Assessing the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign: A developmental evaluation

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In this article we explicate our way of assessing the South African Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign, and in particular its impact in the Eastern Cape. We provide an account primarily of focus group sessions conducted in 2013 and again in 2014 with volunteer educators and past learners in the campaign. We concentrate on the way in which relationships with these participants and with coordinators in the province were established towards the creation of findings. We outline how our evaluative purpose could be seen as incorporating a social justice agenda (as in developmental evaluation) in that it was aimed at strengthening literacy initiatives as a human right. We conclude with some considerations around catalytic validity as a criterion for judging research practices. We reflect upon how this notion of validity can justify our research as being directed towards potentially activating further options for literacy initiatives to contribute to personal and community development.

Keywords: *developmental evaluation, literacy initiatives, catalytic validity*

Introduction

This article discusses our assessment of the South African Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign in the Eastern Cape and our way of promoting the use of 'findings'.[1] Our assessment is theoretically grounded in what Patton (1994) has named Developmental Evaluation (DE). To date DE has been used largely as a consulting tool, with few accounts of how it can be classed as, and fulfil the functions of, 'research' (Rey, Tremblay, & Brouselle, 2014). In this article we extend the research component of DE.

Our article is structured as follows. To begin with, we indicate that DE can be interpreted as containing an injunction to work collaboratively with participants towards improving broadly-defined social justice outcomes. This implies supporting (more-or-less) marginalised participants in the social fabric. We proceed to show how we tried to practice such an approach when assessing the impact of the Kha Ri Gude Campaign. We point to our way of interacting with the various participants. We discuss our manner of research reporting so that the report could become utilised for purposes of advancing literacy initiatives. We conclude with some considerations around the notion of catalytic validity as a way to substantiate the research.

Developmental evaluation: A participatory process

When outlining his view of Development Evaluation, Patton argues that the collaboration between the evaluator and the stakeholders who are 'most deeply involved with the evaluation, should be based on participatory and dialogue-driven process' (Patton, 2011:13).[2] The ultimate social aim is to support 'social innovators and social entrepreneurs, especially those working on issues of human rights and equity, [who] are typically trying to bring about fundamental changes in systems to change the world' (Patton, 2012:105-106).

As Reynolds also summarises, the focus in developmental evaluation is on how to change systems by developing the capacities of agents (Reynolds, 2014:79). Reynolds furthermore reminds us that questions of power relations and the way of justifying knowledge claims (epistemological questions) as well as questions regarding political and ethical issues always become invoked when doing evaluations

(Reynolds, 2014:75). (See also Bawden, 2007; Gregory, Romm, & Walsh, 1994; Gregory & Romm, 2004; Midgley, 2007; Wadsworth, 2010.)

Mertens has expressed a similar idea when noting that a social justice theory of ethics—which she believes should underpin both research and evaluation—'leads to an awareness of the need to redress inequalities by giving precedence, or at least equal weight, to the voice of the least advantaged groups in society' (Mertens, 2007:87).[3] Howard et al. (2008:488) likewise refer to the importance of taking into account that in research concerned with social inclusion, one needs to be particularly alert to the possibility of developing 'trust, respect, integrity, dignity and rapport' with participants who may be more or less socially excluded (disadvantaged). In subsequent sections of this article we indicate how we tried to incorporate these ethical principles, while being conversant with the human rights associated with literacy education. (See also Merriam & Kee, 2014:141, regarding rights to literacy and to lifelong learning.) Our manner of proceeding can be said to be in keeping with Bristol's point (Bristol, 2012:16) that postcolonial educational research (underpinned by postcolonial theory) reviews 'what counts as research' in contexts with a history of colonisation (as, for example, in the South African context) as discussed below.

Background to the Kha Ri Gude Campaign

With the inception of a democratic government in 1994, the post-1994 policies that were promulgated were aimed at redress across the country's institutions, including educational ones. Backlogs in adult education were particularly problematic, because during the apartheid era, Black people were excluded from free and compulsory education. Zeelen, Rampedi and Van der Linden explain the apartheid legacy pertaining to education as follows:

> The legacy for the newly chosen government consisted of racially embedded poverty and inequality, reflected in the educational system with its strong separation between education for Whites and education for Blacks. Blacks were allowed access [which in any case was not compulsory] only to underfunded and ill-equipped so-called *bantu education. (*2014:22)

The Kha Ri Gude South African Mass Literacy Campaign was launched

by the government in 2008 with the intention to address the backlogs of illiteracy, with the understanding that literacy can enable adults to play an important role in social development by expanding their life choices, particularly for those who have had no or little basic schooling (McKay, 2010, 2012). In 2008, the government estimated that:

> Illiteracy rates in South Africa are high and stand at about 24 percent of the population over 15 years of age: 4.7 million adults never went to school, and further 4.9 million are functionally illiterate. Provinces with the largest number of illiterate people are KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape, followed by Gauteng, Mpumalanga and North West. The lowest numbers occur in the Free State, the Northern Cape and the Western Cape. The language groups most affected are isiZulu, isiXhosa and Sesotho sa Leboa. (South African Government, 2009) [4]

The campaign is organised using a cascade model, where educators (called volunteer educators albeit that they receive a stipend) are supervised, trained and supported by supervisors and coordinators. The cascade model entails a ratio of 18 learners per educator. Groups of 10 educators are supported by a supervisor who is overseen by a coordinator. By 2012, 2.8 million illiterate learners had become literate, with teaching delivered by 40,000 educators, who were managed by approximately 4000 supervisors and 400 coordinators (Department of Basic Education, South Africa, 2012). Learner retention for the learners was very high - about 92% country-wide - with nearly all learners graduating (http://www.education.gov.za/Home/KhaRiGudeWorkshop/tabid/857/Default.aspx). As far as the content of the curriculum is concerned, McKay (2012) indicates that the materials that were established for the campaign, were intentionally attuned to optimise the social, economic and developmental opportunities of literacy as connected with the Milleniuim Development Goals (MDGs). The campaign core materials were organised using certain themes in order to contextualise the learning around developmental outcomes, namely: learning to learn, my family, my home, the world of work, living a healthy life, the environment, our communities, South Africa and the world around us (McKay, 2010).

Volunteer educators are meanwhile advised (through their training)

to try to instil a sense of positive interdependence (community co-operation) within their classes, and to encourage adult learners to find ways of co-operating further outside of the classes (such as, for example, by setting up co-operatives). The encouragement of a spirit of co-operative enterprise can be (theoretically) connected with what Lavia and Mahlomaholo (2012:6) call the development of a 'postcolonial imagination' in the sense of 'projecting alternative ways of knowing, doing and being'—that is, as alternatives to the capitalist project embedded in colonialism. The training also draws on Freire's notion of education as enabling people to participate in the construction of their futures. (Freire considers that people can re-envision and reshape their ways of living and thus participate in society's historical process—1994:256). Space in this article does not allow for a full discussion hereof, but Quan-Baffour and Romm (2015) recount, and reflect in detail upon, some exemplars of how literacy education in the South African context can function to generate an alternative to capitalist-geared (dehumanised) social and economic relationships.[5]

The evaluation (impact assessment) of the campaign: Research design and process

The research to which we refer in this article was conducted as part of a larger impact assessment of the Kha Ri Gude Campaign that is being undertaken by the University of South Africa (Unisa). The Director General of the National Department of Basic Education granted formal permission for this in 2013. The research is currently being undertaken in three provinces: Kwa-Zulu Natal, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape.

The research design as a whole involves various methods, viz: focus group sessions with past learners and volunteer educators (VEs); interviews with Kha Ri Gude supervisors and coordinators; visits to projects undertaken by Kha Ri Gude graduates (with VEs and/or coordinators who are also involved); analysis of sections of learners' assessment portfolios; and analysis of some government-collected data pertaining to, for example, geographical regions, and learners' ages, gender and employment status.

In this article we report on two visits of three days each in the Eastern Cape, primarily to organise focus groups but also to see what projects Kha Ri Gude graduates had been able to set up further to their

involvement in the campaign. In the first visit, which took place in August 2013 (led by Dichaba of this article, who was accompanied by two colleagues[6]) the research involved facilitating three focus group sessions (with past learners and a few VEs), as well as speaking at length to coordinators in Umtata and Port St Johns (and to the super-coordinator of the province). As planned, we visited some project sites—in particular, a bakery that was being run by Kha Ri Gude graduates with a coordinator, and also some poultry enterprises.

In the second visit, which occurred in August 2014 (led by Romm of this article, with Dichaba and another colleague[7]) we organised some 'member checking' and discussed and elaborated upon our draft findings (with participants and coordinators). We also conducted some further focus groups (this time with the coordinators facilitating); and we visited the bakery again, as well as another project—a pre-school that had been built by members of the community. As part of this community project, a Kha Ri Gude graduate was volunteering her services to help pre-school children, using materials that she had from the Kha Ri Gude classes. Community members had also started an associated vegetable garden to feed the children.

Sampling: Our way of accessing the participants (and their self-selection in visit 2)

We drew on some chosen coordinators within the province to arrange samples of learners and volunteer educators for all the focus groups. In the first visit the focus group sessions (two groups in Umtata and one group in Port St Johns) were limited to the numbers advised within the focus group literature, namely about 8 members each (cf. Liamputtong, 2011; Ndimande, 2012). These members agreed to take part in the group sessions when approached by the coordinators, after the coordinators explained to them what the research was about, namely to assess the possible personal and community impact of the Kha Ri Gude Campaign. (Participants ranged between the ages of 30 and 75, with the majority being in their 50s and 60s.) Whether if another sampling method was used we would have arrived at different insights, is impossible to say; but it is noteworthy that across all the focus groups that were conducted in this and in other provinces, the 'findings' were very similar, with similar positive impacts as well as challenges being reported (as we

indicate below).

What we need to mention here, is that on the second visit to the province far more than the recommended 8 participants (as recommended by the literature) joined the sessions. The main reason for this, as explained to us by the coordinators, was that in between the first and second visits, the campaign arrangements had become drastically reduced—with communications between the coordinators/super-coordinator and the CEO in charge of the campaign (not the same person in charge as the person prior to 2012) having become tense and frustrating. The 'extra' people attending the various 'focus group' sessions at all the sites, including many would-be learners for 2014 and additional supervisors, coordinators and monitors, and even headmen of the village and chiefs (including a female chief) were all present to show us (the Unisa team) that they were disappointed with the reduction/stoppage of the campaign, as classes had not yet begun this year (2014).

Clearly, *we had little control in this case over the sampling,* as people chose to enter the sessions with agendas that were important to them. We do not regard this as problematic, but indeed as an expression of agency on the part of self-chosen participants and as an expression of their trying to set agendas and express voice, much as is advised by authors such as Mertens (2007) and Chilisa (2012), to equalise the researcher/participant relationship.

Focus Group Field Guide

The guiding questions were prepared by a team (led by Romm) that was tasked with preparing some questions, which were later discussed with all the research project members. The final guide was finalised by Romm (see Appendix 1), with comments for facilitators to bear in mind. The boxed material to follow contains Romm's comments to all the facilitators, which are relevant to our ethical position.

Focus group facilitators: Please remember to say that 'today we are all together re-looking at any impact that your involvement in the Kha Ri Gude program may have had on you or whether you feel it did not have an impact'.

In the beginning while everyone is introducing themselves you can ask them to tell you roughly their age and when they joined the campaign (what year). And you can record on your note pad how many women and men there are. So we will have these 3 pieces of info about the participants in each group. Then you can start with the questions (as your guide). Remember to do some 'checking' along the way that you are hearing well what they are saying; and give them the opportunity to tell you if they want to add or modify your interpretation of what they are saying. You can also make summary statements along the way and check these with participants. This shows that you are listening carefully to them and they will appreciate this, while also feeling that you are giving them a chance to give commentary on your interpretation of the gist of the discussion.

Member checking and reporting/discussing interpretations

Further to our first visit, the Eastern Cape team of colleagues prepared a power point presentation. This was presented orally by Dichaba (with the help of a coordinator/translator) to the participants from 2013 who attended the focus group sessions in August 2014. As can be seen from the boxed section above, Romm had recommended to all staff facilitators already during the first visit to arrange a kind of 'member checking' while the focus group sessions were being run, by 'checking' from time to time the meaning of what participants were saying and by summarising and asking if the summary was sound. But in August 2014 we did some further member checking as Dichaba presented the various points that were on the slides. We stopped intermittently to ask if people wished to add or modify points that were being made. At most points, people were nodding in affirmative when Dichaba asked if this resonated with what had been said on the previous visit.

However, at one point a modification was requested. This was when Dichaba spoke about projects that had been successfully set up thanks

to the learning that members had achieved via Kha Ri Gude and also thanks to their meeting people with whom they could form groups (co-operatives). Some graduates indicated that they were experiencing challenges on various scores. For instance, the poultry enterprises that they had set up, had failed as the chickens caught diseases. They said that they would need to learn about medication for chickens and also would need to get some support in organising this. Also, some other projects too had failed as the graduates did not have sufficient business acumen and so they had not kept any money aside to re-invest in the project (and also they indicated that they probably were not pricing their goods such that the business would be sustainable). They therefore requested that Kha Ri Gude should be extended in a variety of ways, to train them further.

When Romm asked the participants to comment as a whole on their response to the presentation, one person (speaking on behalf of the group) stated that:

> *This is what we said [on the previous occasion]. We are happy to see that everything has been written down. It is not like we are speaking and everything is forgotten. We are hoping that next time something will come out of the things that we had said.*

Romm then asked 'how did you experience the whole of today?' And one of the participants responded:

> *Even today we are happy that people have come and want to know how we are feeling about everything about Kha Ri Gude. You want to know our needs and this gives us hope as well.*

Space here does not permit a discussion of the additional focus group sessions that we held on the second visit or the additional project site visits. But the above offers a glimpse of how we set up a relationship with people where they were happy to see us and hoped that through our - as well as their - involvement, the campaign could be strengthened.

The next day we were invited to a meeting which had been arranged by the super-coordinator in order to discuss the dire state of the campaign.

(Political) Meeting at Tombo Hall, Port St Johns

This meeting (attended by about 500 people) had been arranged for monitors, coordinators, supervisors and VEs from various districts across the Eastern Cape to attend. The super-coordinator of the campaign in the province opened the discussion by indicating that 'we all know why we are here' (namely, to speak about the 'vanishing' of Kha Ri Gude in the province). She said that she did not know why it had 'vanished' as she was unable to get an answer from the government on this. She said that she would like 'our visitors' (us three from the university) to be aware of this meeting and of their concerns. The person chairing the meeting then indicated that a person representing the monitors would have a chance to speak and also a person representing the coordinators and one representing the supervisors. During their presentations, all expressed a failure in the lines of communication with the relevant government personnel.

The person chairing the meeting stated that some government communications had suggested that certain districts were now exhausted for Kha Ri Gude and did not require further classes while others needed it. But as it happened, he argued, many areas that they were told still needed classes were also cut off. So the reasoning that was supplied to them for the drastic cuts does not make sense.

During the meeting, he asked us (from the university) what kind of response we could give to their grievances. Our colleague then took the floor and said that we appreciated that they had chosen to set up this meeting when we came to evaluate the Kha Ri Gude Campaign in this province and that through the reporting process we would do the best we could to report back within the university and hopefully, due to the relationship between Unisa and the government, the message would also reach the government through the person responsible for community engagement in our college at the university.

Our reporting and its possible usefulness for participants

After the second visit we sent our draft report (via email) to the coordinators who had coordinated our visits. This is how we phrased our request for comment hereon: 'The document is in draft form so please feel free to make any suggestions—additions, deletions modifications'.

Further to this, one of them stated via email that: 'Your report is well written as it included all the details of our visits. All aspects necessary are included'. Another offered suggestions, especially in regard to our one point (in the draft report point referring to women's participation in community meetings): see our summary findings below in our account of the gist of our report. Also, this coordinator wanted it highlighted in our discussion of challenges that, as she put it, many of the projects that Kha Ri Gude graduates had set up 'lack sustainability skills' (see our last bullet point in our account under the heading of challenges).

In addition, Romm discussed the draft report with the super-coordinator orally (as they had an opportunity to meet soon thereafter): the focus of the discussion was the potential usefulness of the report. We discussed that possibly it could be used as one of the bases for her writing a letter to the Minister of Basic Education, expressing a plea to revive the campaign. (She indicated to Romm that she had arranged an additional meeting with co-ordinators already to further discuss strategy and that at that meeting she could obtain signatures to append to the letter.) She also at the same time handed over to Romm a video that had been made of the earlier meeting—for us to give to the person in charge of community engagement projects in Unisa's College of Education. This person subsequently arranged that a leader in the community who is well connected (including with various people in government) use it as a basis for writing to the Presidency. (A visit to the Presidency indeed also took place.) In a later email to Romm (November 2014), one of the co-ordinators offered us the update that 'Kha Ri Gude is back in our region but out of 23 districts it's 10 districts now, at least it's better than nothing'.

The gist of our report

As indicated above, our report on the provincial visit (Romm, Dichaba, Anakoka, 2014), was written in a style that bore in mind its 'accessibility' for those wishing to use it for furthering literacy initiatives. Our report was combined with other provincial visits before being sent to the College of Education and the community engagement directorate of the university. In our report we highlighted what we perceived as having come out very strongly as benefits for learners in terms of their sense of personal and community wellbeing.

Participants' expressions of a sense of self-reliance included that:

- They are able to go to the bank (or use ATM machines) without relying on literate persons to help them.

- They are not cheated by others when they ask them to get airtime on their phones for them.

- They can send sms's and can read sms's and can type numbers in when wanting to communicate with people.

- They have learned a lot about various illnesses—e.g. HIV and AIDS and TB and also the value of cleanliness.

- They can read the hymns when these are sung at Church; and when they are told to open a section in the Bible to read it, they are able to do this.

- They also learned the value of starting their own gardens as ways of sustaining themselves and many do do this—although they still could do with more support e.g. in terms of getting seeds or in terms of options for water. (At present they are fetching water from distant rivers.)

Increased involvement in their communities included participant activities such as:

- They are chosen for leadership positions in the community. For example, many of them now serve on the School Governing Bodies [SGBs] and they also take leadership positions e.g. in the Church, where some of them are treasurers.

- They can help their own children with school work and also other children—in one centre a Kha Ri Gude graduate is volunteering her services for the pre-school that was created by the community.

- Their confidence and self-esteem has increased and therefore they are able to participate actively in community meetings; and now that their roles as modern women are clearly defined they can help, support, and counsel other women and their

own children when a need arises.

- Because they meet each other in the classes, opportunities become created for starting projects - e.g. the bakery project is run by Kha Ri Gude graduates who trust each other and the pre-school initiative (a voluntary one) also involved Kha Ri Gude graduates. Also some have set up beadwork groups and gardens in groups.

- The spirit of teamwork has affected many of them in terms of setting up small projects and also doing voluntary work in the community - for example, some mentioned fetching wood for the school or they give other children food and clothes.

- They have gained more respect in the community because of being graduates.

Further to their involvement in the campaign, most of the learners would like to continue their education: some mentioned they would like to go up to matric and even further. The VEs too would like to further their education (e.g. via Unisa).

Notably, all of these expressions of the participants are in line with the MDGs mentioned in our background discussion to the campaign above. These goals became 'lived' for the vast majority of the participants in that they felt more confidently engaged in economic, social and political life.

As part of our report, we also noted certain challenges:

- *Six months is not sufficient for them to learn.* Most learners felt that they needed more time to consolidate their knowledge and also some additional extra knowledge is needed, such as learning how to price goods if they start a business and how to save sufficient for re-investment in the project.

- *Many felt that further skills training and further study is essential.*

- Many of them feel that their businesses suffer because they do not have the *basic machinery* such as a sewing machine or a

machine for sewing shoes.

• Many do not know how to access *seeds for gardens (besides water being a challenge).*

• They are very eager and can set up their own projects, but the little profit they receive they use for their day-to-day needs instead of saving the money or using it for project needs. The project therefore can collapse (as happened to the poultry project that they were proud of in 2013). Often the projects lack sustainability skills.

Our recommendations to the government were that**:**

• *Kha Ri Gude should become extended beyond 6 months* so that learning (literacy and numeracy) can be consolidated. Also, this longer period would enable the curriculum to be to 'beefed up' to include business skills training and how to manage projects (and basic pricing and re-investment into the business). Graduates also *need other skills training*, e.g. advanced sewing (to make school uniforms), poultry management (including disease management), shoe-making and repairing, using recycling material to make products, etc.

• *Abet [Adult Basic Education and Training] level 2 should also be offered by Kha Ri Gude* (by using the same model of reaching learners) so that learners have access to the learning sites.

• *The government should take a more active role in linking up various organisations with Kha Ri Gude graduates* (e.g. through the coordinators) so that they can be supported in their further activities in setting up small businesses and maintaining these and scaling them up. These can be NGOs, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Social Development, etc., where links should be made with Kha Ri Gude learners to look for further options for development.

• The drastic reduction of the Kha Ri Gude program especially in 2014 *needs to be looked into and reconsidered,* as the

> campaign has the promise of making such a vast difference
> in the lives of all those involved in it (including others in the
> community who benefit from having knowledgeable, caring and
> confident people in their midst, thanks in large part to the Kha
> Ri Gude process).

Besides our hoping to influence the relevant government officials to
consider re-working the campaign accordingly, we also pointed out
in our report that the university community engagement directorate
can consider ways in which it can play a role in supporting continuing
initiatives to strengthen the impact of the Kha Ri Gude Campaign. At the
time of writing this article, we have sent a proposal to this directorate
which is awaiting approval.

Concluding remarks: Catalytic validity for justifying research embracing a transformative agenda

In postcolonial educational research, as Bristol notes, it is vital that
research should incite what she calls the 'construction of a social
imagination', to regenerate ways of being in society that have become
sidelined through the history of colonisation (2012:22). Our report
outlined, *inter alia*, the ways of living that could be revitalised by
linking literacy initiatives to personal and community wellbeing; and we
suggested options for various players to take into account accordingly.
Hence, as stated earlier, Romm suggested to the super-coordinator of
the province that she could use our report in correspondence that she
enters into with, for e.g. the Minister of Education.

*The problem of communication breakdown with Government and the
role of our reporting*

The government is one of the stakeholders in this program, as they are
funding and organising it. In the stance that we took in the report, we
noted the communication breakdown as specified by the people to whom
we spoke, and as evident from the accounts that we heard at the meeting
at Tombo. In this case, we considered that since literacy is a human right
(cf. Merrian & Kee, 2014:141) and given the goals as initially specified
by the government, our duty was to show care for those most in need.
These were mainly the would-be learners (for 2014) and the VEs (who
benefit from the stipend they get from organising the literacy classes,

in that they can help to support their families and also enrol for further education). The payments to supervisors and coordinators for their work also injects money into these poverty-rife areas. Hence we did feel an allegiance to support these prime participants, especially after hearing the expressed account of the value of the campaign to those to whom we spoke, and their reasons for advocating a strengthening of the campaign. We ourselves did not shy from supporting the ideal of literacy tied to development as built into the intentions of the campaign.

Besides constructing our report, our reporting process involved orally discussing the results of our evaluation with people who have actioning power within the university, in terms of their connections with the government and also in terms of their connections with community leaders who can take on advocacy roles. And we also liaised with research participants, and especially the super-coordinator, in defining how the report might be used.

The notion of catalytic validity

Lather (1986) is well-known for using the term *catalytic validity* as one way of defining how research processes can attain validity other than through the search for so-called 'truth' as representation of some posited realities (as in positivist and post-positivist-oriented approaches to research validation). She argues that research can never be a 'pure' description/explanation, purified of researchers' concerns (Lather, 1986:64). Furthermore, it is never neutral in its social consequences. She points to the importance of recognising 'the reality-altering impact' of the research process (1986:67). Given that research is always reality-altering in some way or another, it is preferable to consciously channel it towards advancing an experience of 'self-determination' of participants (which can be linked to community development, as shown above).

Ozanne and Anderson offer an additional angle on this, which pertains specifically to Community Action Research (CAR), but can also be applied in DE as a community-supportive approach. They define catalytic validity in their CAR project as 'the extent to which people were energised to be involved in and continue the work' (Ozanne & Anderson, 2010:134-135). That is, by virtue of participating in the research process, participants found options for additional (transformative) action, which the research served to catalyse.

Chilisa takes this point yet further. She suggests that researchers/ evaluators can indeed become involved in training people in 'specific forms of social and political action' if participants request this. In any case, she argues that within what she calls postcolonial research paradigms some 'prompting of action' on the part of participants (towards increased empowerment) is likely to take place via the research, so that the research then becomes valid in terms of the criterion of catalytic validity (Chilisa, 2012:172).

In similar vein, Bristol (2012:16) expresses that in postcolonial research, agents are ideally energised towards nurturing 'educational transformation' (linked to Indigenous understandings of valued ways of being) and the research is judged as worthy insofar as people become thus energised/empowered.

These accounts of catalytic validity indicate how it can serve to validate research in terms of a pragmatically-oriented epistemology. Within a constructivist approach to knowing with a transformative or pragmatic twist (cf. Chilisa, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Romm, 2006, 2014 a,b), the distinction between 'research' as an *enterprise of developing social reality-construction* and 'evaluation' as *an enterprise aimed at advancing empowerment/social justice,* admittedly becomes fuzzy - as in the case of our involvement in assessing the Kha Ri Gude Campaign. Our research endeavour entailed engaging with (specific) actors so that the research could become a vehicle to advance valued development.

Endnotes

[1] Kha Ri Gude is the Tshivenda word for 'let us learn'.

[2] Collaboration can of course be instantiated in different ways. Cousins, Whitmore, & Shulha propose that we can conceptualise types of collaboration along three dimensions: control of decisions as to how to proceed; control of stakeholder selection; and depth of participation of stakeholders (2013:9).

[3] This is also the approach adopted by Romm in her discussions on accountability in social research (2001, 2002, 2010, 2014a).

[4] McKay and Romm (2014:6) indicate that in keeping with the South

African Constitution's provision for equality of languages, the campaign developed its core literacy and numeracy manuals in all 11 official South African languages—Tshivenda, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sepedi, Setswana, Xitsonga, Sesotho, Afrikaans, siSwati, isiNdebele and English.

[5] This ties in with Darder and Uriarte's point that 'race' and 'class' analyses of exploitative social relations cannot be separated when considering possibilities for shifting human relationships and offering options for empowering marginalised participants to develop new ways of expressing themselves in communities (2012: 72).

[6] Esther Njiro and XoliswaTawana. The latter conducted the session in the mother tongue of the learners.

[7] Mufungulwa Anakoka.

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Appendix 1: Our focus group guiding questions

1. Since you have been in the KHA RI GUDE campaign, have you been able to start a community project, example, vegetable garden, soup kitchen, etc.?

2. Through engagement in the campaign, what type of community participation are you involved in, example, church activities, political involvement, volunteering work, etc.

3. Since you have been in the campaign have you been able to start your own or with others a business enterprise, income generating activity, or did you find work or promotion (or just work better with others at work) because you can now do your work better?

4. Regarding your involvement in the KHA RI GUDE campaign, has it contributed towards you having to assist in your child's or grand child's school work, participating in the SGB's [School Governing Bodies]?

5. Are you able to look after your health better now and the health of others after attending the KHA RI GUDE campaign?

6. Have you considered studying further to ABET level 2 and maybe until you obtain matric?

7. Please let us know if there is anything else that you can think of where the Kha Ri Gude has impacted on you and/or on the community?

8. What do you think could be done to extend the campaign in future and also what can be done to support you more in future to improve your lives (and the quality of life in the community)? What do you think is still needed?

Finally, we are very interested to know how you experienced the discussion today. Do you think you learned from one another? Please give examples if so. Do you think you learned from hearing our questions and creating answers? Did our questions help you to think about the way in which the campaign has an impact? We are interested in any comments that you have about the session today! Who wants to start?

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