

Collaborative synergy: Community-based research as a catalyst for enhancing community wellbeing in KwaZulu-Natal



Authors:

Angeline S. Ngcobo¹ 
Ernest N. Khalema² 
Hosea O. Patrick^{3,4} 

Affiliations:

¹Community Development,
School of Built Environment
and Development Studies,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Durban, South Africa

²College of Law and
Management Studies,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Durban, South Africa

³Africa and Black Diaspora
Studies Program, Faculty of
Humanities, McMaster
University, Hamilton, Canada

⁴Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of KwaZulu Natal,
Durban, South Africa

Corresponding author:

Hosea Patrick,
patrick@mcmaster.ca

Dates:

Received: 08 July 2025
Accepted: 06 Dec. 2025
Published: 08 July 2026

How to cite this article:

Ngcobo, A.S., Khalema, E.N.
& Patrick, H.O., 2026,
'Collaborative synergy:
Community-based research
as a catalyst for enhancing
community wellbeing in
KwaZulu-Natal', *Inkanyiso*
18(1), a185. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ink.v18i1.185>

Read online:



Scan this QR
code with your
smart phone or
mobile device
to read online.

This article explores how community-based research (CBR) can serve as a transformative and collaborative method for addressing community challenges, poverty, and exclusion in KwaZulu-Natal. Over 30 years have passed since South Africa achieved freedom, during which the government has funded numerous CBR projects to understand community needs and address power disparities to enhance community well-being. Despite these efforts, living conditions in many communities have deteriorated because of rising poverty, unemployment and exclusion. Consequently, we adopted a social justice and emancipation approach, guided by critical theory, to empower marginalised groups and improve their well-being. The study employed qualitative research methods, including in-depth semi-structured interviews with five senior government officials who fund CBR, 10 senior researchers specialising in CBR, and two focus group discussions with community members and leaders. Additionally, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to gain significant insights from researchers, community members and government officials. The findings reveal that whilst CBR holds substantial potential for addressing complex social issues in KwaZulu-Natal, its effectiveness is hindered by challenges related to power dynamics, resource limitations and community exclusion.

Contribution: This article proposes a framework to address challenges associated with interventions, project implementation, discrimination and community capacity-building. This framework aims to enhance community knowledge and equip them to tackle their challenges and improve their well-being. Furthermore, we advocate for a shift from a top-down approach to participatory strategies that enable communities to articulate their needs and co-create knowledge for sustainable solutions.

Keywords: community-based research; participatory action research; inclusion; knowledge co-creation; capacity building.

Introduction

The conversation around community engagement in research and policy development is gaining traction in science-community interactions (Bracic 2018; Ocloo & Matthews 2016; Oliver et al. 2022; Tan et al. 2025). Within this, community-based research (CBR) is emerging as a vital approach to fostering community inclusion and capacity-building whilst also addressing the power dynamics between researchers and communities (Campano, Ghiso & Welch 2015; Israel et al. 2019; Le Dantec & Fox 2015). This collaborative synergy positions CBR as a powerful catalyst for enhancing community well-being. This article, using KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa as a case in point, explores how CBR can serve as a transformative and collaborative method for addressing community needs.

For context, KwaZulu-Natal is one of South Africa's largest provinces (Patrick 2021a; 2021b), home to diverse communities, each with its own unique cultural history and challenges. Despite its stunning landscapes and rich historical background, the region is not immune to the persistent injustices and inequalities seen globally. The legacy of colonialism and oppressive legislation has led to unequal development in South Africa's economic, social, and political spheres (Hosea et al. 2023). In 1994, South Africa achieved freedom, with citizens voting for the African National Congress (ANC), which pledged to end injustices and inequalities stemming from apartheid (Lues 2014). Since then, government institutions have

Copyright: © 2026. The Authors. Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

funded numerous CBR projects to understand and improve living conditions in these communities. However, despite these efforts, poverty and social inequality persist (Ngcobo 2023). As a case in point, the evidence presented in Figure 1 illustrates, from a demographical and geographical perspective, destitution and inequality prevalent in South Africa. Whilst on one side of the same city, affluence in terms of wealth, good standard of living and government amenities is prevalent, the other side of town experiences a sharp contrast in terms of the incidence of lack of social amenities and abject poverty (Powell 2017; Turok 2018). Therefore, we argue that collaboration is critical to tackling the complex issues such as community encounters. When stakeholders work together, they can create enduring and significant solutions that facilitate inclusion and enhance overall community well-being.

Community-based research is recognised as crucial for generating concrete understanding and knowledge to guide policies and programmes aimed at reducing health and socio-economic disparities (Flicker & Savan 2006). Broadly, CBR involves the community in research, leading to positive outcomes such as societal change and social fairness (Strand et al. 2003). Research organisations, through CBR, collaborate with community members to identify and address issues affecting their well-being. Similarly, community development empowers and connects communities in identifying their needs and achieving their goals (Kenny & Connors 2016).

However, Watson-Thompson et al. (2018) argue that community problems cannot be solved with one-size-fits-all solutions; instead, they require multifaceted approaches that support sustained investments of resources over the

long term. Community coalitions can contribute to developing and improving policies and changes that address community issues. This article investigates the challenges faced by communities through the lens of social justice and emancipation, guided by critical theory (CT). Poverty and inequality necessitate CBR to employ systems that encourage constructive and inclusive participation of communities in identifying and solving their challenges. Latopa and Bashir (2015) argue that community development involves improving community well-being through collaborative efforts aligned with sustainable development goals. Community collaboration fosters an understanding of synergies between key objectives, whilst the agenda's uniformity requires a more robust approach to addressing shared and common challenges (UNDP 2016).

Over the years, various CBR projects have been conducted to influence economic changes, policy development and behavioural shifts, as well as to enhance people's knowledge, awareness and perceptions of social issues (Phillips & Pittman 2019). For instance, research organisations in South Africa have implemented numerous CBR projects to understand community dynamics and improve living conditions. However, persistent problems remain, such as increasing poverty, lack of basic community needs, and unfavourable government policies. Beckman, Penney and Cockburn (2011) noted that many CBR projects have had a limited long-term impact on communities.

This article is motivated by the ongoing struggles faced by communities in South Africa, even after 30 years of democracy (see Friedman 2019; Masipa 2018; Mayekiso 2023; Patrick 2021b; Patrick et al. 2023). Despite the millions of rand spent



Source: World Bank Group, 2018, *Overcoming poverty and inequality in South Africa: An assessment of drivers, constraints and opportunities*, World Bank

FIGURE 1: Poverty and inequality in South Africa.

by government departments to fund CBR projects aimed at understanding community needs, significant issues persist. The critical question is whether the government truly comprehends the severe conditions experienced by these communities. If so, why have improvements not been realised? Using a desktop study approach, this article gathers secondary data to explore the underlying issues contributing to increased poverty despite the implementation of CBR projects in South Africa.

Theoretical framing

This article emphasises social justice and emancipation, employing CT to highlight the importance of empowering marginalised groups and advancing social justice (Butcher 2022; Israel et al. 2019; Todici et al. 2022). The framework hereby challenges power structures whilst amplifying marginalised voices and promoting social justice. The CT framework, therefore, prompts an investigation into power dynamics in society, examining who holds power and how it is distributed, as well as its impact on knowledge production (Butcher 2022; Pitsoe & Vlăduțescu 2024). Within the confines of CBR, CT criticises the top-down dynamics of traditional knowledge production whilst promoting community members as equitable partners in the coproduction of knowledge. Using the CT framework, the goal of research is to understand community needs rather than change them (Butcher 2022; Todici et al. 2022). Hence, research questions are designed to be community-driven, and outcomes are geared towards policy change, empowerment and actionable actions.

The findings reveal that communities are often excluded from having meaningful influence over the research process. However, CBR initiatives should prioritise community ownership and engagement. This aligns with Freire's ([1970] 2005) concept of the 'pedagogy of the oppressed', which advocates for the empowerment of marginalised individuals through critical consciousness and collaboration.

Additionally, the findings indicate that researchers face various challenges when implementing CBR, including political influence and pressure to collaborate with specific community members linked to the ruling party, thereby marginalising others. This undermines the core principles of emancipation and social justice. For instance, CBR projects should adopt inclusive strategies that ensure equal representation of diverse viewpoints from the project's inception (Chevalier 2019). Moreover, participatory action research (PAR) adheres to the principles of social justice and emancipation by fostering collaboration, community ownership, and measurable outcomes (Melro et al. 2025).

From the above summation on CT influence on CBR, our position in this article is that applying CT to CBR initiatives in KwaZulu-Natal can significantly enhance their impact by addressing deep-rooted social inequalities and promoting community well-being. Critical theory challenges traditional power structures and emphasises the importance of social

justice, making it a powerful lens for CBR. By centring the voices of marginalised communities and encouraging participatory, emancipatory approaches, CBR becomes a tool not only for understanding social issues but also for transforming them. In KwaZulu-Natal, where communities frequently face systemic challenges related to poverty, health disparities and historical marginalisation, CT can guide researchers in co-creating knowledge with local stakeholders. This approach fosters mutual respect, reflexivity, and action-oriented outcomes that align with the community's needs and aspirations. Ultimately, integrating CT into CBR ensures that research is not only academically rigorous but also socially responsive, empowering communities to drive meaningful change and advocate for their own futures.

Research methods and design

This article employed qualitative research to explore the underlying issues contributing to increased poverty despite the implementation of CBR projects. This approach provided deep insights into why government departments often do not utilise CBR reports and recommendations for the projects they fund to understand community needs (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). Additionally, this rigorous approach addressed broader questions by offering insights that might have been overlooked if the focus was solely on the community, without considering the roles of researchers (CBR implementers) and government officials (project funders) in fulfilling their mandates (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011; Hoover & Krishnamurti 2010). Boyd (2014) supported this by highlighting the importance of qualitative methods in examining complex community issues to obtain broad perspectives from numerous stakeholders.

To gather data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five ($N = 5$) senior government officials and 10 ($N = 10$) researchers specialising in CBR. Additionally, two focus group discussions were held, each with 10 participants who are community leaders and members, to understand their views on CBR and its benefits for the community in KwaZulu-Natal. The article utilised interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives on CBR implementation and its impact on communities. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was beneficial, as it strengthened the study through data triangulation, providing insightful perspectives on participants' experiences regarding collaborative synergy and the impact of CBR on social well-being (Taylor 2015).

With participants' consent, focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews were recorded. The article benefited from IPA data analysis, which involved systematically reviewing transcripts multiple times and identifying emerging themes. The data were analysed based on the relevant themes of this article, focusing on similarities and differences in participants' experiences to yield a thorough understanding of the examined phenomena (Chatfield 2022). Additionally, NVIVO software was used to manage and organise large volumes of data, enabling a detailed examination of complex datasets.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from University of Kwazulu-Natal and Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (No. [HSSREC/00003009/2021]).

Results

The findings from the research project are presented in the following emerging themes.

Researchers rely on funders to implement their recommendations

The participants revealed that they rely on funders to take their research recommendations and use them to improve the living conditions of communities. In addition, the result suggests that researchers believe it is the government's mandate to implement research recommendations:

'We always rely on the funders that, they will implement our research recommendations.' (P1, Senior researcher, female)

'With the type of project that I have been doing, the most important thing is that it must generate discussion because we are not the intervention implementers; it is not our mandate. It is the government mandate and other organisations.' (P7, senior research fellow, female)

'When we get awarded CBR, it usually comes with the funder's direction on how they expect it to be implemented, leaving us as researchers with no choice but to follow contractual obligations.' (P3, Research Director, male)

Challenges caused by the community leaders

Challenges caused by the community leaders were raised by a participant as follows:

'In the community, we face many challenges when implementing research projects. Most of the time, we are affected by political influence. For example, we the community challenges. Nevertheless, we are sometimes forced to work with the community members affiliated with the ruling political party, which excludes other community members.' (P2, Senior researcher, female)

Presentation of focus group discussion results (community in KwaZulu-Natal)

The section below presents the result of the focus group discussion conducted in one of the rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal.

The in-and-out flow of researchers results in a lack of interest in community-based research projects

The participants indicated that they do not benefit from participating in CBR, except for the information from the researchers related to the issues affecting the community. The focus group discussion community members further suggest that researchers do not help or build them to deal with whatever was discovered in those communities.

They stated that there are so many CBR projects that have been conducted in their area, but would be lying if saying that there is something that they benefited from research, except for providing information to the researchers.

The focus group discussion community members stated that the research that has been conducted has never helped anyone; it is like they come to open up things that they do not want to discuss then leave them like that, not even assisting them on how they can help themselves.

Usually, when government departments award them the CBR grants, they do not give them enough time to implement these projects meaningfully. As a result, they would have no choice but to collect the data as soon as possible so they will not miss the deadline. Then they will have no choice but to bring the fieldworkers excluding the community, into the planning process.

Presentation of in-depth individual interviews from the government leadership

This section presents the findings from data collected from the government institution in KwaZulu-Natal. All the participants are leaders and decision-makers regarding CBR project funding and intervention implementation based on the research recommendations.

Community-based research is used to identify the community's needs

The participants revealed that funding for CBR is decided based on the community's needs. They further indicated that the government institution develops interventions based on CBR recommendations as a responsive strategy to the community's needs:

'Community-based research projects are identified based on the needs of the communities. Then, when we craft or develop interventions for the programmes, we can develop programmes that will be appropriate and more responsive to what the community needs.' (P5, Municipal senior staff, male)

'We hear from them what they require because if you put something they do not need, it will not work; it will be just a waste of time and resources. So the process of community-based research projects must be community-driven.' (P6, Municipal senior staff, female)

A lack of resources is impeding the implementation of community-based research findings

The findings revealed a lack of funding within the government institution. The participants indicated that when they are ready to implement the research recommendations or interventions, they sometimes discover that the projects are no longer a government priority. Therefore, they ultimately fail to take action regarding those specific projects. Furthermore, the participants highlighted the lack of resource constraints, which ultimately led to the phasing out of developmental projects.

'When you are ready to implement, you will discover that the project is no longer a priority because they have moved on to other projects that they believe should be prioritized. So those are some of the challenges and conflicts within the department. The main issue is a scarcity of resources. The department has about 110 wards and cannot please everyone. Therefore, we look at what is available, prioritize critical projects within resource constraints, and phase out developmental projects based on the organization's available capacity, for example, when dealing with extreme cases of the country's COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest. Therefore, there were numerous factors influencing the department's resources. For example, we may plan to deliver projects A and B, but the entire plan is thrown into disarray if disaster strikes. When that happens, it forces us to refocus and re-engineer whatever plans we had so that we can address the projects that require immediate attention.' (P6, Municipal senior staff, female)

Discussion

The findings highlight several critical challenges affecting the effectiveness and sustainability of CBR initiatives. This reveals a complex interplay of roles, expectations and structural limitations within CBR initiatives. A key issue is the heavy reliance of researchers on external funders to implement their recommendations. This dependency creates a disconnect between research outputs and tangible community benefits, hereby often creating delays or preventing the translation of research findings into tangible community benefits, especially when funding is inconsistent or misaligned with community priorities (see Ayalew et al. 2020; Beckman & Wood 2023; Stevahn, Anderson & Hasart 2016; Yaakub, Kassim & Tumin 2025). This is consistent with Zurynski et al. (2021) study, which argues that researchers tend to prioritise the funders, leading to a situation of 'dollar-for-dollar returns'. In the same vein, funders' influence adds another layer of complexity. Contractual obligations and predetermined implementation strategies limit researchers' autonomy, sometimes sidelining community priorities. This raises critical questions about the participatory ethos of CBR; if communities are excluded from planning and decision-making because of time constraints or political interference, research risks becoming extractive rather than empowering.

Additionally, the transient nature of researcher involvement, characterised by short-term engagements, leads to a lack of continuity and a diminished sense of community trust. Researchers perceive their role as knowledge generators rather than intervention implementers, emphasising that implementation falls under the government's mandate. Whilst this delineation of responsibility is understandable, it often results in communities feeling abandoned after contributing valuable insights. The 'in-and-out' nature of researcher engagement further erodes trust and diminishes the perceived value of CBR, as community members report little to no benefit beyond information sharing. And as Corbett and Le Dantec (2018) argued, trust is a vital component of community participation. This 'in-and-out' pattern undermines long-term commitment and weakens the potential for meaningful impact.

Despite these challenges, CBR remains a valuable tool for identifying and articulating community needs (Ayalew et al. 2020; Beckman & Wood 2023; Halseth et al. 2016; Stevahn et al. 2016). It provides a platform for marginalised voices and fosters participatory approaches to problem-solving (Alamgir, Roy & Taverna 2024; Kehler 2025; Sousa 2021). However, the lack of resources both financial and infrastructural continues to impede the implementation of research findings. Communities are often left with well-documented problems but without the means to act on proposed solutions (Halseth et al. 2016; Yaakub et al. 2025).

To address these issues, there is a need for more sustainable funding models, stronger partnerships between researchers and communities, and capacity-building efforts that empower local stakeholders to lead and sustain initiatives. Long-term research engagement and institutional support are also essential to ensure that CBR moves beyond data collection to drive real, lasting change. Ultimately, aligning research efforts with community empowerment and resource mobilisation is key to unlocking the full potential of CBR.

Within the context of our case study, persistent poverty and inequality despite significant government expenditure funding different CBRs to improve well-being in KwaZulu-Natal are very alarming (see Blose et al. 2021; Ngcobo, Khalema & Makusha 2024; Nkambule 2017). This is because CBR projects are well-known for creating important information to direct policy and lower socio-economic inequalities (Flicker & Savan 2006). Therefore, this article highlights a disparity in research findings, governmental actions, and the implementation of interventions aimed at improving community well-being. This article reveals an overwhelming failure in converting research into significant change, challenging the concept of 'collaborative synergy' promoted within CBR frameworks. One interesting problem we discovered is how funders and researchers view their roles and responsibilities. For example, researchers frequently perceive themselves as knowledge creators, depending on funding entities (government institutions) to execute recommendations in the form of interventions as part of their mandate. Therefore, this approach creates a dependence paradigm that externalises responsibility, potentially reducing researchers' accountability for ensuring that CBR projects result in impactful societal benefits. Moreover, the funder's instructions on how researchers should carry out CBR projects limit their ability to implement the project in a way that positively impacts all community members. As a result, this top-down approach contradicts the fundamental principles of PAR, which affirms community involvement from the beginning of the project and ownership over the research process (Cornish et al. 2023).

The article revealed that conducting CBR projects provides obstacles because of community leaders, who may be influenced by political or cultural affiliation, marginalising other community members and undermining the criticality of inclusion that PAR aims to attain. Furthermore, community members highlighted that CBR is perceived as an extractive method since researchers collect data and leave without

sharing the result or giving any identifiable benefits to enable community members to handle their problems. This 'in-and-out arrival of researchers' reduces confidence and creates disappointment, affecting the possibility of collaborative action. In addition, it also indicates a failure to implement a participatory method, wherein researchers and communities collaboratively create knowledge that results in lasting community-driven initiatives (Koch, Selim & Kralik 2002). The senior government officials also admitted that they fund CBR projects to identify community needs and guide intervention plans. However, they also highlighted that they usually encounter challenges implementing intervention strategies because of a lack of funds and sometimes changing priorities. Therefore, how government departments operate raises doubts about their commitment to improving community conditions using evidence-based policymaking and their position to implement inclusive interventions for community well-being.

From our findings, we could argue that government perspectives highlight good intentions but underscore systemic challenges. Whilst interventions are designed to be responsive to community needs, resource scarcity and shifting priorities exacerbated by crises like coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) impede implementation. This misalignment between research timelines, funding cycles, and policy agendas perpetuates a cycle where well-documented problems remain unresolved. Overall, these findings call for rethinking CBR governance. In this sense, strengthening collaboration among researchers, funders, government, and communities is essential to ensure continuity, shared accountability, and resource mobilisation. Without addressing these structural and relational gaps, CBR risks reinforcing the very inequities it seeks to dismantle. Considering all these assertions, this article recommends a framework to help researchers implement meaningful research that positively benefits communities. In addition, the recommended framework will assist government departments in addressing challenges to implementing inclusive interventions that benefit all community members.

Recommendations

South African communities have suffered because of poverty, unemployment and inequality. As a result, government departments allocated funding to several CBR projects to gain a deeper understanding of community needs. However, the communities continue to deal with unbearable conditions, including poverty, inequality, and injustice. Therefore, we recommend adopting the following framework for CBR projects to improve community living conditions.

See Figure 2 for a CBR implementation framework.

Recommendation for the government-funding organisation

Call for a proposal

When a government department issues a call for CBR proposals, one of the requirements for awarding the

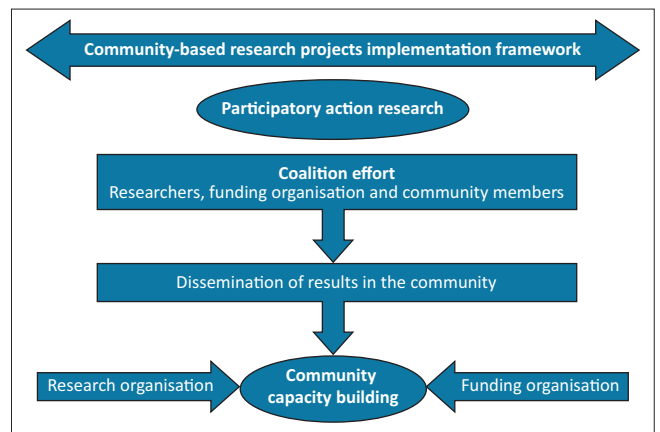


FIGURE 2: Community-based research implementation framework.

projects should be detailed information on how capacity-building and community dialogue will be addressed. In addition, the government department should invest more in adopting the PAR approach to allow the community to identify their problems. This approach is essential because it empowers communities to determine what is important to them and how the identified problems or challenges can be addressed.

As a result, it will address challenges related to a lack of funding, which results in delayed interventions. If the funders or government departments receive research findings or reports but cannot carry out the interventions, the organisation-awarded projects would have implemented capacity-building and community dialogues to assist the community in comprehending the issues identified during the implementation process. Likewise, the PAR approach will directly impact the community, as communities will have collaborated with researchers to identify issues affecting their living conditions. Furthermore, this approach can contribute to the community by providing information and making an immediate change. It will also provide communities with a better understanding of how to overcome obstacles and improve their living conditions. This approach will help ensure that limited government funds are not wasted by implementing CBR that does not directly impact the communities or funding that only produces research outcomes and reports that end up sitting on the shelves, benefiting no one.

Awarding department

No proposal for CBR projects should be funded unless it demonstrates how the research incorporates community capacity-building and provides provision for community dialogue and a dissemination mechanism. Employees' training will also be required to ensure that all the employees (decision-makers on which CBR project should be awarded) understand the importance of community capacity-building and community dialogues related to CBR projects to improve community knowledge and understanding to address community issues. In addition, adopting the PAR approach should be used as the source of knowledge creation to better

understand the real issues affecting the communities rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach.

Recommendations for further research

Future research could also focus on the project planning and resource allocation of government institutions. The relevance of such studies emerged from the findings of this study, which indicated a significant problem of inadequate resources in government/funding institutions, preventing them from implementing community interventions.

Conclusion

Study contribution

This article addresses a critical gap by presenting effective frameworks for implementing CBR. The proposed framework is designed to benefit research organisations, government institutions and local communities by offering practical guidelines for conducting impactful CBR projects. It contributes to existing knowledge by outlining how CBR should be structured to ensure meaningful engagement and sustainable outcomes. Central to the framework is the integration of PAR and community capacity-building, which empower local stakeholders to take ownership of the research process. Rather than waiting for external interventions, which are often delayed or never realised, this approach enables communities to identify challenges, co-develop solutions and implement immediate changes. By fostering collaboration, inclusivity and responsiveness, the framework ensures that research is not only academically sound but also socially transformative. Ultimately, it supports a shift towards more equitable and action-oriented research practices that prioritise the needs and voices of the communities involved.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

CRedit authorship contribution

Angeline S. Ngcobo: Conceptualisation, Formal analysis, writing – original draft, Validation and Data curation. Ernest N. Khalema: Conceptualisation, Validation, Resources, Supervision and Funding Acquisition. Hosea O. Patrick: Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Project administration, Validation, Resources and Writing – review and editing. All authors reviewed the article, contributed to the discussion of results, approved the final version for submission and publication and took responsibility for the integrity of its findings.

Funding information

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship or publication of this article.

Data availability

The authors confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and are the product of professional research. They do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency or that of the publisher.

References

- Alamgir, A., Roy, P. & Taverna, F., 2024, 'Levels of engagement of South Asian participants in health research: Effectiveness of community-based research (CBR) framework', *Journal of Scientific Research and Reports* 30(9), 880–897. <https://doi.org/10.9734/jsrr/2024/v30i92415>
- Ayalew, A.T., Adane, D.T., Obolla, S.S., Ludago, T.B., Sona, B.D. & Biewer, G., 2020, 'From community-based rehabilitation (CBR) services to inclusive development', A study on practice, challenges, and future prospects of CBR in gedee zone (Southern Ethiopia), *Frontiers in Education* 5, 506050. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2020.506050>
- Beckman, M. & Wood, D., 2023, 'The role of community-based research in achieving community impact', in M. Beckman & J. Long, (eds.), *Community-based research*, pp. 33–49, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Beckman, M., Penney, N. & Cockburn, B., 2011, 'Maximizing the impact of community-based research', *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 15(2), 83–104.
- Blose, S.B., Doeraj, S., Padia, S., Pillay, K., Reddy, K. & Chetty, V., 2021, 'Healthcare professionals' perceptions of community-based rehabilitation in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa', *African Journal of Primary Health Care & Family Medicine* 13(1), 2461. <https://doi.org/10.4102/phcfm.v13i1.2461>
- Boyd, M.R., 2014, *Community-based research: Understanding the principles, practices, challenges, and rationale*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY.
- Bracic, A., 2018, 'For better science: The benefits of community engagement in research', *Political Science & Politics* 51(3), 550–553. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096518000446>
- Butcher, H.K., 2022, 'Community-based participatory research guided by critical caring theory', *Nursing Science Quarterly* 35(4), 400–408. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08943184221115103>
- Campano, G., Ghiso, M.P. & Welch, B., 2015, 'Ethical and professional norms in community-based research', *Harvard Educational Review* 85(1), 29–49. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.85.1.a34748522021115m>
- Chatfield, S., 2022, *Strategies to enhance and emphasize the value of your interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research*, American Psychological Association, viewed 30 October 2025, from <https://www.apa.org/education-career/training/qualitative-research-interpretative-phenomenological-analysis>.
- Chevalier, J.M., 2019, *Participatory action research: Theory and methods for engaged inquiry*, Routledge, London.
- Corbett, E. & Le Dantec, C.A., 2018, 'Going the distance: Trust work for citizen participation', in *Proceedings of the 2018 CHI conference on human factors in computing systems*, Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), Montreal, Canada, April 21–26, 2018, pp. 1–13.
- Cornish, F., Breton, N., Moreno-Tabarez, U., Delgado, J., Rua, M., De-Graft Aikins, A. et al., 2023, 'Participatory action research', *Nature Reviews Methods Primers* 3, 34. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43586-023-00214-1>
- Creswell, J.W. & Plano Clark, V.L., 2011, 'Choosing a mixed methods design', *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* 2, 53–106.
- Flicker, S. & Savan, B., 2006, *A snapshot of CBR in Canada*, Wellesley Institute, Toronto.
- Freire, P., [1970] 2005, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, transl. M.B. Ramos, Continuum, New York, NY.
- Friedman, S., 2019, 'The more things change... South Africa's democracy and the burden of the past', *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 86(1), 279–303. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sor.2019.0012>
- Halseth, G., Markey, S., Ryser, L. & Manson, D., 2016, *Doing community-based research: Perspectives from the field*, McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP.
- Hoover, A. & Krishnamurti, S., 2010, 'Survey of college students' MP3 listening: Habits, safety issues, attitudes, and education', *American Journal of Audiology* 19(1), 73–83. [https://doi.org/10.1044/1059-0889\(2010/08-0036\)](https://doi.org/10.1044/1059-0889(2010/08-0036))
- Hosea, O.P., Mdalose, M., Tshishonga, N., Patrick, R.T.I. & Khalema, E.N., 2023, 'Frustration, aggression, and the COVID-19 pandemic impact in South Africa: Insights on the South African July 2021 Protest', *African Journal of Development Studies* 13(4), 85.
- Israel, B.A., Schulz, A.J., Coombe, C.M., Parker, E.A., Reyes, A.G., Rowe, Z. et al., 2019, 'Community-based participatory research', *Urban Health* 272(2), 272–282. <https://doi.org/10.1093/os0/9780190915858.003.0029>

- Kehler, O., 2025, 'Researcher perspectives of power and empowerment in indigenous community-based research', doctoral dissertation, University of Winnipeg.
- Kenny, S. & Connors, P., 2016, *Developing Communities for the Future*, 5th edn., Cengage AU, Melbourne.
- Koch, T., Selim, P. & Kralik, D., 2002, 'Enhancing lives through the development of a community-based participatory action research programme', *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 11, 109–117. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2702.2002.00563.x>
- Latopa, A.-L.A. & Bashir, S.M., 2015, 'Analysis of values and principles of community development: A response to the challenges of building a new Nigeria', in *The 7th Annual National Conference of the College of Administrative Studies and Social Sciences (CASSS)*, Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna, Nigeria, November 02–06, 2015.
- Le Dantec, C.A. & Fox, S., 2015, 'Strangers at the gate: Gaining access, building rapport, and co-constructing community-based research', in *Proceedings of the 18th ACM conference on computer supported cooperative work & social computing*, Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), Vancouver, Canada, March, 14–18, 2015, pp. 1348–1358.
- Lues, L., 2014, 'Citizen participation as a contributor to sustainable democracy in South Africa', *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 80, 789–807. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852314533450>
- Masipa, T., 2018, 'South Africa's transition to democracy and democratic consolidation: A reflection on socio-economic challenges', *Journal of Public Affairs* 18(4), e1713. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.1713>
- Mayekiso, M., 2023, *Township politics: Civic struggles for a new South Africa*, UJ Press, Johannesburg.
- Melro, C.M., Bombay, A., Robinson, M., Martin, D., Bombay, K. & Hackett, L.S., 2025, 'Indigenous youth engagement in research: A scoping review of community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) in Canada and the USA', *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 30, 2435264. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2024.2435264>
- Ngcobo, A.S., 2023, 'Paradoxes of strategic research: Exploring the impact of Human Sciences Research Council's community-based research projects on communities 1999–2019', PhD, University of KwaZulu Natal.
- Ngcobo, S.A., Khalema, N.E. & Makusha, T., 2024, 'Partnership and coalition efforts for community-based research: Towards a liveable urban and rural settlement in KwaZulu-Natal', *CSID Journal of Infrastructure Development* 7(1), 7. <https://doi.org/10.7454/jid.v7.i1.1096>
- Nkambule, S.S., 2017, 'An investigation of perceptions, participation, and socio-economic impacts of community-based conservation programmes: The case of Buffelsdraai, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa', doctoral dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Ocloo, J. & Matthews, R., 2016, 'From tokenism to empowerment: Progressing patient and public involvement in healthcare improvement', *BMJ Quality & Safety* 25(8), 626–632. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjqs-2015-004839>
- Oliver, K., Hopkins, A., Boaz, A., Guillot-Wright, S. & Cairney, P., 2022, 'What works to promote research-policy engagement?', *Evidence & Policy* 18(4), 691–713. <https://doi.org/10.1332/174426421X16420918447616>
- Patrick, H.O., 2021a, 'Climate change and water insecurity in rural uMkhanyakude District Municipality: An assessment of coping strategies for rural South Africa', *H2Open Journal* 4(1), 29–46. <https://doi.org/10.2166/h2oj.2021.009>
- Patrick, H.O., 2021b, 'Climate change, water security, and conflict potentials in South Africa: Assessing conflict and coping strategies in rural South Africa', in W. Leal Filho, J.M. Luetz & D. Ayal (eds.), *Handbook of climate change management: Research, leadership, transformation*, pp. 1775–1792, Springer International Publishing, Cham.
- Patrick, H.O., Mdlalose, M., Tshishonga, N., Inioluwa Patrick, R.T. & Khalema, E.N., 2023, 'Frustration, aggression, and the COVID-19 pandemic impact in South Africa; insights on the South African July 2021 protest', *African Journal of Development Studies* 13(4), 85–107.
- Phillips, R. & Pittman, R.H., 2019, *An introduction to community development*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Pitsoe, V.J. & Vlăduțescu, Ș., 2024, 'A critical analysis of Foucault's power and knowledge in higher education research', *Social Sciences and Education Research Review* 11(1), 41–51.
- Powell, M., 2017, 'A world of fins and fences: Australian and South African shark management in the transoceanic south', *International Review of Environmental History* 3(2), 5–30. <https://doi.org/10.22459/IREH.03.02.2017.02>
- Sousa, J.W., 2021, 'Community members as facilitators: Reclaiming community-based research as inherently of the people', *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement* 14(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.5130/ijcre.v14i2.7767>
- Stevahn, L., Anderson, J.B. & Hasart, T.L., 2016, 'Community-based research (CBR) in the education doctorate: Lessons learned and promising practices', *International Journal of Doctoral Studies* 11, 441. <https://doi.org/10.28945/3620>
- Strand, K., Marullo, S., Cutforth, N.J., Stoecker, R. & Donohue, P., 2003, *Principles of best practice for community-based research*, Michigan Publishing, Ann Arbor.
- Tan, D.W., Crane, L., Haar, T., Heyworth, M., Poulsen, R. & Pellicano, E., 2025, 'Reporting community involvement in autism research: Findings from the journal Autism', *Autism* 29(2), 490–503. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613241275263>
- Taylor, A., 2015, 'Using interpretative phenomenological analysis in a mixed methods research design to explore music in the lives of mature age amateur keyboard players', *Music Education Research* 17, 437–452. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2014.906397>
- Todic, J., Cook, S.C., Spitzer-Shohat, S., Williams, Jr. J.S., Battle, B.A., Jackson, J. et al., 2022, 'Critical theory, culture change, and achieving health equity in health care settings', *Academic Medicine* 97(7), 977–988. <https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.00000000000004680>
- Turok, I., 2018, 'Worlds apart: Spatial inequalities in South Africa', in M.N. Smith (ed.), *Confronting inequalities in South Africa*, pp. 159–182, Jacana Media, Johannesburg.
- UNDP, 2016, *Africa human development report 2016 accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa*, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York, NY. <https://doi.org/10.22004/ag.econ.267638>
- Watson-Thompson, J., May, M.J., Jefferson, J., Young, Y., Young, A. & Schultz, J., 2018, 'Examining the contributions of a community coalition in addressing urban health determinants', *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community* 46, 7–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10852352.2018.1385936>
- World Bank Group, 2018, *Overcoming poverty and inequality in South Africa: An assessment of drivers, constraints and opportunities*, World Bank, Washington, DC.
- Yaakub, F., Kassim, A. & Tumin, M., 2025, 'Navigating complexity: A systematic review of the challenges in Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) implementation', *Journal of Administrative Science* 22(2), 126–160.
- Zurynski, Y., Smith, C.L., Knaggs, G., Meulenbroeks, I. & Braithwaite, J., 2021, 'Funding research translation: How we got here and what to do next', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* 45(5), 420–423. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1753-6405.13131>