

Abstract submitted for the Mount Kenya University Annual research and
Innovation conference; August 28th -30th, 2013

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Sub-theme: Education and Community Development

Title: Gender Education Liberation Agenda: An Art-Based Participatory
Approach

Abstract:

Research in the social and human sciences requires methods and approaches that seek not only to interpret the social reality and experiences of the participants, but also to generate their empowerment. By so-doing, research moves from the confines of a research process to transforming societies and initiating development in communities. Although vision 2030 provides for political, economic and social pillars, this paper sought to demonstrate fundamental interventions possible in the social pillar through education and community development. Although several approaches and frameworks have been developed in the methods in participatory frameworks, this paper focused on an art-based approach that developed new frontiers in methodology that develop not only education but awareness critical to transforming utilization of individual and group local knowledge for socio-economic development. The art-based participatory approaches to research and engagement of communities for socio-economic development lie at the heart of the much needed development and transformation of communities in Kenya. From the findings of a doctoral research study that investigated the contribution of hip hop music to the construction of personal identity of late female adolescents through the utilisation of participatory visual

methodologies, this paper reflected on the research process through the testimonies of the participations with regard to their empowerment and liberation during the process. The paper demonstrates the significance of an art based participatory research approach to conscientising and driving actions and agenda aimed at developing communities. This is done through enhancement of participation, development and utilization of local knowledge and facilitation of a conscientisation process towards identification of community-self strengths and weaknesses. By so doing, the process opens up critical spaces through which the participants can determine solutions to critical challenges and development of strategies aimed at advancing as well as mitigation of issues and challenges in community development education.

Key words: Education, Participatory research approaches; visual methodologies; art based approaches; community development