This book investigates the power of art to enhance human development and to initiate positive social change for individuals and societies recovering from conflict.

Interventions aimed at reinforcing social justice and bringing communities together after conflict are often accused of being top-down, or failing to consider all groups and contexts within a society. The use of participatory arts can help to address these challenges by fostering community engagement, social cohesion, influencing public policy, and ultimately, advancing social justice. Arts-based methods can be particularly effective at reaching youth communities, providing voice and political agency to young people who are often not given a platform. Situated at the intersection of participatory arts, social and epistemic justice, this book brings together case studies from across the world to reflect on best practice for the use of bottom-up, participatory, co-produced, and co-designed arts processes in conflict settings.

This book provides an important guide to the role that arts can play in addressing epistemic injustice and contributing to social justice and human development. As such, it will be of interest to international development and arts practitioners, policy makers, and to students and researchers across participatory arts, youth studies, international development, social justice, and peace and conflict studies.

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POST-CONFLICT
PARTICIPATORY ARTS

Socially Engaged Development

Edited by
Faith Mkwananzi and F. Melis Cin
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This book has been produced and edited amid a global pandemic with Melis working in the United Kingdom and Faith working in South Africa. Our shared vision, commitment, and passion for creating a change, inspiring the youth, and working for peaceful communities have been the starting point of our friendship which would grow and blossom into a co-authorship later on. We believe in the greater good and have good faith in working with global citizens and activists who will share our passion for sustainable development, peace, and justice. The book was also very much shaped by our individual debates with contributors but also with our colleagues whom we owe a debt of gratitude. We would furthermore like to thank Carmen Martinez-Vargas, Melanie Walker, Mikateko Mathebula, Parvati Raghuram, Rahime Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm, Marlies Kustatscher, Amrit Virk, Sandra Boni, Ecem-Karlıdağ-Dennis, Elif Dastarlı, and Özge Zihnioğlu. We also acknowledge the support of the Higher Education and Human Development Research Group at the Centre for Development Support
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1

INTRODUCTION

Participatory arts in building socially just societies in the Global South

*Faith Mkwananzi and F. Melis Cin*

The book creates a platform for the analysis of cases and the sharing of good practices for participatory arts, civic engagement, and political spaces of voice, all of which are necessary for development. Drawing on the various cases, the book conceptualises both epistemic and social justice and how participatory arts methods and the variants presented in the case studies speak to this conceptualisation. It brings a diverse range of chapters from Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Lebanon, Nepal, South Africa, Turkey, Palestine, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The case studies chosen touch upon the methodological processes of participatory arts methods in the co-production of knowledge and ways in which these socially engaged art interventions can enhance well-being, lives, and the opportunities available to communities and individuals. They also illustrate the difficulties and limitations involved in participatory arts and will contribute to reflections on the constraints and possibilities to create peaceful communities working for social change. Therefore, beyond the conceptualisation, the book places these three areas of growing interest (participatory arts, epistemic justice, and social justice) in conversation with each other empirically in post-conflict settings. The overall argument is tailored in line with the contextual uniqueness of the case studies presented as illustrations of the role of collaborative engagements in the creation of knowledge and building of socially just societies. In this chapter, we provide a motivation for focusing on post-conflict communities as it provides a distinctive contextualisation of where participatory methods have been applied in the Global South, and how this application contributes to the creation and expansion of knowledge to and beyond political spheres.

We understand socially engaged arts interventions as a way of enhancing human development for social inequality and well-being. It can potentially transform individuals and society through raising critical consciousness, promoting

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social change, introducing political and social issues to the public sphere, and even stimulating a social movement at large. More importantly, it can contribute to social and epistemic justice in the long run. The distinctiveness of participatory arts methods, particularly in post-conflict settings, lies in its collaborative nature between those with, and those without power in the process, encouraging the use of bottom-up, participatory, co-produced, and co-designed arts processes. It is our aspiration that this book sets the ground for a start to related conversations and reflections on conceptualisation and methodology of participatory arts through interrogating the role of arts in diverse conflict settings by focusing on various conflicts (e.g. displacement in Palestine, or civil war in Nepal) to explore how arts methods can be imagined and used through the themes of redressing epistemic justice and building social justice. This approach provides locally, yet internationally relevant content for arts in (post-) conflict settings and strengthens the input of local voices of youth and NGOs who have collaborated in each of the projects presented in this book. Our understanding of (post-) conflict communities in this book is broad and does not only encompass the communities who have been exposed to civil war and armed conflict (e.g. Chapter 10 by Bhandari on Nepal) but we also accounted for poverty or countries with high horizontal inequalities (Brown, Langer and Stewart, 2011), the intercommunal conflict (Ryan, 2013) that exists between different ethnic groups, gender-based violence, and moderate conflict and fragility. As such, the cases of Turkey and Lebanon, for instance, in this book reflect cases of such emerging tensions and conflict related to femicides and between refugees and host communities, which can polarise the parties and act as the catalyst for violent conflict.

Each case study in the book represents a specific context, illustrates the potential impact of various participatory methods on fostering community engagement, social cohesion, influencing public policy, and, in so doing, advancing social justice. The multiple cases in the book provide unique insights from each context, providing examples of building inclusive, youth-led civil societies in areas of post-conflict. They demonstrate how participatory arts methods can be used to address different challenges in different contexts across the globe. This provides a broader contribution to knowledge in how the arts and social science can contribute to social, economic, and political development in a practical manner. In doing so, this brings to attention how participatory arts have the considerable potential to identify and document the local (indigenous) knowledge to create sustainable and peaceful communities, face injustices, and create a platform for community resilience. The book provides empirical, methodological, and theoretical contributions and illustrates the role and contribution of participatory arts methods in fostering social justice in conflict settings; demonstrates the nature of participatory arts processes in knowledge production and epistemological diversity; and highlights how arts and participatory methods can contribute to youth’s or communities’ quest for social justice or theorise and evaluate social justice and arts. Thus, our key concern is to share ideas, and
instigate ongoing conversations about civil and political collaborations in building peaceful societies.

We are, nonetheless, also attentive to the limits of participatory arts, and our aim is not to romanticise the arts as therapeutic and thus automatically conducive to peace and justice. We realise the nuanced roles that arts can play concerning fostering justice and peaceful relations and can sometimes neglect the power relations inherent in any creative and curatorial practice (Sylvester, 2015). Art needs to integrate different kinds of political voices, creating a counterpublic space for those who live on the margins of the society (Leavy, 2020), where the political agency of minority groups such as youth can be understood and amplified. This way of using art can also challenge the use of art as a form of governance for engaging young people deemed to be ‘at risk’ because of the fear of conflict and instead positions art as enabling young people to have ‘new ways of knowing themselves’. However, we also echo the concern that arts can be seen as ‘extractive’ when project facilitators draw on local knowledges for a predetermined agenda and the arts themselves can be seen as ‘a by-product of a process often focussed on achieving social cohesion or western neoliberal notions’ (Cooke and Soria-Donlan, 2019, p. 15). Therefore, the book also addresses these methodological issues and ethical concerns in how participatory arts can be employed as they discuss the participatory process for epistemic and/or social justice.

**Understanding epistemic (in)justice**

In this book, our understanding of epistemic (in)justice departs from Fricker’s (2007) theorisation of epistemic (in)justice which identifies two forms of injustice – testimonial and hermeneutical – while acknowledging that not all chapters explicitly use this theorisation but draw on the key arguments of these two injustices. Both types of injustice involve prejudice against someone because of their social identity. Testimonial injustice is a transactional issue; a social group may suffer from credibility and lack trustworthiness due to their social identity and may face discrimination in terms of access to goods and services. Testimonial exclusion becomes structural when institutions are set up to exclude people (Anderson, 2012). Hermeneutical injustice is a structural issue and occurs when a society fails to interpret or understand a speaker’s experiences because they belong to a social group that has been prejudicially marginalised (Fricker, 2007). Building on Fricker’s account, Walker and Boni (2020) argue that epistemic oppression and marginalisation intersect with various forms of inequality such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity, and exclude communities from public spaces, knowledge production processes, and decision making that concern them. Similarly, Cin and Süleymanoğlu-Küürüm (2020) conceptualise epistemic justice as a political capability, arguing that the absence of such a political capability eradicates any possibility of the freedom necessary to express and engage in political conversations and can be an outcome of multiple social oppression compasses, which are indeed often the influences of the conflicts at hand. Therefore,
we understand epistemic justice to be allowing a person to express and exercise their capability as a knower and contributor to knowledge creation and dissemination. We draw this position from the assertion that a wrong can be done to an individual based on their capacity as a knower by disregarding or discredit-ing their potential for participation in knowledge creation processes, and this equates to an injustice (Fricker, 2007; Kidd, Medina and Pohlhaus, 2017). In some conflict settings, people’s capacity as knowers may be discredited because of various factors such as ethnicity, race, geography, gender, age, socio-economic class, among others. For instance, if views of a previously in-conflict community are not considered in future local policy decisions, the vulnerabilities experienced are likely to continue into and be expressed by future generations. Thus, the discrediting of knowers may be detrimental to any peacebuilding efforts. Recentering these communities and their epistemic contributions in the centre of discussion and public deliberations may enable reconciliation, ultimately driving towards socially just societies.

Epistemic injustice is more salient in marginalised communities. Newbigging and Ridley (2018) write about epistemically marginalised groups and the power asymmetries that exist in considering whose, and what knowledge counts. This is also particularly the case in environments where either ethnical, political, economic, gender, or racial dominance has been the norm. In other words, the ‘testimony, of people seen as underdogs in such cases becomes at high risk of being seen as irrelevant or unreliable and consequently ignored, downgraded, or rejected’ (p. 37). While the testimonial injustice obstructs the flow of knowledge and devalues ideas, knowledge, and values of such communities, it can also lead to hermeneutical marginalisation (Peels and Blaauw, 2016) by positioning a social group in a relatively disadvantaged position of exclusion. From the multiple case studies, we draw parallels with concerns of such marginalisation, social violence, and exclusion, and highlight how, through participatory arts, communities can share their experiences, knowledge, and information and take up the role of advocacy. In doing so, both epistemic and social justice are encouraged, allowing those that have been facing different forms of violence to influence public discourse through knowledge, participation in communicative practices, or representation (Fricker, 2015). Epistemic justice may, therefore, have been viewed as a virtue of social institutions by theorising the intersection of social epistemology with theories of justice (Anderson, 2012). The wrong done to someone in their capacity as a knower (and our analysis of that as epistemic injustice) may be seen to be a consequence of social (non-epistemic) power imbalances. Therefore, challenging epistemic injustices would require addressing institutional structures. Consequently, while Fricker’s focus on individual epistemic virtue is important, it is also necessary to consider the requirements of epistemic justice as a feature of social systems.

There are, however, certain elements that we wish to draw attention to, which are that epistemic justice is not, whether in conceptualisation or comprehension, an end; it is an iterative practice in which individuals, and