

Emerging Participatory Action Research Initiatives in the Field: Experiences from a study of Migration and Settlement in Scotland.

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SSAMIS

Social Support and
Migration in Scotland

Participatory Action Research: Planning -> Action -> Reflection

- Driven by participants, with a shared concern or interest in a particular issue
- Offers a democratic model of who can produce, own and use knowledge,
- Collaborative involving discussion, pooling skills and working together,
- Intended to result in some action, change or improvement on the issue being researched.

(Adapted from Pain et al. 'PAR Toolkit' 2010)

- Focused not only on exploring 'problems' and furthering understanding, but developing 'solutions' and researching the challenges and opportunities involved in putting them into practice
(Nelson et al, 2009; Kindon et al 2007; Pain and Francis 2003)



SSAMIS: Social Security and Migration in Scotland

- 4-year ESRC funded research project to study perspectives and experiences of 'social security' amongst migrants from CEE/FSU in Scotland (November 2013 - November 2017)
- 'Social security' = ways in which migrants able to make themselves socially, economically, personally and culturally secure in their new environment.
- Explores link between experiences and perspectives on 'social security' and longer term intentions regarding settlement in Scotland (Glasgow, Aberdeen, Angus, Aberdeenshire).



Phases of the Research

Preparatory Phase (completed)

- Expert interviews with range of stakeholders (e.g. Local Councils; Service Providers; ESOL practitioners; Migrant Associations) (42)

Phase I (completed)

- In-depth interviews with migrants across 6 locations (200);
- **photo diaries (24) /video diaries (16);**
- Ethnographic observations and fieldnotes

Phase II (January – November 2016)

- **Participatory Action Research**

Phase III (Nov 2016-Nov 2017)

- Analysis, dissemination, impact



SSAMIS
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Photo and Video Diaries

- These were envisaged as participatory methods (but not PAR)
- Designed to allow migrants to conduct investigation themselves, bring together emotional, affective and physical dimensions of their perspectives on social security and settlement and offer them tools for expressing everyday issues (De Leeuw and Rydin 2008)



PAR Phase – Initial Plans

- Analysis of data from Phase I to feed into consultation workshops in 4 research locations
- Each workshop to bring together migrants, policy-makers, service providers, NGOs etc.
- Action Research Sets to come together around particular project ideas
- Project ideas to be developed through collaboration between researchers and members of the action research sets.
- Project researchers to work with these action research sets, maintaining regular contact, helping to facilitate the development and sustainability of the projects



PAR Phase – Developing Ideas

- In reality, ideas have emerged from phase I, which have challenged the more structured approach imagined
- These include:
 - Exhibition: Migrants' lives in Scotland
 - Alternative Ways for Language Learning
 - Community Radio
 - Combatting Loneliness and Isolation
- Small themed meetings focusing on these ideas and potential initiatives as the way forward



Challenges and Dilemmas

- How to maintain the principle of projects being **driven by participants**
- How to engage a range of participants without overburdening
- How to ensure that initiatives are not 'taken over' by more powerful stakeholders
- How to balance shorter-term initiatives with a desire for capacity building and for longer term change

