

Collecting social data: Adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic

Agenda

Thursday, 27 August 2020

Katherine Brown, Foundation for Human Rights

10:00-12:00

Community-based research during Covid-19: a tale of two surveys

Candice Groenewald, Human Sciences Research Council

Research through social media in the time of 'social' distancing: Reflecting on the life during lockdown study

Marlise Richter and Kristen Abrahams, Community Action Networks

Lessons from remote CAN learning sessions

Reflection:

*What are we compromising
and what are we gaining?*

Katherine Brown, Foundation of Human Rights

- **Tara:**
 - What spatial info is the map based on? GPS point or address? or other spatial info?
 - So for the NCF survey, this was based on the addresses given by the respondents. In some cases, we did ask them for their ward number to try make it accurate because we could not add a geolocation question to the survey. We did ask them to provide this, but in some cases they actually gave us incorrect information, so we had to research the location, which can be time consuming and we tried to make sure that it was a closest approximation to what they intended to say and in some cases; they were contacted to rectify the information we had.
 - Would be good to know how responses by CAO relate to the provinces of where CAOs exist (or % of existing CAOs per province)
 - This has been included in our short report, there's a nice table and a graph outlining this. Overall, we got 57% response rate, and this was out 224 CAOs we contacted and 127 responded. The highest response rate in terms of Provinces was from the North West, where there was 9 CAOs and 8 responded. The lowest was Gauteng, where there are 40 CAOs we contacted and only 16 responses we received.
 - How much did you communicate to potential respondents how the information was going to be used? What decisions would be informed by it? and if they would get the information back to be able to make decisions in their own areas based on it?
 - For the FHR survey, we informed all respondents that results will be used to illustrate key issues in their communities and we also said that they will be used to pin point the importance of CAOs. This was quite useful, especially in the launch, as the Deputy Minister of Justice and an ambassador to South Africa from the EU who attended and participated in discussions and all participants were present. It was useful to have this kind of engagement from all different levels to figure out how to get at the bottom of addressing the key issues.
 - For the NCF survey, the food relief map was really the key here. So we were very clear from the beginning that this would help participants in raising their profile for people who need food aid, for receiving funding and other support for their food aid.
 - For both surveys, we included all the key information in the map in the case of NCF and in both reports- and these are freely available and were sent to all participants.
 - Are you willing to share the questions that you asked of CAOs?
 - I can't share the questions. The easiest way would be to perhaps I can send you a pdf of the questions, and can send for both surveys.
- **Mahlomola Lengolo:** Is the map geo-referenced?
- I think I've already answered that.
- **Candice Groenewald:** Could you perhaps say more about the participants (who they are within these systems) and how you recruited/marketed the survey?
- From the FHR perspective, we sent a link to the survey to our CAO databases and we did follow up from calls, especially as the time of collecting data was drawing to a close to try to get as many responses as possible. Luckily, at the FHR; we had the resources and the time to do this, but at NCF because it was a volunteer based initiative from our side, we just shared a link via email to our networks, via whatsapp and shared around social media, so we didn't have the resources to follow on calls.
- **Shirley Walters:** How can we access reports? thanks very much
 - FHR report and other things: http://www.fhr-mirror.org.za/index.php/latest_news/foundation-human-rights-community-based-advice-office-survey-human-rights-diagnosis-community-advice-offices-and-covid-19/
 - NCF report and map: https://www.safsc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/National-Food-Crisis-Forum_-Food-relief-mapping-report.pdf
 - <https://www.safsc.org.za/food-relief-mapping/>
- **Matt Skade:** How would you advise an organisation that has money on sustainable spending on relief efforts?
- Great question Matt about advise on spending on sustainable food relief efforts. Don't get me wrong, short term food relief is really useful for the immediate issue of hunger. But looking at more sustainable practices, so this could be things like food gardens, seed banks, local community food growth networks etc. There's been quite a lot that has been happening on the ground, there's also a South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (SAFSC) which have series on YouTube on how to start maintaining your home gardens and the recordings for this series are available on YouTube for everyone to access. There's also an amount of creativity and innovations where organisations are integrating things like recycling and working together campaigns trying to create a more sustainable way to combat hunger in this country.

Candice Groenewald, Human Sciences Research Council

- **Sthembiso:** For children, I see you had focused only on the 5-12 year-old children. Was there a particular reason not to focus on the under 5s (0-4 years)?
- We wanted children to participate themselves and having children who would be able to talk to us over the phone. We thought with the 5-12 age group because they are likely to be socialising in a different way to the younger group. Of course lot of the engagement was facilitated with the parents, but we wanted children to have an input and that's why we went with this particular age to engage meaningfully.
- **Shirley Walters:** How did the recruitment occur in more detail?
- We have our study brief put up on our different social media platforms. On the brief, there was a WhatsApp number and the same number could be used to send a please call me. So we explained the study to them and it was up to them if they wanted to participate or not. The number used was specifically for the project and it was easy to communicate with the participants, and getting them involved to the study. In the beginning, it went quite slow to get participants and a video was made and shared online to explain how the project will work. Recruit went 3-4 weeks, we soon realised that we had more female engagements, which is often the case in this type of research. We then started actively recruiting males and different groups provincially. We got a good selection of people and a majority were from KwaZulu-Natal.
- **Mahlomola Lengolo:** In terms of ethical considerations, how did you go about when recruiting minors?
- We recruited minors through parents. We asked parents if they have kids this particular age and if they would consider allowing their children participating. If the parent considered this, we talked to them and to the children as well to get consent even from them. The consent form was done telephonically, and this was also forwarded to them directly to go through it with the kids to explain to them what we are doing and if they are really happy participating.
- **Tara:** Also re ethics, how do you manage permissions around using photos of children and other respondents?
- We did specify the use of photos of children and other participants and how this information would be used. Overall, participants were happy to consent this, and got very excited knowing that their pictures would be used. It was quite a fun part for people who enjoyed doing it. We went through the HSRC Ethics committee and to get ethical clearance from responses.
- **Rob Tyrrell (FHR):** Are there any concerns about confidentiality while using social media - in particular some social media companies terms of usage allowing them to store and potentially access content on the social media accounts?

Marlise Richter and Kristen Abrahams, Community Action Networks

- **Julia de Kadt:** The co-learning approach is fascinating, and seems incredibly valuable. I'd be interested in thoughts around incorporating it into formal research projects/processes. Is anyone aware of examples of this? I can also imagine it could be incredibly useful in study design, or for example developing field protocols, etc.
- **Tara:** Trust-based collaborative remote working (also within spatially distributed research networks) is such an important topic!
- **Karen Kotschy:**
 - Thank you so much for the fascinating insight into CANs. It's a wonderful example of collaborative social learning in action, and resonates so well with the approach used over the last 7 years in the Resilience in the Olifants River Basin, with which I have been involved through an NGO called AWARD.
 - Another example is the Tsitsa Project in the Eastern Cape (with involvement from Rhodes University and other partners).
- **Shirley Walters:** The participatory research approach has been around for many decades and builds learning as a key part of the process.