

Children mapping their realities and aspirations: an innovative methodological tool with implications for practice, program and policy

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Abstract:

This presentation examines an innovative transdisciplinary Children's Mapping Project in the evolving work of the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) in South Africa, and the engagement of child and youth care workers (cycws) of the NACCW *Isibindi-Ezikoleni (Safe Parks/Courage in Schools)* school-based program in locational and aspirational mapping practice with children and youth in seven provinces across South Africa, in collaboration with the Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre (GCRC), Carleton University, and *Circle of All Nations*, the Legacy work of Indigenous Elder William Commanda. This innovative project initiated in January 2022 engages social services sector workers, researchers and children from a diversity of locations (urban, rural, informal settlements and isolated), with a range of environmental challenges (floods to drought) and community and social challenges (safety, poverty, empowerment) in cartography and a locational exploration of a complex intersection of issues. The presentation will include a preliminary analysis of the children's map visualizations of environmental and social conditions, and a prioritization of issues for further practice, program and policy development, in partnership with researchers and national and international organizations like the South African Human Rights Commission (Children's and Migrant Rights Commissioner), the Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town, and UNICEF.

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