Exploring Active Citizenship Through Spoken Word Poetry

A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of Arts specializing in Applied Drama and Theatre Studies at the University of Cape Town.

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2021

ABSTRACT:

This dissertation is concerned with developing the South African youth's active participation in formal politics. Spoken word poetry as an applied drama and theatre medium is of particular interest to this study and it argues that the art form can be used as a means of youth development in the area of formal politics. To illustrate its argument, the dissertation discusses how a programme of spoken word poetry was used to address the issue of youth formal political participation and developed a group of young people's enthusiasm to participate in formal national decision-making processes. The programme, titled *Raising Participation*, was conducted with the support of Africa Unite, a non-profit organisation in Cape Town that offered their school club members as participants in the programme. The workshops targeted young people who would be eligible to vote in South Africa's next general elections, set to take place in 2024.

Chapter 2 discusses spoken word poetry as an applied drama and theatre medium and identifies the connections which make spoken word poetry an appropriate art form to use as an applied drama and theatre approach. Chapter 3 discusses the programme of activities, the theoretical framework that informed its design and the methods of data collection and analysis which were used. It also discusses Africa Unite and the partnership between the organisation and the programme. Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the programme and its successes and limitations, concluding the dissertation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

It is because I stood on the shoulders of giants that I was able to reach for this achievement and I would like to dedicate it to: Mbali Kula, Wandile Kula, Thelmar Thela, Molemo Sefolo, Lwandla Sindaphi, Javier Perez, Morné Steyn, Kabi Thulo, Jacques Nashilongweshipwe Mushaandja, Jackie Manyapelo, Nomi Blum, Ntombi Makutshi, Nwabisa Plaatjies, Elikem Kunutsor, Kate Jaskolski, Tendai Mtukwa, Veronica Baxter, Sabila Quiroz, Bongeka Gumede and Yonela Msongelwa, and the rest of the staff and school club members at Africa Unite. I thank you all for your moral support, the resources and constructive feedback.

A special thanks to:

Mama, thank you for lifting my spirit up when I was despondent and raising me headstrong with your advice that is always full of wisdom. Papa, thank you for believing in me. Without your encouragement, I doubt I would have dared to pursue this ambition as early as I did. Your faith in me is the strength that carried me through to the end. The investment you have made in me, both emotional and financial, meant everything to the success of achieving this goal. Words can never completely articulate the full extent of the love and gratitude I feel towards the both of you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

South Africa seems to have a history of marginalising young people from important decision-making processes. Evidence of this exclusion is made apparent by significant moments in history through which "the youth…historically played an important role in changing South African politics" (Booysen et al., 2019). These include the June 1976 Soweto Uprising and the subsequent Twitter fallist movements, which followed in the example of the Soweto Uprising, such as 2015 and 2016's #RhodesMustFall that was also a catalyst for #FeesMustFall. Each campaign was a response to a policy that young people were excluded from participating in the decision-making of, yet which would have significant impact on their livelihoods.

The Soweto Uprising was a response to apartheid's Bantu education language policy, which mandated that "Afrikaans be used as one of the languages of instruction in secondary schools" (Reader's Digest, 1992:440). The language policy was only the tip of the iceberg. The uprising broadened to be a protest against the entire apartheid regime, of which Bantu education was a microcosm. Apartheid was a system which claimed that people of different races were not equal and should be separated and treated differently. It was a regime in which white citizens were considered to be superior to people of colour and it categorised the different races into a racial hierarchy that determined the opportunities which each race would be allowed[1].

Bantu education was implemented as an instrument to systematically justify this racial myth that the regime believed in. It "had been designed specifically to condition Africans to accept the role of menials in a white man's country. Bantu education- with its overcrowded classrooms, inadequately trained teachers and separate, inferior universities- was meant to shatter morale" (Reader's Digest, 1992:441). Hendrik Verwoerd (Reader's Digest, 1992:379), the architect of apartheid, had even said:

> the school…, must equip the Bantu to meet the demands which the economic life… will impose on him… What is the use of teaching a Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice?... Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life.

[1] There were four apartheid racial categorisations, which were: white, African/black, Asian and coloured. The phrase 'people of colour' implies the African/black, Asian and coloured race categorisations.

So, not only did Bantu education seek to teach young Africans to be servants of the white race, but to also serve in the oppressor's language in order to not inconvenience their Afrikaner masters, who preferred to communicate in their own language rather than in English. This is what the Afrikaans language policy was for.

But by 1976 a Black Consciousness (BC) had awakened amongst black people. It was pioneered by the South African Students' Organisation and its president Steve Biko. Its "influence spread into black schools, which was a critical development. A number of teachers who had been trained on black campuses returned to schools to spread the BC message. This was to be a significant factor in Soweto in 1976" (Welsh, 2009:149). David Welsh explains that "the fundamental theme of BC was the need for blacks to overcome the internalised sense of inferiority and the acquiescence in subordination that racial domination had instilled in black people" (2009:146). "Black Consciousness engendered a new sense of pride in millions of Africans: blackness became something to be proud of, to be defiant about and worth fighting for" (Reader's Digest, 1992:441).

This new consciousness emboldened young people to plan a march against the Bantu education language policy. Students "elected an action committee to plan a protest march rally at the Orlando football stadium" (Reader's Digest, 1992:442) that would take place on the 16th of June 1976 and according to the Reader's Digest "more than 20 000 pupils" (1992:440) participated on the day of the protest. Yet, their commitment to the cause was not limited to the day of protest. The Reader's Digest also records that some of the activities that occurred leading up to and following the day of protest included: "Emthonjeni pupils [refusing] to write their social studies examination in Afrikaans, while Orlando West Junior Secondary was faced with a full-scale boycott of the entire June examination" (Reader's Digest, 1992:441). Students also prepared a pamphlet addressed to their parents in which they declared their commitment to Black Consciousness and asserted that they are a generation which "prefers to die from a bullet rather than swallow a poisonous education which relegates [them and their] parents to a position of perpetual subordination" (Reader's Digest, 1992:444). The protests were not only directed to schools and the Bantu Education Department, but also bottle stores and shebeens where large amounts of alcohol were destroyed by students calling for "less liquor, better education" (Reader's Digest, 1992:444).

The students' activities developed into a national movement with neighbouring townships and those, over 1000 kilometres away, in Cape Town joining in the protests. This had a crushing effect on the country's white owned economy, its politics and foreign relations. It is recorded that (Reader's Digest, 1992:444):

> As news of the shooting began appearing on television screens and in newspapers in the rest of the world, South Africa's economy… took a devastating knock: gold shares dropped by an average of 75 cents on the land stock exchange, while De Beers diamond shares fell nearly 15 cents. Big businesses reacted to these developments with alarm.

This, therefore, brought the Afrikaans government to its knees and eventually less than a month later "on 6 July 1976 MC Botha, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, announced the withdrawal of the dual-medium requirement… For the government to back down under pressure was a rare phenomenon" (Welsh, 2009:171). The uprising's victory would not end there; "it brought to an end almost two decades of African political inactivity" (Reader's Digest, 1992:440), which followed the life-sentencing of struggle heroes such as Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu at the Rivonia Trial and also the banning of liberation parties that included the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress. Following the uprising many students went into exile and joined the ANC's armed struggle, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and this "breathed new life into the ANC, which, while not moribund, was certainly dispirited" (Welsh, 2009:170). Two decades after the events of June 1976, in 1996 the politics of the country were already transformed partly because of this injection of youth participation in the liberation project of the ANC. The country became a democracy with the ANC elected to power and a new constitution, that would go on to be praised by the rest of the world, was being ratified. Welsh emphasises that though "the uprising was not the end of apartheid… unmistakably it was the beginning of the end" (2009:171).

This type of youth political participation would not be unique to only apartheid and the Soweto Uprising. Similar youth led movements would occur again in post-apartheid South Africa with the most significant being the #RhodesMustFall (RMF) and #FeesMustFall (FMF) movements, which erupted in 2015 and 2016. #RhodesMustFall was a movement that denounced colonial legacies that still existed in university campuses post the eras of colonialism and apartheid. It was sparked when University of Cape Town (UCT) student, Chumani Maxwele, defaced a

statue of John Cecil Rhodes with faeces. The statue stood publicly at the entrance of the university. As a black person living in a post-apartheid South Africa, Maxwele "found it 'unbearably humiliating to walk every day past a statue glorifying an undeniable racist" (Castro and Tate, 2017:204) and so his actions were a call for the Rhodes statue to be removed. News of his protest went viral on social media and this mobilised the rest of UCT's student body to join in on Maxwele's request. Because they also felt alienated by the legacy of colonisation, which was celebrated across the university's campuses in the statues, paintings and monuments named after historical leaders of black oppression. By requesting for the removal of John Cecil Rhode's statue students were calling for transformation in the universities' identity so that it reflected the democratic and equal nation it was a part of, "since monuments are a way in which heritage and identity are created within nations" (Castro and Tate, 2017:198).

Students' protest action included "hijacking meetings, panels and other platforms held by the University of Cape Town" (Castro and Tate, 2017:204) and in their place they would host sit-ins, in which they initiated the process of transformation by unofficially renaming the spaces they had occupied. An instance of this was, as documented by Castro and Tate (2017:205):

> students occupying the Bremner building that housed the Vice Chancellor's administration office. The building was subsequently renamed Azania House, referring to the classical name for the South-eastern region of Africa, and to the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, a black nationalist party in South Africa.

They also brandished picket signs which read: "#Transform UCT #RhodesFalls", "All Rhodes lead to a colonised mind", "Decolonise UCT", "Rhodes so white" and "I will always be black!". In some instances, students risked getting expelled by burning the university's colonial artworks. It is recorded that "in mid-February 2016, a group of Rhodes Must Fall protesters 'removed and burnt artworks from Fuller Hall and Smuts Hall residences as well as Jameson Hall in the name of ridding UCT of its images of oppressors" (Castro and Tate, 2017:208).

The Rhodes statue did eventually fall and was removed from public view. Yet, the outcomes of the RMF protests were not only limited to the Rhodes statue. The student's unofficial renaming of certain buildings was made official by the university's administration and monuments were renamed to also honour black history and notable black public figures, such as Saartjie Baartman. In addition to Azania House, other monuments that were renamed

included the Jammie Hall and plaza which were renamed to the Sarah Baartman Hall and plaza, in order to memorialise Saartjie Baartman who was a victim of colonisation, used by the French and British as a freak show attraction (Castro and Tate, 2017:208). The renaming of buildings still continues across UCT's campuses years after the RMF protests and the university's administration work in collaboration with students on its transformation project.

Another significant outcome of the Rhodes Must Fall movement was the #FeesMustFall movement. Though the movement was initially an opposition to the plan to increase university fees, it would go on to also include the aims of the RMF movement and the aims of insourcing outsourced workers and increasing their wages. As Godsell et al. observe, "the protest turned from fee increment to outsourced wages to decolonisation and patriarchy" (2016:115). Ultimately, the movement called for free, quality and decolonised education and for an environment on university campuses that was welcoming to workers as much as it was to students. The movement began at the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) but it soon "spread across seven campuses in ten days" (Godsell et al., 2016:109) and became a national movement. "This movement spread throughout the whole of the South African nation causing students in all major universities to order fees to fall just as Rhodes had" (Castro and Tate, 2017:209).

It was important that fees dropped to 0% because many students felt that the high cost of education made the possibility of getting a professional qualification, in order to increase their chances of employability, inaccessible. For many students not being employable meant that they would remain in poverty. So, getting higher education meant getting a ticket out of poverty. This anxiety of the students was succinctly captured by a protest sign which read: "Post racism society says 'you are poor go get a degree'. Colonial elitist Universities says; 'You are too poor to take yourself out of poverty' #WeAreFucked #ShutItDown" (Godsell et al., 2017:117).

Students campaigned for their requests through "varied forms of protest such as sit-ins, street protests, occupations, and artistic performances" (Godsell et al., 2017:102). A significant form of protesting was the use of social media. "Blogs, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Facebook emerged as important reporting tools during the protests" (Godsell et al., 2017:108). This type of protest is what enabled the movement to spread nationally in a short space of time. Through these new media students from different universities would communicate with one another to

unify their protest action, address open letters to university and government officials and educate the rest of the public about the necessity of the movement. They would even counter the negative narratives that journalists reported about the movement. News would report that the students were vandals and looters but in one instance students countered this when they occupied the WITS Senate House, which they had unofficially renamed Solomon Mahlangu House. "Inside their space, the students studied, and cleaned up after themselves, and conveyed this by means of pictures posted on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram" (Godsell et al., 2017:113).

However, the movement was not only limited to cyber networks and university campuses. Students also took the movement to Parliament and the Union Buildings, demanding these formal political structures to acknowledge their campaign and meet its requirements. In the end, "President Jacob Zuma did freeze fees because of these campaigns" (Castro and Tate, 2017:209). In addition to government's response, major banks also got involved to help provide funding to students that were classified as the 'missing middle'. That is students who are not poor enough to qualify for government and university funding, or rich enough to be able to afford the high costs of tertiary education on their own. Through similar types of formal participation students were able to draft a joint memorandum of understanding with university management and workers. "The memorandum cover[ed] matters of immediate concern to protestors such as deferment of examinations; medium-term plans such as constituting an insourcing task team; and the long-term dream of a different society" (Godsell et al., 2017:107-108). Also, like the RMF movement, names of university monuments were officially changed as part of higher education's project of decolonisation, to include those of freedom fighters such as Robert Sobukwe and Solomon Mahlangu. At WITS, the Senate House was officially renamed to Solomon Mahlangu House.

Despite these youth movements, in 2019 the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) reported that there is low representation of registered voters between the ages of 18 and 19 when it comes to elections. Early in January of 2019, news media reported the Electoral Commission saying that less than 20% of 18 and 19-year-olds, who were eligible to vote in the general elections, had registered to vote (Phakagadi, 2019). The *Daily Maverick* wrote that "throughout South Africa's 25 years of democracy, youth voter registration and ballot-casting rates have been lower than those of older categories" (Booysen et al., 2019). Their research showed that the age category of 18-19-year-olds of eligible voters had decreased by 17% in comparison to

the 2014 elections that had 33% of eligible voters in the same category. The age category of 20-29-year-olds had also decreased from 64% in 2014 to 54% in 2019. As the IEC records, "these two age groups constitute… 'the youth'- about half of the South African electorate (17.7 million of the 36 million South Africans who are eligible to vote)" (Booysen et al., 2019). This decline in youth voter participation was so concerning that the IEC had to launch their "X sê" campaign to encourage young people, in their parlance, to register to vote in the general elections that took place on the 8th of May 2019.

Illustrated above is a dissonance in the South African youth's political participation. In the information about previous youth movements is an indication of young people's uneasiness with being marginalised from important decision-making process and their enthusiasm to be part of determining the economic, political and social welfare of their communities and, ultimately, the nation. However, demonstrated in the statistics provided by the IEC is their dispassion towards formal decision-making processes. Instead, they are participating in alternative ways to the formal structures that exist. As indicated by previous youth movements, they are choosing to participate through direct action such as protesting and social media activism. Political Analyst Ebrahim Fakir (GroundUp, 2019) observes that:

> there is a growing tendency for younger people globally to participate less in formal political processes. This doesn't necessarily mean they are agnostic, disengaged or apathetic, it simply means that they express themselves politically in other ways, such as direct action, protests, cultural forums and so on.

Yet, protesting and creating viral social media hashtags every time there is an issue is not sustainable. It is not sustainable because firstly, as Lester Kiewit says, "we are very selective of what we feel passionately about" (Politically Aweh, 2019). This, therefore, also implies that our social media activism and direct action are selective in what they address. Though previous youth led movements have proven to be successful in addressing the pressing issues at the time, they were particular in the issues they addressed. For instance, the RMF movement was particularly about the issue of colonial heritage still eclipsing African heritage in post-apartheid South Africa and the FMF movement was primarily about unaffordable school fees. This selective quality of direct action means that it is not guaranteed that the same type of energy would be mobilised for every other issue that exists in the country and that the less immediate

issues such as climate change would not be prioritised, because not everyone is equally passionate about all social issues. Secondly, another quality which makes social media protests unsustainable is highlighted by a poem written by Mandi Vundla (2018:92) which reads:

> #Taglines
>
> We must preserve our women
> beyond PR against violence.
> Taglines keep us alive for a month.
> When campaigns start to run out of breath
> billboards come down
> pink ribbons fall to their knees
> safety pins grow teeth.
> I pray to God for ad-space to keep my children safe
> but it will be heritage month by then
> the hashtag would have changed

This poem highlights how social media campaigns are unreliable because they are abortive. They tend to last for a limited moment or season until another social issue trends, then the hashtag changes. So, they are not dependable forms of political action and national development because they are inconsistent. A final quality has to do with a critique that Oliver Tambo once made about the "limitations of the Soweto Uprising" (Welsh, 2009:167), in which he said that "it could not be sustainable because it lacked organisation and overall political direction to channel the pupil's anger" (Welsh, 2009:167). The same can be said about all the protests that followed in the example of the Soweto Uprising such as the RMF and FMF movements. So, the youth would benefit more from a type of political action that channels their zeal into formal decision-making structures such as the ballot casting, which are consistent, all-inclusive and have organisation.

This thesis is concerned with developing the South African youth's active participation in formal structures of important decision-making processes. Particularly, their participation in formal politics. There are two ways in which citizens can participate in the politics of South Africa. The first is through representational democracy and the second is through direct action. Representational democracy is the country's official and formal type of political action and is

characterised by political parties, the electoral voting system, parliament and so on. Whereas direct action is the informal type of political participation, which is characterised by forms of activism such as protest march and petition signing. The youth led movements discussed above fall within the informal type of political action. So, by formal politics this thesis refers to representational democracy.

Within the domain of representational democracy, there are two levels at which citizens can participate. These are local and national government levels. Bongeka Gumede (2019) identifies the structures of formal politics, at the level of national government, as:

> the three pillars of government, namely the executive, legislature and the judiciary branches. The Executive is the branch of the government that represents the presidents and the cabinet; the Legislature consists of the different houses such as the parliament and they are responsible for the passing of laws and electing the president as well as monitoring that Executive fulfils its duties towards the people; and lastly, the Judiciary consists of the courts and the high judges.

Ordinary citizens participate in these structures through the electoral voting system, namely the general elections which take place every 5 years. It is said to be a representational system of democracy because in these structures political parties represent the citizens who elected them to advocate for their social desires and needs.

The formal political structures at the level of local government include municipalities, town halls and community councils. These are structures that allow for participation in South African politics beyond the periodic general and local elections. They are the coalface of service delivery and citizens can participate in them to hold government accountable for the social issues it does not address. As the *Executive Summary of the National Development Plan for 2030* (Department of the Presidency, 2012:27) states:

> Legislation provides numerous avenues for citizens to participate in governance beyond elections. Forums such as school governing bodies, wards, committees, community policing forums and clinic committees provide voice to citizens and

> opportunities to shape the institutions closest to them. Communities can also participate in drafting local government plans.

National legislation also encourages government officials to participate in these forums in order to hear the feedback of the citizens which they claim to serve. So that citizens can contribute to the national agenda which government sets, "to help shape the development process" (Department of the Presidency, 2012:474). Instead of government setting an agenda that does not meet the direct needs and demands of the people. Therefore, these avenues "enhance citizen's participation through a variety of two-way information gathering and sharing forums and platforms between citizens and government" (Department of the Presidency, 2012:474). When we talk about formal politics, and participation therein, these are the structures at both local and national levels that are referred to. They are what this thesis hopes to see the active participation of the youth in.

It is important for young people to engage in formal types of political action because the youth make up almost half of the South African population; "those between the ages of 14-35 represent 42% of the total population" (National Youth Development Agency, 2019). Given that they constitute such a large percent of the population than any other age category, this implies that they are the ones who are most affected by the social issues that overwhelm the country, such as the growing unemployment rate that is especially high amongst the youth. Therefore, they will benefit the most from participating in formal political processes at national level that ensure that the people voted into power are those who advocate for their needs and desires. They will also benefit from participating in processes at local level, which enable them to keep an open line of communication with government officials to ensure that their needs remain the priority of national agenda and, if they are not, then hold them accountable.

Not only would the youth benefit but so would South Africa's democracy, because government considers the political participation of citizens as an asset in national development. Likewise, it also thinks of the participation of the youth as an asset. It is for this reason that national legislation (Department of the Presidency, 2015:8-9) mandates that:

> service providers must design policies, strategies and programmes for and with young people by sharing information, creating opportunities and involving them in decision-making as active participants in their own development.

> Young people should own the outcomes of the development process and view human rights as fundamental to development. Government will provide the enabling environment.

This study is important because it seeks to address the social gaps which have been identified, by encouraging young people to participate and contribute to the country's political and social welfare. It is important for the broader society because it seeks to help government meet its aims of nation building, which include collaborating with private citizens and young people in decision-making. It is, therefore, also important for democracy because it encourages participation in formal processes that uphold the values and principles of a fair and organised democracy. Whereas protests can be violent, divisive and are often limited to addressing a single issue. Finally, it is important for young people, because it seeks to empower them to be agents who bring redress to the issues which they face in their own lives and which they are most affected by as a population.

During the youth led movements, art was integral in young people's participation and when "the protest momentum and energy faltered, artworks were created- fine art, poetry, theatre and music performances inspired by the project" (Godsell et al., 2016:110). On some occasions, art was used to facilitate the participation of students back into the protest movements. For instance, during the Fees Must Fall movement a group of students (Swankie Mafoko, Zukolwenkosi Zikalala and Matshepo Khumalo) put up a performance art piece which's "intention was to mobilise students and give them a voice again" (Godsell et al., 2016:111). Using Augusto Boal's methods of developing spectators into spec-actors, student "spectators on the day were allowed to intervene in the action that took place on the steps of the Wits Great Hall" (Godsell et al., 2016:111). This piece engaged with the movement's theme of decolonising the university curriculum and so "the response to this was a performance piece centering on washing 'colonial course packs" (Godsell et al., 2016:110). For that reason, "spectators were invited to continue helping Mafoko to wash course packs that contained colonial content, or content they felt needed to be stripped away from the curriculum" (Godsell et al., 2016:111), as a symbolic act of continuing with the mission towards a free, quality and decolonised education. Therefore, "through art, the hearts of those who had turned their backs against the movement could be recaptured" (Godsell et al., 2016:112).

In the same way that art was used to "give the [FMF] movement a second wind, and mobilise students once again" (Godsell et al., 2016:112), this thesis reasons that art could be similarly used to facilitate the South African youth's participation in formal politics. Spoken word poetry as an applied drama and theatre medium is of particular interest to this study and it argues that the art form can be used as a means of youth development in the area of formal politics. To illustrate its argument, the thesis discusses how a programme of spoken word poetry was used to address the issue of youth formal political participation and developed a group of young people's enthusiasm to participate in formal national decision-making processes. The programme, titled *Raising Participation*, was conducted with the support of Africa Unite, a non-profit organisation in Cape Town that offered their school club members as participants in the programme. Workshop sessions were hosted in 2019, from the 20th of July to the 7th of September, and targeted young people who would be eligible to vote in South Africa's next general elections, set to take place in 2024.

Chapter 2 discusses spoken word poetry as an applied drama and theatre medium and identifies the connections which make spoken word poetry an appropriate art form to use as an applied drama and theatre approach. Chapter 3 discusses the programme, the theoretical framework that informed its design and the methods of data collection and analysis which were used. It also discusses Africa Unite and its partnership with the programme. Finally, chapter 4 discusses the findings of the programme and its successes and limitations. Then, it concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: SPOKEN WORD POETRY AS AN APPLIED DRAMA AND THEATRE MEDIUM

Spoken word poetry is of interest to this study because of its growing popularity in South African youth culture. Although it is an art form with a long history that "can be traced from the protest songs of the Civil Rights Era, to the blues and sermonic traditions of the American South, and as far back as the ancient storytelling traditions of the African "griots" (Parmar and Bain, 2007:134), its popularity in South Africa recently surged. Since 2010 there has been an emergence of a spoken word poetry movement across the country with many groups hosting open mic competitions at least once a month. These include Current State of Poetry in Johannesburg, Spoken Sessions in Pretoria and the Word N Sound Live Literature Company, with branches in both Johannesburg and Cape Town. The Word N Sound Live Literature Company is at the forefront of the spoken word poetry movement in South Africa and is the first to introduce the poetry-slam competition genre in the country.

Spoken word poetry is popular because it allows access to a public forum without any gatekeepers. An artist easily has a large audience made available to them regardless of whether they are published, have fame or a large following on social media, or not. "What this means in practice is that no matter who you are, how much experience or training you have, you can sign up at an open mic or poetry slam and share something" (Myhre, 2016). So, the youth gravitate towards spoken word poetry because its open format allows "for people holding oppressed identities, and/or people with voices that have just generally not been valued (or even noticed) in society" (Myhre, 2016) to be publicly acknowledged and affirmed. For this reason, young people generally use the art form to air their anxieties, desires, hopes and frustrations about society and address the socio-economic and political issues that exist in it. Because they find an environment that is conducive for them to get public support for their ideas.

Penina Muhando Mlama (1991) advocates for integrating the participants cultural literacy in development projects. She believes that a lack of consideration of targeted participants' cultural expression is the reason why many development strategies become ineffective in achieving social transformation in participant's lives and communities. She observes that an imposition of outsider's literacy undermines the targeted participants' genuine participation in development projects. Mlama believes that in order for participants to genuinely express what

they feel and want and contribute that to development strategies, their cultural expression needs to be the main vehicle of communication or else their participation will remain inhibited. Ross Kidd and Martin Byram (1979:10), endorsing Mlama's argument, propose that:

> By neglecting indigenous creative expression, we 'inhibit people from active participation in the process of modernization, because an abrupt denigration of traditional forms of culture means a denial of access to a kind of literacy to which they have been used' (Mathur, 1968). On the other hand, by using a popular theatre which makes use of local forms of cultural expression, 'the creative forces that reside in the people are being brought to bear on the development process (Sherlock, 1975)

Mlama, Kidd and Byram write in the context of Theatre for Development projects that are targeted towards participants whose cultural literacy is not the traditional western (Greek) theatre but indigenous African traditions where "people continue to use their dance, mimes, drama, recitations and storytelling to express their views about their realities, to discuss their problems, to air their fears and aspirations, to condemn and protest against injustice" (Mlama, 1991:63). Despite this difference in context, their ideas are relevant to the subject of this study because they highlight the importance of the choice of the artistic approach and its potential to either make or break genuine participation. They recognise that participation is not only enhanced at the level of the activities which participants take part in but also at the level of the entire framework of the development programme.

It is because of the consideration of Mlama, Kidd and Byram's ideas that this study chose spoken word poetry as an artistic approach, because it is popular amongst the targeted youth. It is one of the popular cultural expressions (amongst drama, dance, music and so on) that South African young people use to analyse themselves, their communities and experiences. So, this study is capitalizing on a cultural expression which the youth already gravitate towards to use it to facilitate their genuine participation and empower them.

Now, spoken word poetry is not an indigenous South African creative expression but is an American popular cultural form. Yet, because of globalisation and its effects of mass communication and production, South African youth culture is predominantly influenced by

American culture. Globalisation is the "transgress [of] boundaries of time, geography, place and culture" (Callahan, 2013:9). Callahan (2013:3) explains that it is:

> "a process of cross-cultural interaction, exchange, and transformation… no longer bound to the inner workings of any particular country or imagined organic community but instead… interwoven systematically with transversals between national territory and intercontinental space".

In this regard, "popular culture does not consist of a play of pure forms and structural relations" (Fabian, 1978:328). Rather, it also moves and continues through space and time. Subsequently, as members of a global society, the South African youth consider themselves through "a kind of relational thinking in which [they] see the nation through the local yet as part of the global" (Callahan, 2013:3). This global relational thinking makes the cultures of other countries easily accessible to South African young people and they are, therefore, able to simply understand and appreciate them and take them on as their own. So, even though spoken word poetry is not a cultural form that is local to South Africa, because of the global relational thinking through which young people perceive themselves they do not see spoken word poetry, and American culture in general, as foreign and untouchable but as their own culture that they can freely use for their own creative expression. Therefore, the fact that spoken word poetry is an American cultural form does not make it peripheral to a South African cultural context.

Spoken word poetry is also of interest to this study as an applied drama and theatre medium because it is an oral art form. Earlier, it has been identified that spoken word poetry has its origins in the ancient storytelling traditions of the African griots which were "a class of travelling poets, musicians, and storytellers who maintain[ed] a tradition of oral history in parts of west Africa" (Stevenson, 2010:413). This means that spoken word poetry's roots are settled in oral tradition which "utilizes the dynamic range of the voice and engages the vernacular speech" (Parmar and Bain, 2007:131) and poems labelled as spoken word are considered "not complete until they are re-infused with the rhythms and the melodies of the human voice" (Dyson, 2005:159). Voice and oral tradition are not unique from drama, theatre and performance but are one of the mediums of dramatic art. As Augusto Boal identifies, "the first word of the theatrical vocabulary is the human body, the main source of sound and movement. Therefore, to control the means of theatrical production, man must, first of all, control his own body" (1979:125). This implies that theatre is primarily made up of everything that constitutes

the human body and voice, and orality are some of the qualities which make up the human body and make it expressive. So, spoken word poetry is of interest as an applied drama and theatre medium because it is performance based.

People also tend to interchangeably use 'performance poetry' to refer to spoken word poetry, because of its quality of being performed. Poems falling under this style of poetry are poems written to be performed. Whereas Susan Weinstein refers to poems written particularly to be read as "page poetry, literary poetry, or academic poetry, which is written primarily to be read on the page" (2010:7). A "spoken word poem cannot be realized completely until performed and recited" (Parmar and Bain, 2007:131). In the publication of a spoken word poem "the performance is not peripheral, rather it is an integral part of the 'communicative event" (Parmar and Bain, 2007:136).

Yet, spoken word poetry is still literary art and it typically starts off as a literary art form before it develops into a performance art form. So, even though spoken word poetry is intended for performance, the literary tradition is also equally important. Therefore, figurative and sound devices such as imagery, rhyme and rhythm are also considered to strengthen the quality of a spoken word poem. Ultimately, spoken word poetry is the marriage between creative writing and theatre. Elizabeth Acevedo, a 2014 American National Poetry Slam Champion, has been quoted saying that "spoken word is really about combining theatre and creative writing and figuring out how to make words live on stage" (Dunkins, 2015). Her peer, American poet Sarah Kay who is famous for her Ted Talk presentation, *If I should have a Daughter*, echoes the same notion that "spoken word poetry is where poetry meets theatre" (Kay, 2011). Irrespective of creative writing being a significant aspect of spoken word poetry, it is still an appropriate choice as an applied drama and theatre medium because it is written content that is disseminated through dramatic means and cannot be fully realised until it is performed.

Another quality that makes spoken word poetry an appropriate choice as an applied drama and theatre medium is that it is said to be an "aesthetic safety zone" (Jocson, 2006:700). Korina Jocson explains that an aesthetic safety zone is "a sanctuary…, a place to play out conflict and imagine multiple possibilities" (Jocson, 2006:702) through which young people can explore their identities and "claim and develop a sense of being" (Jocson, 2006:700). On the other hand, the foundational ideas of applied drama and theatre stand on Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979) which proposes "a rehearsal-theater" (1979:142) as a means to transform

"spectators', passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon- into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action" (1979:122). It aims to create an environment in which spectators are allowed "the opportunity to try out all their ideas, rehearse all possibilities, and to verify them in practice, that is, theatrical practice" (Boal, 1979:141), on how to become active beings. Yet, this type of theatre is not a rehearsal for the stage or the theatre auditorium but for real life and it prepares participants on how to "transition from passivity to action" (Boal, 1979:132) in their own lives. Therefore, it creates a safe fictional space for spectators to exercise agency over their own lives, to think critically and act for themselves and not delegate that power to anybody else. So that they may be empowered to do the very same thing in their real lives.

The concept of an aesthetic safety zone is similar to Boal's concept of a rehearsal-theatre because it is also about providing a safe artistic space to explore the self and make sense of the world. "Poetry offers a place where youth can be themselves and embrace their own experiences" (Jocson, 2006:700). It facilitates this exploration not only "aesthetically (through writing)" (Jocson, 2006:703) but also through performance. In the same way that Boal's rehearsal-theatre facilitates its exploration through the conventions of drama and theatre. So, spoken word poetry is an appropriate medium because it is aligned to the foundational ideals of applied drama and theatre. Its quality of being an aesthetic safety zone makes it suitable to use as an applied drama and theatre medium that can enable young people to feel safe to explore their formal political participation.

In the context of this study, exploring participants' formal political participation within poetry's aesthetic safety zone meant developing an understanding and critical consciousness on their roles as active citizens, and discursively enacting their citizenship. A critical understanding of being an active citizen develops as they critically examine conceptions of citizenship and "assess and analyse the advantages and disadvantages of their participation" (Mlama, 1991:207) in formal politics. Then, through writing and performing their poems they also get to discursively enact their citizenship and develop confidence in their voice as active contributing members in society. Therefore, within the safe artistic space of spoken word poetry their proactive civic identity becomes developed.

Yet, this development is not only social but also creative and, therefore, not only do participants develop critical consciousness they also gain creative writing and presentation skills. Within

poetry's aesthetic zone they learn the literacy of poetry and how to use it as a language through which to contribute to change. In the same way that Boal's poetics teaches theatre as language, the aesthetic zone of poetry also teaches the literacy of poetry. Therefore, participants "discover a deeper appreciation for language and the fundamentals of poetic devices" (Pellegrin, Zenkov and Calamito, 2013:108) and become competent in using "traditional poetic devices including simile, metaphor, rhyme repetition, hyperbole, allusion and other elements in their own poems" (Pellegrin, Zenkov and Calamito, 2013:97). However, since the exploration is not only through writing but also through performance, participants also develop skills in performance "and performing the word or building confidence by sharing written work publicly" (Fisher, 2005:118). Another skill that becomes developed is the ability of "actively listening in order to give constructive feedback to other members of the community" (Fisher, 2005:128) considering that "spoken word poetry… fosters a culture of listening and valuing words" (Fisher 2005:128).

Poetry is an effective social tool of asserting citizenship. It is effective because, "poetry, when used as a public art, engages situations in ways that transpose private feeling into public affect" (Smith, 2012:14). Throughout history citizens have always used poetry, along with other popular forms of creative expression, in their activism "to perform their citizenship with the tools of their art" (Smith, 20212:5). As Mlama observes, across many liberation struggles "popular songs, poetry, dance and drama have been employed by the struggling masses to vent their anger or to inspire the struggles and boost the morale of participants as well as to concientise them for the right causes" (1991:33).

Unfortunately, poetry has been underestimated and "it is often common to deny poetry's public affects on contemporary culture… too often poetry is overlooked in terms of what it can accomplish beyond the literary community so that it may contribute to more radical social or political confrontations (Smith, 2012:2). Yet, what is evident in contemporary youth culture and the spoken word poetry movement that is popular amongst young people is that "poetry remains active in the imagination and enactments of public space. Open-mic readings in coffee shops, bars and cafés, the publicity generated by poetry slams and the spoken word movement… have all kept poetry thriving within popular imaginations" (Smith, 2012:1). They prove that "the poet's responsibility for shaping the possibilities of the nation's political and social life" (Smith, 2012:1) is still very much meaningful.

So, spoken word poetry is of interest because it has historically proven to be effective and is still relevant in asserting citizenship. As an applied drama and theatre medium spoken word poetry is of interest to this study because it is performance based, is an aesthetic safety zone and it is one of the youth's popular cultural expression. These qualities make it appropriate because applied drama and theatre is about facilitating genuine participation through using a medium of performance that is familiar to the targeted participants. As Boal asserts, "the theatrical experience should not begin with something alien to the people ([i.e.] theatrical techniques that are taught or imposed)" (1979:127). Applied drama and theatre is also about creating a safe, enabling environment for participation and exploration which spoken word poetry's 'aesthetic safety zone' quality also maintains.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Figure 1: Poster advertising spoken word poetry programme, *Raising Participation*

Spoken word poetry was used as an applied drama and theatre medium in a programme titled *Raising Participation*. The programme was concerned with developing the South African youth's active participation in formal politics and used spoken word poetry as a means of youth development. It was also conducted with the support of Africa Unite, a human rights and youth empowerment organization. The organisation which was "initially started as part of IDASA (Institute for Democracy in South Africa), … launched officially in 2003 by the Provincial Minister of Safety and Security, at Ikwezi Community Centre in Gugulethu. The project became autonomous in 2004" (Africa Unite, 2019). This section provides background information into Africa Unite and discusses why the organisation was approached. Then, it discusses the programme's design and the theoretical framework that informed it.

Africa Unite was initially a response to the "increasing levels of crime, alcohol, drug abuse and xenophobia" (Africa Unite, 2019) and "the high levels of unemployment in the townships, and a sense of abandonment that prevailed among the youth" (Africa Unite, 2019). The youth of New Crossroads and Gugulethu Townships "felt that no commitment had been shown from

government, at any level, to give young people in the townships confidence to face the future" (Africa Unite, 2019). Consequently, xenophobic sentiments were beginning to increase amongst the youth in these townships and the Gugulethu youth, in particular, felt that "refugees from other African countries living in their areas were successful in achieving a better quality of life, whereas they couldn't. Although this was a misperception, it caused great resentment between South African youth and young refugees" (Africa Unite, 2019). In order to help alleviate the growing tensions, in 2001 a group of young adults hosted with the assistance of IDASA "an initial workshop… held at Uluntu Centre in Gugulethu with 46 young adults mainly from New Crossroads Township and Gugulethu, in which they expressed their deep frustration about the problems facing their communities" (Africa Unite, 2019). It is this context of the growing prejudice against migrants that became the catalyst of the establishment of Africa Unite. Its mandate "strives towards the achievement of a united and prosperous Africa in which all people live together harmoniously and peacefully" (Africa Unite, 2019). Africa Unite strives towards this through working with "citizens, refugees, and migrants to prevent conflicts, enhance social cohesion and promote socio-economic development" (Africa Unite, 2019) in communities.

The human rights and youth empowerment organization was approached in order to work with its school club members. Africa Unite has school clubs in various schools across Cape Town including, but not limited to, "Pakhama High (Philippi), Zonnebloem Nest Senior School (Woodstock) and Mountainview High School (Hanover Park)" (Africa Unite, 2019). The organisation started the school clubs in 2013 to help address the challenges that learners faced in their schools and local communities such as "incidents of theft, vandalism, and teenage pregnancy, school drop-out, burglary, rape, gangsterism and even murder… on school grounds" (Africa Unite, 2019). The objective of the school clubs is "to give learners the opportunity to become agents of change within their schools and communities" (Africa Unite, 2019). The school clubs achieve this through creating an environment that enables learners to "share their experiences, learn to fundraise, spark volunteerism, gain confidence, and let their voices be heard amongst their peers" (Africa Unite, 2017). Africa Unite (2017) explains that its school clubs are setup as follows:

> Each school club is modeled after a country, where learners run their own 'parliament', complete with an elected president, 5 ministers (a Minister of Information and Public Relations, a Minister of Sports Culture and

> Entertainment, a Minister of Finance, a Minister of Environment, and a Minister of Social Development), as well as thirty to fifty parliamentarians.

Not only are they made knowledgeable about the country's democracy in how the environment of school clubs are setup, but they are also made knowledgeable through field trips which involve shadowing Members of Parliament (MPs) or attending workshops presented by parliament. For instance, in 2017 "Africa Unite arranged for 5 of their learners to shadow actual provincial Minister of Social Development for the Western Cape, Mr. Albert Fritz" (Africa Unite, 2017). Similarly, to celebrate Freedom Day (27th of April), in 2019 six school clubs were taken to the "Western Cape Provincial Parliament (WCPP) to attend a workshop on how the provincial parliament in structured and runs" (Gumede, 2019). During the workshop event the school clubs learned "about the chamber of the Western Cape and their seating arrangement" (Gumede, 2019), and were also taught about the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of South Africa's government. "Additionally, the learners had the privilege of learning how a law is passed in the provincial parliament. This particular lesson was made all the more effective through an activity which allowed them to draft their own laws to send to the government" (Gumede, 2019). Therefore, the curriculum in Africa Unite's school clubs is very strong on the formal structures of government.

Africa Unite was approached because the values and mission of its school clubs were aligned with the objectives of this study, which were similarly concerned with youth development and empowering young people to become active citizens. A core group of nine participants from three different Africa Unite school clubs participated in the programme. The school clubs which participants were from are namely Dr. Nelson R. Mandela High School (Crossroads), Heideveld Senior Secondary School (Heideveld) and Portland High School (Mitchells Plain). Four teenage girls and five teenage boys, ranging between 14-18 years old, made up the group of participants. The programme targeted young people who would be eligible to vote in the next South African general elections planned to happen in the year 2024. The participants were people of colour. Most of them were of African heritage and Xhosa speaking and a few were of coloured descent and were English speaking. Afrikaans seemed to be another language that all of them could speak or understand.

The school clubs which participants were from are based in communities that form part of the Cape Town area known as the Cape Flats, which are a group of suburbs, townships/urban

ghetto that are notorious for drug addiction, gangsterism and violent crimes. According to media reports, “the Cape Flats has been known as a ‘danger zone’ where people are killed or injured in gang warfare” (Solomons, 2021) and as “a child on the flats, violence is a major part of your life…. It is a daily reality you learn to live with” (Kotz, 2013).

To give an indication of the conditions which exist in the specific communities that the core group of participants are from, reports from media and community organizations state that: “Crossroads has suffered from a lack of resources and development since its inception in the early 1970s” (Ikamvalabantwana, 2021) and “it is largely left out of the social and economic progress seen in neighbouring communities” (Ikamvalabantwana, 2021). On the other hand, “Mitchells Plain police stations still have some of the highest rates of reported murders nationally” (Kotz, 2013). “Mitchells Plain had at one time or another been the deadliest place on earth” (Kotz, 2013). At the time of the research programme, which took place during mid-2019, “after almost 1,000 [one thousand] murders in the first six months of [that] year alone on the Cape Flats, national authorities sent in the army” (Burke, 2019) to patrol the streets “of the area’s worst neighbourhoods of the Cape Flats” (Burke, 2019).

It is clear from the above reports that the core group of participants are members of communities that feel neglected by the government. One resident has even been quoted saying in the media: “the government seems to have been willing to let the Cape Flats burn” (Burke, 2019). So, therefore, this core group of learners would benefit the most from participating in formal political processes which ensure that their needs are the priority of national agenda.

The programme only involved school club members who had signed consent forms. Participants who were 18 years old gave their own signed consent and the participants who were younger than 18 years had to seek consent from their parents or guardians, in order to be able to participate in the programme. It is only the school club members that had signed consent forms that were allowed to participate in the programme. No participant was allowed to participate before providing signed consent.

None of the school club members were obliged to take part in the programme. Africa Unite did not force any school club and its members to participate. The school club members that participated did so because they were interested in the programme and they had the right to withdraw from the programme at any stage. Other privileges which came with giving their

consent included that their privacy would be respected and that they would not be personally identifiable in the dissertation. The consent forms they were provided with gave details of the nature of the research and also stipulated what their involvement would entail. Therefore, by signing the forms, participants agreed that they were giving informed consent.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

The programme used spoken word poetry as a means of youth development through designing a curriculum that imitated the process that spoken word artists typically engage in when developing a spoken word poem. This includes first writing down the poem and considering the literary elements that go into producing poetry. Followed by developing a performance-based presentation of the poem. As Susan Weinstein (2010:7) explains, spoken word poetry:

> draws on common poetic devices including metaphor, imagery, allusion, rhythm and so on. With performance poetry, two additional texts work in concert with the written text to create a fully realized piece: the physical text (that is, what the poet/performer does with the body on stage) and the vocal text (the oral delivery of the poem).

Therefore, the design of the programme was informed by these two processes that make-up the art form of spoken word poetry.

Yet, the programme was broken down into four phases that included: baseline research, content generation, embodiment and recitation, and then spoken word performance. These are the planned phases that participants were facilitated through in developing their poems and working towards a public performance of their work. The breakdown of these four phases took inspiration from Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* which outlines four different stages of transforming a spectator into what he has coined a spect-actor. His play on theatrical jargon illustrates the transformation audience members go through in his rehearsal-theatre, which involves them going from being silent witnesses of the action on stage to being active contributors in the action.

His poetics can be summarized into the following four stages: (1) knowing the body, (2) making it expressive, (3) theatre as language and (4) theatre as discourse. His first stage is about enabling his participants to know the abilities and limitations of their bodies. His second

stage is about using the body as a medium of communication and learning to "express one's self through the body" (Boal, 1979:126). The third stage is about enabling his participants to understand the language conventions of theatre and how to use their bodies as a theatrical language. In order to be able to intervene and "enter into a dialogue with the actors, to interrupt the action, ask for explanation without waiting politely for the end of the play" (Boal, 1979:142). Finally, his fourth stage is about practising in more finished forms of theatre. Whereas, the previous three stages were about developing the participants' theatrical literacy, in the final stage "the spectator-actor creates 'spectacles' according to his needs to discuss certain themes" (Boal, 1979:126).

Basically, Boal's poetics details the steps towards developing spectators' direct participation in theatrical productions. His poetics were significant to the design of the programme because they offer a guideline on how to explore the concept of active participation in a theatrical and/or performative way, as well as develop the quality in participants. The design of the programme took inspiration from Boal's poetics in the following way:

PHASE 1: BASELINE RESEARCH

The aim of the first phase was to test how the participants would respond to the programme topic and assess their competency in spoken word poetry. Similar to Boal's first stage in his poetics, this included looking at their abilities and limitations with working in the form of spoken word poetry and looking at their attitudes towards the key themes of the programme that included South African formal politics, representational democracy and active citizenship.

There are two significant things that happened in the initial phase of the programme. The first was the drafting of a contract to negotiate and establish a working relationship between the programme researcher-facilitator and the participants. The second was the theatre activities that took inspiration from Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* and *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (1992), which were used to investigate the participants' attitudes towards the key themes of the programme.

PHASE 2: CONTENT GENERATION

The second phase centred around workshopping and generating content for their written poems. Here, participants focussed on expressing themselves through the medium of poetry. The aim of this phase was for participants to write poems through which they expressed

themselves in relation to the themes of the programme. They were provided with writing prompts and were also informed about the principles and practices of spoken word poetry in order to help them through the writing process.

Because this phase was focussed on the writing aspect of spoken word poetry, the workshops in this phase followed Susan Weinstein's "primer on youth spoken word" (2010:7) in which she details "the consistent structure for workshops" (Weinstein, 2010:7), used in spoken word poetry programs to help participants develop their poetry. This includes providing participants with a model poem which "is chosen to highlight an element that can be used to prompt participant writing" (Weinstein, 2010:8). Then, allowing participants time to draft their poems. Followed by them sharing their poems with one another. However, Weinstein emphasises that "while participants are encouraged to share, it is not a requirement… participants always have the final say in whether or not they share their writing with others" (2010:8). This is the structure which the workshops in this phase of the programme generally followed.

Therefore, the workshops in this phase deviated from the performance tradition of applied drama and theatre. Because Weinstein's primer is limited to practicing the writing aspect of spoken word poetry and does not illustrate "the particular ways that YSW [Youth Spoken Word] programs address the processes of revision and performance" (Weinstein, 2010:9). So, it illustrates a pedagogy of spoken word poetry that is focused on the craft of writing as a conduit of youth development.

Whilst participants were developing their poems in the workshops, they were also encouraged to write their own personal poems, outside of the workshop space and scheduled time, in relation to the themes of the project. They were encouraged to use the skills they acquired in the workshops to write their individual poems. These individual poems were then shared with the rest of the participants who gave their feedback on the shared poems.

PHASE 3: EMBODIMENT AND RECITATION

Similar to how Boal used the third stage of his poetics to make his participants competent in the literacy of theatre and using their bodies as theatrical communication devices, the third phase in this programme concentrated on embodying the written poems and building a performance-based presentation of the poems. The participants were introduced to performance techniques to help them express themselves through performance and

communicate their poems in a performative way. Activities revolved around developing the active voice and included the exploration of voice techniques such as projection, modulation and rhythm, that help with the deliverance of the poem. A lot of what was considered in the planning of this phase is what Elizabeth Acevedo (University of the District of Columbia, 2016) said about her process of developing performance presentations of her poetry, which she explains as follows:

> when the poem is done then you say 'how does it sound, how is it going to be presented, where is there a strategic place for me to slow down or increase my volume or use my hands'- that once the poem is done you layer on performance. But it is essentially the poet also considering their body.

Likewise, in this phase of the programme, there was a lot of emphasis placed on revising and rehearsing the written poems in order to prepare for the final performance.

PHASE 4: SPOKEN WORD PERFORMANCE

Lastly, the participants were supposed to show their poems to a public audience in the final phase of the programme. The plan was to set the showing as an open mic session in which the participants would perform the poems they had worked on. There was also a plan to invite guest performers to perform and support the participants' showcasing.

This is how Boal's poetics was translated into the art form of spoken word poetry and informed the design of this programme. The intention with which each phase was planned was similar to the aims that Boal had for each of the four stages of his poetics. Likewise, in all of these phases, participants level of participation was observed. They were observed on how they each contributed to decision-making in the structuring of their poems.

In addition to Boal's framework, the design of the programme was also informed by the framework of Participatory Action Research (PAR) which is a way of working that prioritises collaboration between the researcher and research participants, as co-researchers. In an ideal PAR study, participants are involved in all aspects of the research project. This includes the formulation of questions, the devising of strategies for data collection, the collection of data and the dissemination of research.

PAR's way of working and Boal's theatre of the oppressed both take their model from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972). It is just that one adapted Freire's ideas into the area of theatre while the other adapted them into the area of research. Freire's seminal text advocates for a dialogical style of education in which learners are encouraged to equally participate in decision-making regarding their learning. In the same way that the teacher makes decisions that determine what they will learn. The justification for Freire's dialogical education is that by being allowed to determine their class curriculum leaners will develop into contributing members of society and its social development.

Similarly, behind the PAR principle of promoting research participants to co-researchers is the notion that this level of participation from participants in the research will translate into real life and they will become contributing members in society. Alice McIntyre writes that PAR strives to "enrich [participants'] sense of themselves as contributing members of society. That enrichment fosters community-building, and community-building fosters a willingness to engage in ongoing processes of action and change" (2008:67). In the final analysis, a PAR project "is judged not against a criterion of an objective truth but against the criterion of whether the people involved are better off because of their experiences as participants in a PAR project" (McIntyre, 2008:61-62); "whether they have a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution, stemming from their participation in a PAR project" (McIntyre, 2008:64). So, the philosophy of PAR is very similar to the main objective of Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed*.

However, PAR is not only concerned with participation at the level of programme activities, as it seems to be the case with Boal's poetics, but also programme design which is what Freire's pedagogy advocates for. Yet, although the programme was broadly based on a PAR model it also adopted elements from elsewhere that were significant to consider. Peter O'Connor and Michael Anderson, who are theorists in the area of Applied Theatre as Research, argue that "the design of the next phase of the research project, while still collaborative, often relies on the expertise and experience of the researcher" (2015:58). So, even though PAR allows for participants to determine every aspect of a research project, there were certain aspects of this programme that were solely the responsibility of the programme researcher-facilitator and which participants could not be involved in.

Consequently, the implementation of the programme did not religiously follow the PAR model but was flexible in how it used the research framework. Therefore, although, the participants were not only research subjects but were also considered as co-researchers and the history and knowledge they had walked in with was just as valuable as the expertise of the researcher and writer of this study, who was also the facilitator of the programme, their role as co-researchers was limited. Because the formulation of the research questions and the strategies of data collection were planned before meeting with the participants. This is because Africa Unite had required that the programme design be pitched first in order for them to be able to determine whether they would allow access to their school club members, or not. Therefore, the participants only contributed where necessary, such as in determining the themes of the programme.

So, their status as co-researchers was not made explicit because the decisions regarding the research aspect of the programme were already made without them. Yet, the principle of working with participants as collaborators and having a more equitable and respectful engagement with them was more pronounced. Because they were given the authority to determine the direction in which the programme content and activities would go and their feedback regarding the programme was valuable, and they were encouraged to freely express it. Subsequently, the observation of the participants' involvement was not only focussed on how well they worked with one another, but also how they contributed to the programme.

METHODS:

Qualitative methods which were used to collect data throughout the four phases of the research were mainly questionnaires, participant observation and project related tasks. The reason that these methods were chosen is because "the primary goal of qualitative research is to interpret and document an entire phenomenon from an individual's viewpoint or frame of reference" (MacDonald, 2012:35); "to reveal the qualitative features of the individual's feelings, views and patterns" (MacDonald, 2012:35). According to Cathy MacDonald, "focus groups, participant observation and field notes, interviews, diary and personal logs, questionnaires, and surveys are effective methods of data generation in PAR" (2012:41) and qualitative studies. However, the programme design focused on only three of these instruments of data collection.

So, considering that the research programme was assessing the change in attitudes and behaviour of participants, questionnaires were chosen to gain insight into the changes that

participants experienced as a result of their involvement in the programme. Likewise, participant observation was chosen as a method to record what was happening on site and to evaluate the impact of the ways in which the workshop sessions were planned and facilitated. Yet, the observation was not only of participants but also the researcher-facilitator. This was to develop a critical self-reflexive record of practice. As Borg et al. is quoted saying by Jarg Bergold and Stefan Thomas (2012:13):

> reflexivity requires the researcher to be aware of themselves as the instrument of research. This is a particularly important issue for action researchers who are intimately involved with the subject of the research, the context in which it takes place, and others who may be stakeholders in that context.

Therefore, reflective field notes, a critical self-reflective journal and pictures that were taken of participants formed part of the data that resulted from the field observation.

Also, since a large part of the programme concerned participants producing content, project related tasks were a significant method of generating and collecting data. Bergold and Thomas (2012:15) state that:

> Methods of data collection should therefore build on the participants' everyday experiences. This makes it easier for them to understand the concrete procedures. However, it means that new methods of data collection must be developed that are appropriate to the concrete research situation and the research partners. An example of the possible range of methods… [incorporate] a questionnaire, photography projects, blogs, diaries and mapping processes as ways of generating data".

To endorse their statements, Bergold and Thomas refer to a "Glaserian dictum: 'All is data" (2012:15). Suitably, in the programme, a project related task that doubled as a creative method of collecting data was the writing and performance presentation of their poems. Poetry was used "to make the emotional visible" (Bergold and Thomas, 2012:18). Therefore, project related tasks were where participants journaled their experiences and drew a lot from their internal lives, since poetry is an art form that requires writers to engage from a personal and intimate place.

The approaches that were used to analyse the material were Thematic Content Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Thematic Content Analysis was used to analyse the content of data material such as the questionnaires they answered and collages they put together, in order to identify recurring themes. Whereas CDA was used as a method in analysing their poems. Teun van Dijk is a theorist who specialises in CDA and according to him it is a method which "especially focusses on (group) relations of power, dominance and inequality and the ways these are reproduced or resisted by social group members through text and talk" (1995:18). Therefore, CDA is the study of text and talk which aims to examine how certain socio-political ideological inclinations such as racial discrimination or women empowerment are expressed in written or spoken communication. Accordingly, in the case of this programme this method was applied to analyse participants' discursive enactment of active citizenship. So, CDA was used in this research to look for evidence of an attitude of active citizenship in the text of participants' poems and/or performances and the ways in which it was expressed.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This section is a discussion on the findings of the programme. The findings will be discussed according to how the programme was designed and implemented. So, the discussion will first begin with the findings that materialised in the baseline phase followed by that in the content generation phase, then the embodiment phase. The final phase concerning the spoken word performance will not be discussed because it did not take place due to reasons that will be analysed later in this chapter.

BASELINE RESEARCH:

To negotiate and establish a respectable working relationship between the researcher-facilitator and the participants, as co-researchers, the programme began with the collective drafting of a working contract. To connect this activity to the key themes of the programme, the activity was framed as the drafting of a policy that would determine the ways in which the researcher-facilitator and the participants interact with one another during workshop sessions. The contract was titled as the 'Rules of Engagement' and the content which participants contributed to the contract included codes of conduct which stated: "if someone has an idea do not shut it down without considering it", "respect each other", "listen to one another (no side talks) and "full participation from all".

However, not everyone participated in this first activity. The contract was basically drafted by two participants and predominantly contained their ideas. This was significant because it provided data about the participants, which indicated that the majority of them chose to remain silent and let certain individuals lead the conversation and make decisions for the group. This information also indicated that there was a need to develop the active participation of the participants involved in the programme. It established that there were only two participants who were empowered to contribute to discussion and the rest relied on these two.

This could have been a premature observation because there are a number of factors that might have contributed to their silence, which include that it was their first session in the programme, and they were still warming up to the researcher-facilitator. They might have also been warming up to one another, considering that the group was made up of students from three different school clubs and it might have been their first time working together. Another potential factor might be the errors that were made in the facilitation style during the drafting

of the contract. For instance, the facilitation style took on more of the quality of a schoolteacher which Freire refers to as a "narrating subject" (2005:71) that places participants in the position of "listening objects" (2005:71). He explains that "narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into 'containers', into 'receptacles' to be 'filled' by the teacher" (2005:71). This is what Freire has famously theorized as the "banking' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits" (2005:71) of information made into them.

Likewise, the researcher-facilitator made the error of putting up the chart on which the contract would be drafted and had a co-facilitator be the scribe who wrote down the responses of the participants. This was very similar to how a schoolteacher typically stands in front of a class, against a chalkboard, and writes his/her students' responses down for them. The researcher-facilitator also made the error of talking for long periods of time and over-explaining questions. Consequently, this might have intimidated most of the participants from speaking and contributing their responses. This was the style with which the researcher-facilitator led the activity. Instead of doing something more creative and interactive, such as laying the chart on the floor in the centre of the circle which the participants were sitting in and asking each participant to write down their own contribution.

An additional reason which might have also contributed are the group dynamics that have been established in their everyday school club settings. The participants might have entered the programme with these dynamics and maintained them despite the new environment and facilitator. This latter factor is the most probable reason, because following these events the school coordinator of the Africa Unite school clubs, who was present during the drafting of the contract and had witnessed the group dynamics, mentioned that the two participants who had been dominant in the first session of the programme were also dominant speakers in their school clubs and the others usually took a back seat to them. Therefore, it could be said that there is an unspoken contract which they have with one another (and amongst school clubs) and the group dynamics that had played out in the first session were the manifestation of this implicit contract established long before they began the programme. This reasoning seems even more justified considering that during latter workshop sessions, when the two dominant speakers were absent, other voices would be more vocal and added to the conversations that took place.

Following the first observation, another significant thing that happened in the first phase of the programme were the theatre activities that were planned and the data which materialised from participants during these activities. Before moving into a spoken word poetry approach, the programme jumped from the inspiration of the theatre of the oppressed approach in order to help begin the exploration of formal political participation in a performative way. The activities that were planned were inspired by Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* and his *Theatre of the Oppressed*. The main activity adopted from these was his image theatre, which involves participants creating first an actual image, secondly an ideal image then finally a transitional image. The actual image would signify the reality of an issue or situation. The ideal image would express the desired reality that the participants hope for. Then, the transitional image would "show how it would be possible to pass from one reality to the other" (Boal, 1979:135).

Boal explains that the process of this type of theatre is typically as follows: "the participant is asked to express his opinions, but without speaking, using only the bodies of the other participants and 'sculpting' with them a group of statues, in such a way that his opinions and feelings become evident. … He is not allowed to speak under any circumstances" (1979:135). There are many other variations that one could use to practice image theatre, which include each participant sculpting their own bodies into an image, instead of being sculpted by another participant. They could do this individually or build a group image by sculpting themselves in relation to how other participants have sculpted their bodies and where they have placed themselves in the image. They could also, at the prompt of a countdown, simultaneously sculpt their bodies into a group image without strictly considering what the other participants are doing. As Boal asserts, "the game of images offers many other possibilities" (1979:139). In the programme, a combination of approaches was used to facilitate participants through the process of image theatre. Participants were allowed the option to create their images in any of the following ways: (1) one person begins the image, and the others add their sculptures to that first person's image, or (2) they simultaneously create the image and then take turns to individually walk in and out of their sculptures, in order to review the image and edit it where necessary.

The significance of image theatre is that is has the "extraordinary capacity for making thought visible" (Boal, 1979:137). According to Boal, "undoubtedly the different patterns of action [i.e., the actual, ideal and transitional images] represent … the sincere, visual expression of the

ideology and psychology of the participants" (Boal, 1979:137). For this reason, image theatre was used in the programme as a tool to investigate participants' attitudes towards South African formal politics and to identify the area which they thought needed the most change in the system, with regards to youth formal political participation.

To assess their attitudes, copies of images which represented different constituents of South Africa's system of representational democracy were brought in and scattered across the floor. The participants then organised the images into a hierarchy which they believed represented the structure of the system. The images included those of the House of Parliament in Cape Town, the Union Buildings in Pretoria, the cover of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the logo of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and an image showing a list of the logos and names of various political parties that currently hold seats in parliament. The judiciary branch was not included in this selection because the decisions in this branch of the government are made independently by the courts. As the constitution asserts, "the courts are independent and subject only to the Constitution and the law…. No person or organ of state may interfere with the functioning of the courts" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, No. 108 of 1996, 1996:s165). On the other hand, the decisions made in the legislative and executive branches of government are "based on the will of the people" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, No. 108 of 1996, 1996:ss1-3). These branches "represent the people and… ensure government by the people" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, No. 108 of 1996, 1996:s42). What was evident during this activity is that participants were knowledgeable about the individual institutions that makeup the country's system of formal politics and what each constituent represents in the system.

Figure 2: Participants placing images into a hierarchy

The only confusion they had involved the hierarchy of the system. They had placed a couple of images out of their place in the system. For instance, they placed the image of the constitution in the middle of the hierarchy instead of at the foundation of the system. Considering, that it is the founding document of South Africa's democracy and determines its functioning. Other images which they confused were those of the House of Parliament and the Union Buildings. They had put the House of Parliament at the head of the hierarchy instead of the Union Buildings, which is the actual head office of the official government. This misunderstanding highlighted that the participants held parliament in high regard. It is believed that they have a high regard of parliament because the curriculum in Africa Unite's school club is very heavy on the topic of parliament. This is made evident by how the school clubs are modelled after the organisation of the House of Parliament and how school club members assign themselves roles that resemble those in parliament, which include that of president, ministers and parliamentarians. Therefore, because of this emphasis on parliament in their school clubs the participants held the institution in high regard and thought of it as the head of the hierarchy. This emphasis on parliament might also be the reason why majority of the participants identified it as an area that needed change. Because, after they had placed the images into a hierarchy, they were asked to identify the image they believed represented the area that needed change with regards to youth formal political participation. In response to this, majority of the participants identified the image of the House of Parliament as the one which represented the area that needed the most change.

Participants were then asked to offer suggestions of the changes they thought needed to happen in the functioning of parliament, in order for there to be an increase in youth formal political participation. However, they had to represent their ideas in a performative way. So, participants were facilitated through a process of image theatre in which they shared their ideas. Out of the eleven participants that were present during this activity seven of the participants chose the image of the House of Parliament. The other four participants each chose their own individual images. For instance, one chose the image of the Constitution of South Africa, another chose the image of the IEC, others respectively chose images of the Union Buildings and the image showing a list of the political parties that hold seats in parliament's national assembly. The participants who stood alone by their chosen images were allowed the option to work together, irrespective of the different images they chose. Yet, they were also allowed the option to continue working alone on their images. Three of the participants chose to collaborate on their

images. Whilst one participant continued to work on his own image. However, he was not by himself. He was joined on his image by a peer educator from Africa Unite who was chaperoning the school club members that were participating in the programme.

Considering that the majority of the participants chose the image of the House of Parliament, the following analysis will focus on the image theatre presentation that this group of participants created. The images they created were significant data because they reflected the attitudes that a significant number of the group held towards the country's notion of formal politics. The group's images consisted of representations of the South African youth, the African National Congress and two other political parties in opposition to one another. It also included the House of Parliament's Speaker who is "the principal office bearer of the Assembly… presiding over sittings of the House, maintaining order and applying its rules" (Parliament, 2019). In their real image the youth were represented kneeling down with their hands stretched out as if begging. The two unnamed opposing political parties were represented standing with their backs against each other and each with their arms crossed, whilst the ANC stood tall above everybody. The Speaker was represented in a seated position and was placed in between the sculptures of the youth, to the left of the group image, and the political parties on the opposite side of the image, and there were noticeable gaps between the three different sculptures.

Following the real image, the sculptures that changed significantly in the ideal image were those of the youth and the two opposing political parties. Here, the youth were represented standing up, yet their hands were still placed in a gesture that symbolized the action of begging. Still on the other end of the image, the opposing parties were now turned facing each other and they were both holding a note of money as if sharing it amongst themselves. The only change that occurred in the sculpture of the ANC was that the arms of the participant, representing the party, went from doing nothing significant to one of them being risen up with a clenched fist in the air. Therefore, imitating the gesture that has become synonymous with the ANC and the liberation struggle it led.

The participants were then asked to transition from their real image into their ideal image by adding motion, through which one image would dissolve into the other. The transition that occurred was very minimal and happened only in their bodies. Spatially, they still stood in the same positions and there was no interaction between their bodies, except of those who

represented the two opposing political parties. The ANC did not interact with the other political parties and the Speaker remained where she was. The sculptures which represented the youth transitioned from their original kneeling position into a standing position, without any help or recognition from the sculptures that represented those in power. They still stood far away from the sculptures which represented those who hold seats in parliament. The only seat of power they were in proximity to, but did not interact with, was that of the Speaker.

The sentiments that were read from this exercise suggested that in order for the South African youth to participate in the country's formal politics, change needed to happen in the functioning of parliament. Yet, it is the youth themselves who have to rise up and initiate that change and not expect it from officials, who are preoccupied with their own internal affairs.

The activities in this phase of the project were pivotal for the development of the programme, because the participants' attitudes, made evident by these activities, determined the rest of the programme's direction and informed its latter phases. The participants' attitudes provided generative themes on which the program of the project would be built. The term 'generative themes' is a concept which was first introduced by Paulo Freire. This concept refers to "the thought-language with which men and women refer to reality, the levels at which they perceive that reality, and their view of the world in which their generative themes are found" (Freire, 2005:97). He asserts that "to investigate the generative theme is to investigate the people's thinking about reality and people's action upon reality" (Freire, 2005:106). Shor adds to Freire's explanation of generative themes by stating that "they are 'weighted with emotion and meaning, expressing the anxieties, fears, demands, and dreams of the group" (1992:55).

Investigating the participants' generative themes is important for a PAR programme because it is participant-centred and, therefore, it is to the participants' attitudes, emotions, wants and needs that the programme must refer to find its content. As Freire states, "it is the reality which mediates, and to the perception of that reality held by educators and people, that we must go to find the program content of education" (2005:96). He also adds that "the program content of the problem-posing method, dialogical par excellence- is constituted and organized by the student's world view, where their own generative themes are found" (2005:109). Likewise, the findings discovered in this phase helped organize the content of the programme. However, the investigation that occurred in this initial phase only provided an overarching generative theme, that narrowed and determined the area that the programme would focus on, which was the

functioning of parliament. It is the second phase, suitably named content generation, in which the programme explored the participants' world views and discovered the generative themes that provided the content for its main event, which is the spoken word poetry activities.

CONTENT GENERATION:

To find the programme content for the spoken word poetry activities, which would involve writing material for the final spoken word performances, newspapers were brought in that had been collected over the course of a week. These included the *Cape Times* and the *Cape Argus*. These specific brands were chosen because they are the most prominent newspapers in the Western Cape province. Participants were then asked to use cut-outs from the newspapers to individually create collages that represented the social issues they were most affected by or cared about. Freire (2005:114) writes that:

> codifications [sketches or photographs] must necessarily represent situations familiar to the individuals whose thematics are being examined, so that they can easily recognize the situations (and thus their relation to them). It is inadmissible (whether during the process of investigation or in the following stage, when meaningful thematics are presented as program content) to present pictures of reality unfamiliar to the participants.

So, it is for this reason that newspapers, which were specific to the Cape Town area, were used as an approach towards investigating the participants' thematics. This approach ensured that participants worked with representations that were familiar to them. It enabled them to work with issues that were headlining in their communities and to re-appropriate the content to authentically represent how they personally perceived and/or experienced the issues.

Another reason why this approach was used was because most of the participants tended to not verbalise their individual opinions to the larger group. Therefore, a creative approach was necessary that would enable all of the participants to contribute to the knowledge that was being produced by the group. The approach also enabled participants to not feel that their individual vulnerabilities were being exposed, because a collage can be presented anonymously to the group. So, this approach created a safe environment for sharing.

Following the making of their collages, participants grouped them according to similarities in order to identify the themes that were dominant across their collages. The four themes that they identified to be dominant were: (1) sports and entertainment, (2) education and environment, (3) crime and violence and (4) politics, corruption and the judiciary system. The participants then made four larger collages out of the smaller individual collages that were grouped together according to similarities. They would eventually go on to refer to these larger collages as their portfolio of issues, which showed that they were taking ownership of the programme. The phrase 'portfolio of issues' is part of the language that they use in their Africa Unite school clubs. It is a phrase that they use to refer to their ministerial portfolios in their school club parliament. Therefore, this showed that they were bringing in their knowledge and experiences to the programme to help structure it.

Once the collages had been grouped, participants were then provided with copies of South Africa's constitutional *Bill of Rights*. They were asked to associate each portfolio of issue with the sections of the *Bill of Rights* that were relevant to them. This activity was included in order to examine whether the participants were aware of their constitutional rights and understood the *Bill of Rights*. Because the constitution is the "the supreme law of the land… all organs of state are bound by… and are obliged to 'respect, protect, promote and fulfil' the rights it enshrines" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996: The Constitutional Court). It is ultimately what "improve[s] the quality of life of all citizens and free[s] the potential of each person" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, No. 108 of 1996, 1996:ss1-3). So, the activity was included to enable participants to reflect on the gaps between what the constitution mandates should be the reality of South Africans and the actual lived experience of many citizens, including their own. There are many rights assured in the constitution which are not yet a reality for the majority of South African citizens. In the end, it was clear that the participants were well informed about the *Bill of Rights*, because they did not hesitate to perform this task and were able to justify their choices, regarding the portfolios of issues and the sections of the *Bill of Rights* that were relevant to one another. However, what was concerning was that the discussion about their choices was dominated by one participant and the others simply agreed to what the dominant participant had to say. They also seemed to not have any grievances with the inconsistencies between the *Bill of Rights* and the lived reality of many citizens.

Eventually, the four portfolios of issues ended up consisting of a collection of cut out images, words and phrases and the relevant *Bill of Rights*. For instance, the portfolio on Sports and Entertainment (see Appendix A on pages 69-71 for table summary) consisted prominently of content about soccer. There were mostly images of soccer players, soccer balls and the logos of prominent South African sports organisations, such as those of the Orlando Pirates football club and the Premier Soccer League. Yet, there was also an inclusion of athletes known for other types of sports such as rugby and boxing. The words and phrases included were also predominantly sports themed, such as those saying "sports drink" and "fuelling South African heroics". Another theme which stood out in this portfolio was the objectification of women, which came through in images of women photographed wearing very sexy and revealing fashion outfits with accompanying phrases saying, "shock queen" and "mesh dress". Subsequently, the sections of the *Bill of Rights* which they identified as being relevant to this portfolio of issue included 'Language and culture' and 'Freedom of expression'. Within the section on freedom of expression, they emphasized the subsection that read that everyone has the right to "freedom of artistic creativity" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, No. 108 of 1996, 1996:s16). Similarly, the other portfolios also had the same presentation, but some would have more written text than images.

Participants were then provided with the manifestos of the top three political parties in the country which are the ANC, the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). The manifestos of these parties were chosen because they occupy the majority of seats in parliament. Their manifestos were presented as a representation of parliament because, by virtue of the majority of seats the parties hold, their policies have a significant influence on the decision-making made by parliament's assembly. What this implies is that policies have significant influence, because parties are mandated by their manifestos which decisions they will make or add their votes to, regarding the final decisions taken by parliament's assembly. Not only do these parties' manifestos have influence in what happens in parliament, but they also have influence on what happens in the rest of the country and its social dynamics, since "the final decisions on all matters are taken by the House [and] the House always has the final authority" (Parliament, 2019). Therefore, this also means that their policies have significant authority over the issues which participants care about.

The participants were asked to identify what each political party's plan of action was regarding the different portfolio of issues. They were also asked to identify the gaps and/or similarities

between the parties' plans and their own expectations of change in the areas they identified as issues with their portfolios. They had the option to read the manifestos of all three parties, but they seemed to prefer to look at the manifesto of the EFF. For instance, for both the portfolios on 'sports and entertainment' and 'education and environment', the participants had exclusively referred to the EFF's policy on education and its policy on sports, arts culture and recreation. It seems that it was only the portfolio on crime and violence for which they consulted various manifestos. In the end, they mostly identified gaps instead of similarities. They were not impressed with the plans proposed for the issue of crime and violence. They regarded them as empty promises that do not fulfil their expectations, which include being protected from crime and violence and living in peaceful, harmonious communities. So, the participants did not have faith in their political parties. This sparked a passionate debate amongst participants in which they expressed that they were suspicious of political parties and believed that the parties only wrote what they had written in their manifestos to get votes and had no intention of bringing their plans to fruition. Therefore, they were pessimistic about parliament and its members.

Yet, even with the passion that was evoked in them, the majority of the participants could not suggest answers on how to solve the issues or nominate themselves as the solution. Only one participant suggested themselves as the solution. This raised questions about their active citizenship and whether they possessed qualities of being active citizens. However, this lack of active citizenship seemed to only occur verbally, because when their portfolios were later analysed, there were identifiable qualities of active citizenship that were exhibited early on during the process of investigating their generative themes. They were just not articulated verbally when they were asked to propose who/or what they could trust if they could not trust their government. But their proposals were expressed in writing. For instance, when writing their expectations for change in the area of sport and entertainment, the participants' writing alluded that they expected the EFF to have an approach that was more dialogic and people-centred towards resolving the issues which they cared about. They preferred to see an investment towards training and equipping those interested in entertainment careers with an ability to use art mediums to resolve real societal issues, and government collaborating with them in developing creative social campaigns. Rather than providing services which were made out of assumption about what artists need. Similarly, in their expectation for change in the area of education and environment, participants wrote down that they would like to see community members being equipped on how to be responsible for the cleanliness of their environments.

So, with these written responses, participants were essentially saying that they trusted themselves as the solution and wanted to be equipped to be able to do so.

Therefore, the generative themes that came up from this process were that the issues which were important to participants were ‘sports and entertainment’, ‘education and environment’, ‘crime and violence’ and ‘politics, corruption and the judiciary system’. Their portfolio of issues and the passionate debate they had, made it evident that they did not trust parliament with the issues which they had concerns about. There were gaps between the change that they wanted to see happen and the plans of MPs. The portfolios also made it identifiable that though they possessed qualities of active citizenship, or aspired to be equipped with them, in order to be able to do something about their concerns, those qualities remained hidden and not vocalised. Another assessment that was made is that despite the passionate debate that all participants had participated in, which was the most passionate they had ever been since the start of the programme, usually most participants preferred to withhold their participation rather than publicly give expression to it. However, the observation that was made about this was that most participants withheld their participation when certain individual were present and when those individuals were absent, their participation would significantly improve.

For instance, participants were usually chaperoned by an Africa Unite peer educator. During a workshop that the peer educator did not come to, the participants engaged in another vibrant debate and the participants who were usually reserved became more vocal than usual. Some were surprisingly assertive in the discussion. However, in the workshop following this one, their participation had dramatically dropped, and it was difficult to get any response from them during the discussions. The workshop venue had changed, and it was hosted at the Africa Unite head office where three staff members joined the activities. Later in the development of the programme, and again when a peer educator was not present, the participants revealed that they did not engage in the previous workshop because they did not know the staff members and were not comfortable with them. It seems as though some Africa Unite peer educators have a strict relationship with the students in their school clubs. Because, following the workshop in which it was difficult to get any response from the participants, one Africa Unite staff member described their facilitation style as being very strict. Therefore, the presence of a peer educator in the workshops might have had an influence on participants’ behaviour and how they participated in the activities.

It is difficult to say what measure could have been taken to resolve this, because it is reasonable that peer educators were chaperoning the participants. Also, when the peer educators were present, they were not voyeurs but were engaged in the activities along with the participants. Yet, despite this, there is evidence of a difference in participants' behaviour between instances when peer educators were present, versus when they were not.

Once the generative themes were found, the programme moved on to the spoken word activities and the themes that were gathered were used as programme content and writing prompts to help participants write material for their final spoken word performances. So, participants had to identify and choose the portfolio of issue that they were most passionate about and it did not have to be the one in which their individual collages were placed. This way participants were grouped into writing groups which they would work in for the remainder of the programme. However, they also had the option to work individually. Yet, regardless of whether they chose to work in a group or individually, their work still had to relate to the themes of the portfolio which they chose to write on. The portfolios which participants chose to write on were 'sports and entertainment', 'crime and violence', and 'education and environment'. The portfolio on 'politics, corruption and the judiciary system' was forsaken and had no writing group.

The framework of the spoken word poetry activities was that, considering that the participants were not pleased with the manifestos of the top three political parties in parliament, they had to write poems which were their manifestos of change. The prompts which guided the writing process were the following questions: (1) If you had a seat in parliament what plan of action would you suggest to MPs about the issues that you care about? (2) What are you personally prepared to do to actively pursue what is more just in your portfolio of issue? Therefore, not only did they have to identify the social problems and hold government accountable, but they also had to consider what they are prepared to do to help solve the problems.

The activities followed the design that Susan Weinstein (2010) provides on youth spoken word writing workshops, which typically begin with a model poem that serves as a prompt to launch participants in their writing. The model poem that was provided to participants highlighted the concept of a manifesto and gave an illustration of what writing a manifesto could look like. The poem was written by Suli Breaks, a spoken word artist from Britain, and is titled *Message from the Millennial Generation* (Breaks, 2015). The themes of the model poem deal with the idea of the millennial generation being underestimated by older generations. The poem is a

manifesto that is addressed to generations that come before the millennial generation and it demands that they listen and learn to trust millennials, instead of look down on their way of doing things. The poem essentially asks parents or elders to have faith in the millennials' decision-making, no matter how radical or ridiculous their ideas may seem.

The participants found the model poem to be relatable and were very excited by it. As a result, they were able to write a total of six poems which were their manifestos of change. One group poem was written for the portfolio on the issue of education and environment. Two poems were written for the portfolio on crime and violence. One was a poem written by the group and the second was an individual poem which one of the participants had written in their personal time, outside of the time spent during workshops. Then, there were three individual poems written for the portfolio on sports and entertainment. The participants working on this portfolio had chosen to work individually instead of work together as a group.

In addition to Suli Break's *Message from the Millennial Generation*, another significant resource that was provided to participants as a model were the lyrics of a rap titled *Poetic Devices* (Testament, 2014), written and performed by a rapper named Testament. Through his lyrics the rapper illustrates how figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, alliteration, personification and so on, could be used as devices to help elevate the imagery and sound of a poem. His lyrics also illustrate other elements of poetry such as stanzas, sonnets and the iambic pentameter. Along with his lyrics he provides an accompanying document which breaks down and explains the poetic devices that he uses in his lyrics. These resources were presented to participants to help them write creatively about the issues they chose to write on, without being very literal in their writing. It was noticeable in the first drafts of their poems that they were not using much figurative language.

Even though there was an attempt at writing figuratively and using sound devices such as repetition, rhyme and onomatopoeia, the figurative quality of their work was very poor. Donovan (2016) states that "when it comes to poetry, you really want to follow the old adage: show, don't tell" and this was the same advice that participants were given. But the edited drafts of their poems were not much different from what they had started out with, despite the many opportunities they had to polish them. Their poems lacked the ability of using imagery and writing imaginatively about the issues which they cared about. Instead, their poems ended up being more about telling rather than showing and were basically prose broken into stanzas.

It seems as though the resources they were provided with did not help much. This might be because their understanding of poetic devices was not solidified. For instance, they were not guided through the reading on Testament's breakdown of poetic devices. They did the reading by themselves. So, there was a missed opportunity to ensure that they understood the examples and explanations that Testament provided. However, it could also simply be because for most, if not all, participants this was their first attempt at writing poetry.

EVALUATION OF POEMS:

What follows now is an evaluation of three individual poems, written by three male participants, from two different writing groups. Their poems were chosen for evaluation, out of the six poems that came out of the process, because they are the participants who fulfilled all of the requirements that were put in place to measure the successes and/or limitations of the programme. These requirements included the answering of two questionnaires, the completion of project related tasks and also regular attendance for observation. So, there is enough data on these three participants that can be triangulated to measure the changes in them and help make a less biased analysis on their development. Evidence on the other six participants was missing, because they were either absent to respond to certain measures or did not bring back material that was supposed to be returned. This is because some participants had committed themselves to other extra-curricular school activities or Africa Unite programs which sometimes clashed with the programme and affected their investment in it. For instance, there was a participant whose schoolteacher negotiated with Africa Unite's school club coordinator to get the participant excused from the workshop session in which the first questionnaire was handed out. This was so that the participant could attend a school debate competition. As a result, the opportunity to get data from this participant was missed.

Yet, there were measures that could have been taken to get a questionnaire response from the participant at a later stage. Because the participants' sister also participated in the programme and a copy of the questionnaire could have been sent home with the sister. So that the participant who had missed the workshop session could also answer the questionnaire and later return with it in the following workshop. However, these ways of working were avoided because of the concern that participants would not return data, if they went home with it. For example, there was one participant from whom it was a struggle to get back data material. In the last workshop he had left with his poem even when it was made clear that he had to leave

his work with the portfolio he had been working on. When he was asked to take a picture of his poem and send a copy of it via WhatsApp messaging, he failed to do so. So, the programme preferred ways of working where data would be collected during workshops sessions in order to avoid these types of situations. It was only under unique circumstances that the programme used alternative ways of working. For instance, the programme used WhatsApp messaging to collect participants' answers to the second questionnaire. This is because there had not been enough time during the workshop for participants to answer it, since the questionnaire required participants to be reflective in their answers. Yet, even in this situation some participants did not send their answers even when they were reminded to. Therefore, the programme's fears had been realised.

So, it was only the three participants who were consistent in everything. The participants will be referred to as participant 1, 2 and 3. What was evaluated in their poems was whether their active citizenship was developed, because to participate in formal politics is to be a citizen who is proactive about issues of public concern. Therefore, what was looked for in the analysis of their poems and performances was evidence of a discursive enactment of active citizenship. The criteria that were used to measure their active citizenship was whether they had a sense of belonging expressed in their poetry and of taking initiative or responsibility in areas of public concern. Therefore, an expression of interest in participating in the development of where one belongs.

Citizenship is about belonging and particularly belonging to a country. As John Jusa observes, "the idea of belonging to a territory is very crucial for one to be considered a citizen" (2007:17). Dictionary definitions of citizenship also emphasize this notion of belonging and if one were to look up the meaning of citizen, one would find synonyms such as 'dweller', 'inhabitant', and 'resident' associated with it. Similarly, the South African constitution also supports this notion when it states that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, No. 108 of 1996, 1996:ss1-3).

Belonging inherently entitles one to a set of privileges. In South Africa, specifically, "all citizens are equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, No. 108 of 1996, 1996:s3). These privileges include protection from unfair discrimination, the right to voting, housing, health care and so on. Yet, with every privilege comes responsibility and the concept of citizenship is not exempt from it.

Section 3 of the constitution illustrates that "all citizens are equally subject to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, No. 108 of 1996, 1996:s3). The characteristic of responsibility is what makes up the active part in the concept of active citizenship. So, to be an active citizen is to generally take responsibility in the development of where one belongs. Professor Nyamnjoh (2019:406) reiterates:

> "[to] belong to a country or a community is not simply to be labelled or merely defined as such bureaucratically and for purposes of administrative control. It is to be a social actor enmeshed in a particular context that has been and continues to be shaped by unique histories that are marked by unequal encounters and misrepresentations"

Therefore, in the analysis of participants' poems what was looked for as evidence of a discursive enactment of active citizenship were words and phrases which indicated a belonging to a community, and also indicated initiative or responsibility in public issues.

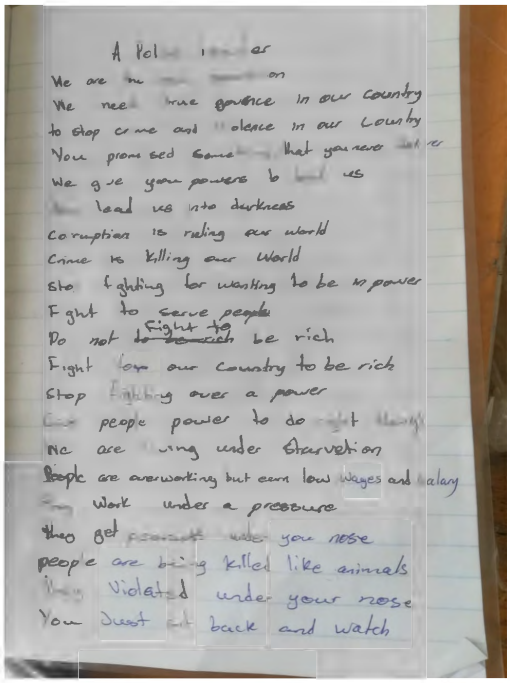
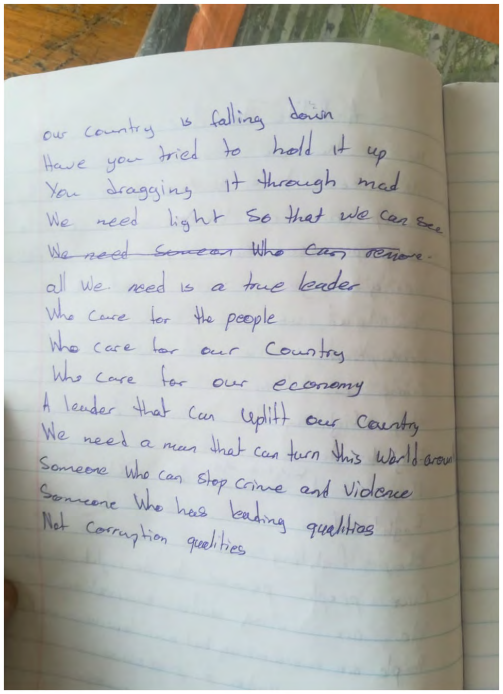


Figure 3: Copy of participant 2's poem, *A Polite Leader*



Participant 1 wrote a poem he titled *We as One* (see Appendix B on page 72). His poem was written in response to the portfolio on sports and entertainment. It is a poem that addresses the

issue of Afrophobia, otherwise commonly referred to as xenophobia in South African media. The poem expressed concern for how the issue is dividing South Africa from other African nations. For instance, at the time of writing his poem, other African countries were threatening to sanction South African sport teams from participating in international sport competitions if the country did not address the issue of xenophobia within its borders. The poet was calling for all Africans to be united by love and not allow themselves to be divided by violence. The intention of the poem was to encourage unity and hope amongst Africans.

His attitude to active citizenship is very evident in his poem. However, instead of sitting within the borders of one country, this poet's citizenship is continental. This continental citizenship is discursively enacted in phrases such as "let us love and cherish each other as Africans" and "as the seeds and children of Africa we cry for peace". Therefore, with this notion of citizenship comes a quality of solidarity with other African nations made evident in expressions like: "one united Africa", "brothers and sisters" and the often-repeated word "us". The title of the poem, *We as One*, also suggests this solidarity.

As a citizen of Africa the poet exercises his active citizenship by mobilising love, unity and peace amongst African nationals whose foreign relations are threatened by the issue of Afrophobia. This mobilisation is enacted in the repeated phrase: "let us come together" and other similar phrases such as "let us love and cherish each other" and "let us reason and come to sense".

During the last workshop of the programme participants were asked to show a performance presentation of their poems, as a start towards rehearsing for the final public performance. The presentation of participant 1's poem, however, was not as galvanising as his writing and it was shy. He held the paper on which his poem was written in front of him and he kept looking down at it to avoid making eye contact. His standing posture was also not upright and was almost turned away from his audience.

Yet, despite this lack of confidence in his presentation, the leadership qualities discursively enacted in his written work had also become evident in his behaviour during the progress of the programme. There was evidence of a development happening in his behaviour, because he went from being initially shy and reserved to being a leader amongst the group of participants. For instance, he would encourage others to engage when there was a lack of engagement during

discussions and when they were reluctant he would try to fill the silence by offering his own opinions. Even Africa Unite's school club coordinator commented that she saw an improvement in his behaviour and that he had become more vocal even in his school club. These observations are also supported by a response he made in a questionnaire, which asked participants to be reflective on their experience of the programme and the changes they have noticed about themselves. In it he said that he did not like how "some people did not want to indulge more and some didn't want to come out of their comfort zone and there was no full participation". Moreover, in response to the question about the changes he had noticed about himself he wrote that: "I've gained more confidence". Therefore, though leadership qualities were not enacted in his performance, they are evident in his written work and it is important to not overlook the improvement in his behaviour during the process of the project.

On the other hand, participant 2 wrote a poem titled, *A Polite Leader* (see Appendix C on pages 73-74). *A Polite Leader* was written in response to the portfolio on the issue of crime and violence and it deals with the theme of corruption in politics. The poem is addressed to political leaders and the poet is calling for them to stop being corrupt and making politics about monetary and power gain, but about serving society. His poem criticises government and demands a change in the style of governance.

Active citizenship comes through predominantly in the choice of words that the poet tends to repeat throughout the poem. Action words such as "stop", "fight" and "give" indicate an assertive and commanding quality and the repetition of these add to the forceful tone of the poet's writing. The repetition of words and/or phrases such as "we" and "our country" also indicate his identification as a citizen of the country. Subsequently, he also indicates that in his position as a citizen he also exercises his agency as a decision-maker. This is illustrated in the quote which states: "we give you powers to lead us". This line and the rest of his poem shows his interest in the formal politics of the country.

Other qualities of active citizenship enacted in his writing are critical thinking and initiative, which come through in his following suggestions: "a true leader/ who care for our economy/ A leader that can uplift the country/ … someone who can stop crime and violence/ someone who has leading qualities/ Not corruption qualities". Therefore, not only is he critical of government, he also proposes ideas about what change should happen and what the outcome of it should look like.

This poet's writing is empowered and not only is his empowerment evident in his writing, but it was also evident in his performance. He gave a surprising performance that presented an emboldened poet, which was a shift from his typically soft-spoken personality. His performance was very passionate and the projection of his voice was very powerful. Therefore, his performance reflected the boldness in his writing.

Then, participant 3's poem (see Appendix D on page 75), which does not have a title, was written in response to the issues related to the portfolio on sports and entertainment. The subject of the poem is women in sports and the discrimination they endure. The poem is addressed to men in the sports profession and the poet is motivating them to be more sensitive towards women in professional sports. The intention of the poem is to persuade men to be more inclusive of female athletes and be compassionate towards them. Therefore, the poem's attitude towards women in sports is one of admiration and considers them to be worthy of respect.

The social issue of sexism is what is being resisted in the text of this poem and it is through the discursive resistance of sexism that the poet discursively enacts his active citizenship. The subject of sexism is evident in lines which state: "we as males underestimate women for they skills" and "women in sports get little attention". Subsequently, the resistance of this attitude towards women is enacted in lines such as: "I think we need to shift focus/ see them as not opponents but as our coaches" and "you do realise that without women we are clueless".

This is quite striking coming from a young male in South Africa, because the dominant discourse about women is generally different from this. This unfavourable discourse is evident in how, for example, sports news treats female sports as a footnote to the news about male dominated sports. Consequently, when women subvert this they are said to be not fully woman, as the poet highlights in the line in which he writes: "our female runner is no longer [considered] as fully woman". Here, he is referring to Caster Semenya and the unfavourable talk about her testosterone (male hormone) levels and the suspicion that they might be higher than is normal in women.

Another example of the unfavourable discourse about women was evident in the portfolio of issue that he was writing on, in which objectifying representations of women were included. These representations might be the reason why he chose to write a distinctive poem about

women. Especially, considering that the images were part of a portfolio that predominantly represented men as professional, athletic and heroic. Therefore, his writing might have been an act of elevating the perception of women in this portfolio from sexual objects to subjects who are more than their sex appeal and are equally capable of being excellent. Like how men are often portrayed to be. Therefore, his resistance is an exercise of critical thinking.

Not only does he resist sexist attitudes or is only critical of them, he also tries to persuade and mobilise other men to not think like that but embrace an attitude of gender equality. So, he is being initiative about the issue. Yet, despite this attitude of resistance and independent critical thinking in his writing, he seemed to struggle with peer pressure when it came to his relationships with other members in his writing group that were his friends. It was observed that when certain participants were absent he showed a genuine interest in the activities that were planned, but when they were present his involvement seemed stunted.

Though, there is an evident discursive enactment of active citizenship in their poems, it could be argued that it is not this programme that developed it. Especially, considering that the programme was working with a group of participants that were part of school clubs in which similar themes of active citizenship and political participation are addressed. There are some statements that these participants made that suggest this argument. When asked about whether they thought differently about active citizenship and themselves as active citizens, participant 1 wrote: “No, I don’t, but I think I am an active citizen because of the things I do to help the community in my way of doing so”. Participant 2 said a similar thing. He wrote: “No I don’t think different about citizenship. I myself am an active citizen because in my community I teach young people how to behave and at school I am a peer educator”. So, the discursive enactment in their poems might not tell us anything about whether it is this programme that developed their active citizenship.

However, they also made statements which indicate that though they were knowledgeable about being active citizens, they did not know how to exercise it. When asked about the changes he noticed in himself since participating in the programme, participant 2 answered: “Now I know how to become an active citizen”. He affirmed this by saying that he will actively pursue being an active citizen by introducing the issue that his poem addresses at his school, so that people can know about it. Likewise, when asked about how writing a manifesto for change has encouraged them to do something about the issues which they cared about, participant 3 said:

“I think it taught me to try and make a change”. Participant 1 echoed this by saying: “there’s more that we can do outside and there are more people in need of help and as the youth we really need to do more”. These responses are a contrast to the initial replies they had given to the first questionnaire that had been handed out to them, in which two of these participants indicated that when they notice a social issue in their communities they do not make plans to do anything about it. It was only one participant, from these three, that indicated that he does. Therefore, the statements mentioned above support that this programme developed their active citizenship or their potential to do so. It might not have developed their knowledge about active citizenship but it enabled them to feel empowered to act on their knowledge. This evidence is made strong by the transformation that was observed in participants’ behaviours, mentioned earlier.

There also seems to be a developed interest in actively participating in formal politics. Initially, they expressed a lack of information about local government and a lack of participation thereof. They indicated that they did not know what was happening with government in their local communities. However, at the end of the programme when asked if they felt encouraged to participate in government decision-making and in determining the welfare of their societies, participant 1 said: “Yes, because it’s our duty and I live in this society. So I know what people need”. Similarly, participant 3 responded: “Yes, now I think I have an interest in political things now”. On the other hand participant 2 said: “I don’t feel encouraged to participate in government decision-making”.

PERFORMANCE:

Despite this positive indication of the programmes’ success with these individual participants, the larger group’s behaviour was inconsistent with this evidence. At the end of the programme, there was a sense of hesitation from participants with regards to performing their poems to a public audience. They were not confident about presenting their work to their immediate communities, such as their schools and the townships in which they lived. They were afraid that their communities would laugh at their presentations and not take them seriously. They preferred to present to communities that were unfamiliar to them, such as suburbs like Rondebosch, even though those communities did not have the issues that their work was addressing. So, they did not seem keen to address the issues in their immediate communities.

Subsequently, they became unresponsive when it came to planning rehearsal dates for the final public performance. As a consequence, the public presentation of their poems failed to happen. It is suspected that this break in communication was the result of their reluctance to perform for their communities. During one of the workshop sessions it was revealed that because of their school environments and their relationship to their teachers, participants believed that their voices were not valuable in their classrooms and to their teachers. Therefore, they might have projected this onto their larger communities and assumed that what they had to say would not be valuable to their community members.

Yet, it is also acknowledged that a better job could have been done at facilitating them in developing their performances for their written work and curbing their insecurities. Essentially, the only activities that had been planned to help them with this were techniques taken from Cecily Berry's *From Word to Play* (2008) and Patsy Rodenburg's *The Right to Speak* (1992). They were taught techniques, from these resources, which mostly dealt with controlling their breathing and the strength of their voice. Another event that had been planned was a field trip to a Cape Town poetry slam competition, which took place as part of the annual Open Book Festival, during September of 2019. The field trip was intended to give them a reference of what spoken word poetry performances could look like and to inspire them for their own public performance. However, when it came to guiding them through the process of embodying their work and thinking through the gestures or facial expressions they could use for effective communication, the programme was not successful. This is why the performance presentation of most participants poems were not strong in the last workshop session. This might also be why the participants pulled away from performing publicly, because they might have felt that not much was done to help them develop their performance ability.

Another thing that was concerning is that the writing group on crime and violence had plagiarised their poem from the internet. They copied a poem titled *Crime & Violence* written by Zanilia (2004) and they omitted some parts from the original poem, to avoid being detected. What is interesting is that they had written their own original poem, which made good points but chose instead to present the plagiarised poem as their own. I believe that this might be due to the changes that occurred in the group. Towards the end of the programme, it was noticed that the drafts of a poem written in response to the portfolio on sports and entertainment dealt more with the themes of the portfolio on crime and violence. It was suggested to the author of

the poem that he join the group writing on crime and violence. He also had the option to remain with his original group but he agreed to the suggestion and joined his new group.

In addition to this change, a participant from the group working on the portfolio on education and environment asked if she could move to join the group on crime and violence, because she had felt that the work that was written for her original portfolio was not inclusive of her voice. She was advised to try and find where her ideas could fit in and her voice could be amplified before abandoning her original group, but she was adamant about changing groups and her choice was respected. Therefore, these two additions changed the dynamics of the group on crime and violence. For instance, there was a noticeable change in the personality of the girl that recently joined the group. She went from being reserved in her previous group to being more involved and being a leader in her new group. This might have impacted on the initial writing choices of the group working on the issue of crime and violence.

SUCCESSES AND LIMITATIONS:

The final analysis that can be made from these findings is that spoken word poetry can develop the participation of young people in formal politics, or at least their enthusiasm to want to participate, as it has been made evident by the responses of the three participants. However, there were limitations to the programme. At the end of the programme the majority of participants were hesitant to act on their knowledge of active citizenship and address the issues in their immediate communities. This indicates that there was something about spoken word poetry as an applied drama and theatre medium which did not work.

The failure has to do with how the programme was designed and implemented. There was a lot of emphasis placed on the writing aspect of the art form than on the performance aspect. Consequently, the participants' confidence in their voice was not developed and it seems as though this lack of development in their self-expression negatively impacted on their enthusiasm to act as active citizens.

Applied drama and theatre is a theatrical mode of working, as Boal (1979:132) emphasises when he says that:

> the spectator's thoughts are discussed theatrically on stage… All the solutions, suggestions, and opinions are revealed in theatrical form. The discussion itself

> need not simply take the form of words, but rather should be effected through all the other elements of theatrical expression as well.

So, even though the programme started off with using Boal's theatrical way of working, at some point in the programme it got stuck on working in a literary way and undermined applied drama and theatre's theatrical way of working.

The problem area is the content generation phase. This phase relied heavily on Susan Weinstein's primer (2010) on youth spoken word which deviated it away from a performative way of working, because Weinstein's framework prioritises the writing practice of spoken word poetry. What the programme design overlooked is that spoken word poetry is rooted in the history of oral tradition and not literary tradition. Therefore, what could have been done differently in this phase is to think of writing as a tool to record what is being said, instead of determine what should be said. For instance, instead of developing the poems through writing, they could have been developed orally using practices from oral tradition. So, following the first phase which mainly worked through Boal's theatrical practices, the programme could have moved into exploring the generative themes through oral-based activities instead of cognitive and disembodied activities, such as that of creating collages. This does not imply that it was a mistake working with literary material like newspapers, the *Bill of Rights* and party manifestos, because Boal also works with similar media in his other forms of theatre such as Newspaper Theatre and Photo-romance. However, the material provided could have been explored using oral practices. Therefore, instead of making cut-out paper collages, they could have made a spoken word collage using sound recordings.

In this way, the participants may have found the process of developing and performing their poems less intimidating. They probably would have identified with this way of working more, especially considering that most of the participants came from a culture in which oral tradition is highly regarded and is still practised. isiXhosa is one of the South African cultures and languages known for praise poetry.

During the visit to the Cape Town Poetry slam, participants seemed more fascinated with poets who presented their poems in isiXhosa. They responded enthusiastically to the poetry performances that invoked African indigenous oral tradition. Considering this observation, this way of working might have enabled participants to grow confidence in the power of their voices

and emboldened them in the final phase of the programme, to publicly share their ideas for social redress and be active members in their societies, and participate in the local government of their communities.

CONCLUSION:

This thesis aimed to assess how a programme of spoken word poetry could develop the South African youth's active participation in formal politics. To illustrate its argument, the thesis discussed how a spoken word poetry programme was used to address the issues of youth formal political participation and developed a group of young people's interest in participating in the country's political and social welfare.

Spoken word poetry was of interest to this study as an applied drama and theatre medium, because it is one of the youth's popular cultural expression and the design of the programme was informed by the art form. The programme was broken down into four phases which explored the concept of active participation, in order to develop the quality in participants, through a way of working that prioritised collaboration between the researcher and research participants, as co-researchers.

In the end, the study concludes that spoken word poetry can develop the participation of young people in formal politics, or at least their enthusiasm to want to participate. However, if future applied drama and theatre research plans to use spoken word poetry as an approach, it is recommended that the focus be placed on the performance aspect of the art form rather than on the literary. Applied drama and theatre is a theatrical mode of working and, therefore, spoken word poetry as an applied drama and theatre approach would have to be employed as a performance-based practice of research. Considering that spoken word poetry is rooted in the history of oral tradition, this means that oral based practices would have to be used as methods of research and/or development.

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APPENDIX A:

PORTFOLIO NAME: SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT					
Images	Stand Out Words and/or Phrases	Relevant Constitutional Bill of Rights	Party Manifesto/s chosen by group	Group's expectation/s (hopes)	Gaps identified by group
Three images of women photographed wearing very revealing fashion outfits covering only the necessary parts of their bodies, such as the breasts and vagina, posing on red carpets. One of the women is standing next to a fully dressed man. Three images of different cell phones which include brands such as the Apple iPhone and Samsung Galaxy, and a drawn image representing what looks like a touch screen smartphone.	"Shock queen Zodwa Wabantu"… "mesh dress"… "Vodacom Durban July" "Kendall Jenner"; "Wiz Khalifa, left, and Amber Rose" "The thing I care about is MY… PHONE" "DUAL SIM" "4G", "5GB data on contract" "Galaxy A20", "Samsung"	"Freedom of expression 16. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes- (a) freedom of the press and other media; (b) freedom to receive or impart information or ideas; (c) <u>freedom of artistic creativity; and</u> (d) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research. (2) The right in subsection (1) does not extend to- (a) propaganda for war;	"The EFF will facilitate the provision of financial services specific to the creative industry."(2019:144) "The EFF will deal decisively with the culture of artists' paying bribes to radio DJs to play their music." (2019:144) The EFF government will subsidise the broadcasting of all South Africa's national sport codes on the SABC."(2019:144) "The EFF government will require radio stations to play a minimum of 75%	"Freedom to express our thoughts through various ways: the arts, sports" "Jobs/career should be made popular/more appreciated in order to create jobs & possibly reduce crime e.g. poetry" "More funding support to creative ideas of reducing crime & unemployment" "Less of handouts- more investments on equipping people (training courses etc.) Hear 4rm them what they want & help from there"	"Looking @ the plan EFF has to reduce crime, it is more from top down, & not bottom up- not fixing the issue. More like putting bandage on a wound"

Various images of sports players wearing sports jerseys of different teams. There are mostly images of soccer players but they also include those of rugby players, boxers and a skater. There are also images of a soccer ball photographed next to a trophy placed on a pedestal and a rugby ball held in the arms of a player. Related to these are logos of different South African sports organisations which include those identifiable as that of the Orlando Pirates football club and the Premier Soccer League. One image of a soldier fully dressed in their uniform and armed with a gun, standing in front a crowd, which	"SPORTS DRINK", "ENERGADE", "FUELLING SOUTH AFRICAN HEROICS" "Matt and Angelo just want to share their love for boxing" "Manchester City"… "English Premeir League champions" "Tottenham Hotspur" "PSL: Premier Soccer League" "Yokohama Tyres" "Vodacom"	(b) incitement of violence; or (c) advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and that constitutes incitement to cause harm." "Freedom of association 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of association." "Language and culture 30. Everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights."	African content by 2024." (2019:145) "The EFF government will build an arts and culture centre in each ward in the country by 2022"(2019:145) "The EFF government will establish a state non-profit music distribution and production company by 2023, which local artists can use to produce and distribute their music, which will also provide legal services to artists so that they can reclaim ownership of their material from record companies."(2019:145) "The EFF government will only hire local artists for state events, with prioritisation of up-and-coming artists over those that are		

includes mostly children and women, gathered at the back of the image dressed in a combination of pyjamas and other warm clothing. One image of a graph with a wavering line moving across it and fluctuating between numbers.	“Rand v dollar”, “Apr.. May… Jun… Jul”; “Bloomberg”		already established.”(2019:145)		

APPENDIX B:

We as One[2]

Let us come together
And build one united Africa
Killing our own brothers and sisters is Afrophobia
That is not xenophobia
What comes to mind when throwing a stone against an African
Let us come together

Let us love and cherish each other as Africans
Let us be an example to our children
Let us give them a chance to grow in a nation
Filled with love and harmony
Let's reason and come to sense because violence doesn't solve problems
Let us come together

Some people want to live in other countries in Africa
But they are contradicted by the violence going on
Violence kills a country, politically, economically.
As the seeds and the children of Africa we cry for peace
Love, kindness, sense of belonging, joy
Let us come together

[2] Written by Participant 1; published with permission.

APPENDIX C:

A Polite Leader [3]

We are the new generation
We need true governance in our country
to stop crime and violence in our country
You promised something that you never deliver
We give you power to lead us
You lead us into darkness
Corruption is ruling our world
Crime is killing our world
Stop fighting for wanting to be in power
Fight to serve people
Do not fight to be rich
Fight for our country to be rich
Stop fighting over a power
Give people power to do the right things
We are living under starvation
People are overworking but earn low wages and salary
They work under a pressure
They get peanuts under your nose
People are being killed like animals
They violated under your nose
You just sit back and watch
Our country is falling down
Have you tried to hold it up
You dragging it through mud
We need light so that we can see
All we need is a true leader
Who care for the people
Who care for our country

[3] Written by Participant 2; published with permission.

Who care for our economy
A leader that can uplift our country
We need a man that can turn this world around
Someone who can stop crime and violence
Someone who has leading qualities
Not corruption qualities

APPENDIX D[4]:

We as males underestimate women for they skills
They might be quiet but they know how it feels
Sorry I'm very soft spoken
Women in sports get little attention
I think we need to shift focus
See them as not opponents
But as our coaches
Women bare pain that some men can't even hold still
Lately we discovered that on the news
Our female runner is no longer considered as fully women
Kanti what have we been doing
You do realise that without women we are clueless
That's like drinking coolade with only sugar
Bam Bam that's a knock on the door
Boom Boom that's her falling on the floor

[4] Written by Participant 3; published with permission.