather pupils' feedback on a specific aspect of the lesson.	Towards the end of the year, pupils complete an annual online survey, which collates the results, to give their views on PE, sport and physical activity.	As part of the 'You said, we did' process, every PE class starts the year with discussion groups. The PE team displays key actions and reports back on their progress.	Working with a SENCO, the PE teacher uses a series of focus group sessions to build a relationship with and gather views from targeted SEND pupils.	A PE panel, consisting of representative pupils from each year group, meets with PE staff each half-term to share views on curriculum planning and delivery.
Collaboration 	Prior to National School Sports Week, all pupils select two options from a menu of challenge activities. The PE team uses these to plan and run events.	At the first after-school multi-sport club of each term, participants test out potential activities then they and the staff agree that term's programme together.	At the start of a unit of work, pupils and staff trial and agree different learning options. Pupils decide which option/group to join for the duration of that unit.	Invited pupils with diverse experiences join parents, PE staff and senior leaders in a mini-conference to discuss and decide on the school's future PE kit.	PE staff and selected pupils bring issues for discussion and decision to the termly sports council meetings; sub-groups advise on specific 'hot' topics.
Co-production 	Teachers/coaches share draft promotional materials with pupils to gather ideas on how to make them more appealing to intended participants.	Pupil activators are invited to present their 'creating active schools' ideas to senior leaders and PE staff. School staff implement the winning ideas.	Young leaders, with support from PE staff, plan and lead a six-week lunchtime health and wellbeing programme for invited pupils.	A group of girls is recruited to support the PE staff to consult with less-active girls and to plan, design and run a series of campaigns to get them more active.	A team of elected pupils plans, organises and evaluates the annual intra-school competition schedule, overseen by two senior pupil 'captains'.

[Youth Sport Trust Youth Voice Toolkit \(2024\)](#)



Promoting care-experienced young people's right to access sport and physical activity

- **Who?** 63 care-experienced young people across six different youth club sites
- **What?** Worked with young people to explore their experiences of sport/PA whilst in care and designed cartoons about their experiences
- **How?** Participatory focus groups - including mapping, quotation conversations, and character creations, co-analysis and co-design activities

Action: Concept cartoons, youth report, practitioner workshops, APPG submission, presentation to government



Co-creating a sport and wellbeing programme for young refugees

- **Who?** 16 co-researchers at a refugee youth charity, staff & volunteers
- **What?** Co-designed, developed and evaluated a new sport, wellbeing and leisure programme
- **How?** Formative partnership work, co-design workshops, survey, participant observation, interviews with practitioners, youth leadership training, photo voice, digital diaries, Whatsapp tools, digital storytelling
- **Action:** Expanded youth programme, animated video, workshops for practitioners, art exhibit, enhanced organization capacity.



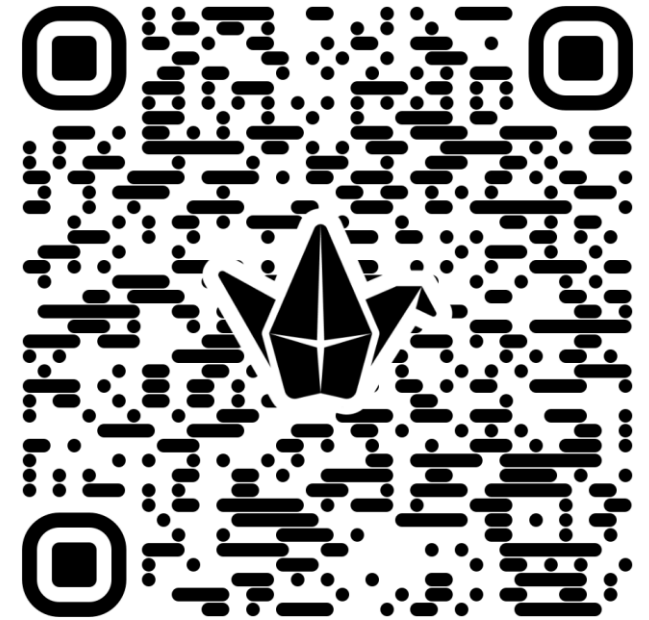
What are the barriers/facilitators to meaningful community participation in your organisation or practice?

Think. Pair. Share Task

1 minute to think

2 minutes to discuss as a pair

1 minute to share via Padlet



Participants

- Costs - travel expenses, accessibility, time off work/away from family
- Time and emotional burden
- Not aligned with skills/goals
- Lack of confidence
- Limited role models/ representation
- Not feeling valued through recognition, rewards, or seeing change

Organisations

- Constraints on capacity e.g. time, staff time, funding
- Deficit-based perceptions
- Fear of getting it wrong, limited training
- Challenging the status quo
- Low engagement
- Concerns about safeguarding, legality



Case studies: Embedding participation in practice

- Split into groups of **5 people**
- You have **20 minutes** in your group
- Read through the **case study** – discuss & capture reflections
- Scan the QR code to access the **Street Games Youth Voice toolkit** to support – but feel free to get creative!
- Nominate somebody to feedback to the group afterwards



You are a programme manager at a professional football club in Germany, delivering specialised community outreach programming for young refugees. Disengagement is high among the young women aged 13-16 years old.

Challenge

You want to embed youth participation to re-design the young women's programme

How will you:

- Consult the young women about their experiences in a safe space and meaningful ways?
- Co-design activities that reflect their interests and needs?
- Consider and address barriers such as uniform, competition, cultural and religious gendered norms?

Consider:

Representation, building trust, creating inclusive spaces for sharing



Case study 2: Advisory board

You work at a National Governing Body (NGB) for swimming in Canada. You want to improve engagement and leadership among ethnically diverse young women.

Challenge:

How will you establish an Advisory Board to inform your strategy?

How will you:

- Recruit and support a diverse group of young women?
- Ensure their voices influence real decisions?
- Provide training and mentorship to build capacity and leadership?

Consider:

Representation, power-sharing, compensation and long-term engagement.



Case Study 3: Programme evaluation

You run a large-scale physical activity programme in a deprived area of Kerala, India seeking to enhance the health and wellbeing of women from low socio-economic backgrounds. You need to evaluate your programme for the funders.

Challenge:

How will you embed participation in the evaluation process?

How will you:

- Involve participants in purposeful ways?
- Ensure inclusive and meaningful data collection?
- Use findings to improve the programme?

Consider:

Training, support, and how to share results meaningfully.



Case study 4: Dissemination and demonstrating Impact

You manage a sport for development organization that has run a successful young women's sport and employability programme in Rwanda. You want to share the impact with funders and stakeholders.

Challenge:

How will you involve the young women in disseminating the outcomes?

How will you:

- Identify and engage your audiences?
- Support young women to engage meaningfully in the process?
- Make their voices central to the story?

Consider:

Confidence-building, representation, recognition, and audience engagement

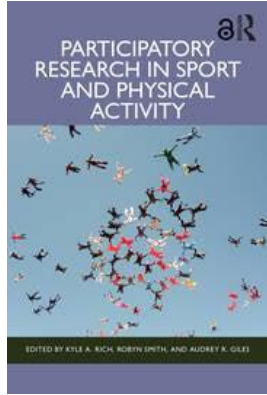


Key takeaways

- Increasingly shift towards participatory approaches as best practice.
- Not everything can be, needs to be, or should be participatory – something is better than nothing.
- Moving from tokenism to meaningful participation
- This is not easy work; there will be challenges along the way.
- Powerful possibilities for impact, empowerment and transformation
- Resources & support are available



Additional resources



[Participatory Research in Sport and Physical Activity | Kyle A. Rich,](#)



[Living Lab Toolkit](#)



Sport Management Review

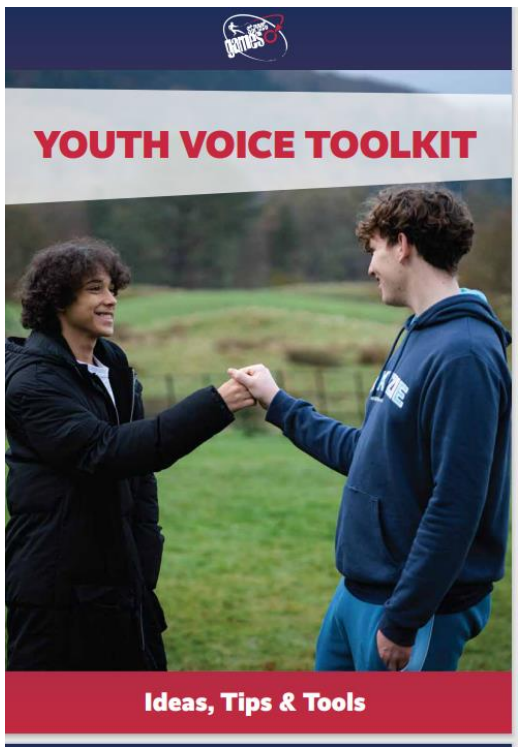
Volume 21, Issue 1, February 2018, Pages 25-37



Participatory research in sport-for-development: Complexities, experiences and (missed) opportunities

Ramón Spaaij ^{a b} , Nico Schulenkorf ^c, Ruth Jeanes ^d, Sarah Oxford ^a

[Participatory research in sport-for-development: Complexities, experiences and \(missed\) opportunities - ScienceDirect](#)



[Street Games Youth Voice Toolkit](#)



Youth Voice Resources

Youth voice is about actively seeking the views of young people to understand their experiences and perspectives and involving them meaningfully in making and enacting decisions about topics that affect them.

[YST Youth Voice resources](#)



Loughborough University



One insight you're taking away



One action you will try in your work



One thought about this session



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