CLARISSA
Child Labour Action Research Innovation in South & South Eastern Asia

## EMERGING EVIDENCE REPORT 6

# HOW DOES PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH GENERATE INNOVATION? FINDINGS FROM A RAPID REALIST REVIEW

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# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This Emerging Evidence Report shares evidence of how, for whom, and under what circumstances, Participatory Action Research (PAR) leads to innovative actions. A rapid realist review was undertaken to develop programme theories that explain how PAR generates innovation. The methodology included peer-reviewed and grey literature and moments of engagement with programme staff, such that their input supported the development and refinement of three resulting initial programme theories (IPTs) that we present in this report. Across all three IPTs, safe relational space, group facilitation, and the abilities of facilitators, are essential context and intervention components through which PAR can generate innovation. Implications from the three IPTs for evaluation design of the CLARISSA programme are identified and discussed. The report finishes with opportunities for the CLARISSA programme to start building an evidence base of how PAR works as an intervention modality, such as evidencing group-level conscientisation, the influence of intersecting inequalities, and influence of diverse perspectives coming together in a PAR process.

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**The Child Labour: Action-Research-Innovation in South and South-Eastern Asia (CLARISSA)** is a consortium of organisations committed to building a participatory evidence base and generating innovative solutions to the worst forms of child labour in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Nepal.

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

**3ie** International Initiative for Impact Evaluation

**CIMO** context-intervention-mechanisms-outcome

**DMPSSP** Dialogue, Mediation and Peace Support Structures Programme

**FCDO** Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

**IPT** initial programme theory

**PAR** Participatory Action Research

**PLA** Participatory Learning and Action

**ToC** Theory of Change

**WFCL** worst forms of child labour

**YPAR** Youth Participatory Action Research

*Section 1:*

# INTRODUCTION

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The CLARISSA programme is an FCDO-funded participatory evidence and innovation generation programme working with children engaged in the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in supply chains in Bangladesh and Nepal. Designed as an action research programme, its aim is 'to use research to understand the dynamics which drive WFCL and through the process to generate participatory innovations which help towards shifting these underlying dynamics and mitigating their worst effects' (Burns, Apgar and Raw 2021: 7). The rationale that underpins the action research design is the lack of understanding, particularly through children's lived experience, of the complex underlying drivers of WFCL, coupled with the lack of evidence of what interventions work to reduce them (Oosterhoff *et al.* 2018; Idris, Oosterhoff and Pocock 2020). The programme aims to include the experiences of children themselves in both understanding the drivers of WFCL and directly in the development of appropriate solutions (Miljeteig 2000; Imoh and Okyere 2020; Sändig, Von Bernstorff and Hasenclever 2018). Consequently, it offers a unique opportunity to build rigorous evidence on how child-centred action research as a programming modality, works.

The CLARISSA programme design (explained further in Section 2.2) uses action research as a broad category and within it includes the use of Participatory Action Research (PAR) with children and other stakeholders in selected supply chains. PAR in this context relates to specific group-based activities. Evaluation research is guided by the question: How, in what contexts, and for whom can PAR generate effective innovations to tackle the worst forms of child labour? As described in Apgar *et al.* (2020), the evaluation research in CLARISSA uses a theory-based evaluation approach, combining contribution analysis and realist evaluation. An important step in theory-based evaluation is to further refine our Theory of Change (ToC) and identify where more evidence is needed to inform the evaluation design. A rapid realist review, employed in the context of realist evaluation, is primarily concerned with evidence from literature that can support or dispute a programme theory. It aims to develop initial programme theories that can explain how the intervention works given contextual influences and underlying mechanisms of action (for more detail, see Box 2 in Section 3). Contextual factors can be broadly understood as any condition that triggers and/or modifies the behaviour of a mechanism. Mechanisms are the resources (e.g. information, advice, trust) offered through a programme and the way people respond to these resources (Jagosh 2019).

Previous systematic, rapid, realist scoping reviews and meta-analyses have identified outcomes of PAR (or community engagement, or community-based participatory research), including improved access to services, increased social capital and ability to participate in services and research, improved trust between citizens, and improved health and wellbeing outcomes (Harden *et al.* 2015; Waddington *et al.* 2019; Jagosh *et al.* 2012; Labonne and Chase 2008; O'Mara-Eves *et al.* 2015; Popay *et al.* 2007; Rifkin 2014; Waddington 2019; Williams, St. Denny and Bristow 2017). While findings from these reviews provide confidence that participatory research approaches can indeed generate change, they do not detail how and why participatory research generates these changes, nor have they looked at how innovations can be generated through participation.

This Emerging Evidence Report shares findings from a rapid realist review that zoomed in specifically to **understand which mechanisms are triggered by PAR in what context and how they result in innovative actions**. The review was undertaken primarily to design CLARISSA evaluation research, and consequently implications for CLARISSA evaluation are discussed in this report. The review also contributes to furthering our understanding of how PAR generates outcomes, for whom, and under what circumstances, and strengthens evidence for PAR as an intervention in international development to generate new knowledge and transformative change (i.e. changes that reshape the individual, organisational, or social systems to build distinct relationships for deeper change). We first provide an overview of PAR, its main characteristics and its historical roots, before detailing our approach in CLARISSA. After an explanation of the review methodology, the resulting three initial programme theories are presented, followed by a discussion on implications for theory and practice.

*Section 2:*

# BACKGROUND: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

# 2 BACKGROUND: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Action research and Participatory Action Research (PAR) 'seek to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people' (Reason and Bradbury 2001: 1). They are an orientation to knowledge production and problem-solving which embrace knowledge as plural and centre lived experience in creating change through collaborative and iterative cycles of action and reflection on real-life challenges. The many and extensive academic and practitioner texts that showcase an ever-expanding diversity of applications and their theoretical foundations are evidence that deep historical roots continue to inform contemporary debates around continuously evolving expressions in different thematic and practice areas. Within this broad orientation, multiple, often contested interpretations and uses co-exist. One area of agreement which provides a common foundation is that PAR enacts an alternative to positivist and empiricist scientific inquiry by recognising knowledge as plural and contested and valuing all forms of it equally. Experiential knowledge is at the heart of PAR, making situated lived reality the starting point for inquiry. It follows, therefore, that the way PAR is theorised and practised is influenced heavily by the context through which experiential knowledge is shaped.

## 2.1 The multiple threads and core elements of PAR

Articulation of PAR from the global South, built around real-life development challenges in particular sociocultural and historical contexts often remains hidden from academic writing, yet drives practical expressions. Maria-Liisa Swantz (2015: 491), for example, discusses how PAR emerged in Tanzania out of deeply embedded research on 'people's own' concepts of development during Nyerere's people-focused policy development. As others have noted, debates around democratic knowledge production on the African continent have roots that go back to post-colonial periods and reflect both nationalist ideologies and pan-Africanist politics (Mangu 2006; Nabudere 2006). South Asia has its own history and trend of PAR as self-investigation by citizens (Rahman 1985, 2008) which posits that 'ordinary, underprivileged people will collectively investigate their own reality, by themselves or in partnership with friendly outsiders, take action of their own to advance their lives, and reflect on their ongoing experience' (Rahman 2008: 49).

Perhaps some of the most influential threads from the global South which are relevant to how PAR is understood as a programming modality in the development sector, come from Latin American traditions, when, during the 1960s and 1970s, critical pedagogy evolved through a commitment of scholars to work with social movements towards political transformation. Work popularised by Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, steps away from the idea that oppressed individuals are blank slates onto which knowledge and resources can be deposited (Freire 1970). Instead, it starts with the assumption that all people have knowledge and expertise in their own lives and that by facilitating dialogue between people, they can become agents of their own liberation.

It starts with people naming their own world, analysing their own situation, through dialogue and collective analysis, and identifying what the factors are that are driving their oppression. Once they have identified these factors, they can then identify what actions they can take to address them and start their process of liberation. They can then start acting on these issues (for example, by bringing changes to their community, taking collective action, advocating for change, further data collection, organising street protests). Further developed by Orlando Fals-Borda and others, the use of iterative cycles of action and reflection started to become more visible as foundational to PAR, which was also influenced by earlier European thinking, particularly Kurt Lewin, who in the 1940s worked towards democratising the social sciences through cycles of reflection and action with others.

### 2.1.1 Collective

Recognising the multiple historical threads and diverse applications, the core elements of participation, action, and research help us understand how PAR can be applied as a programme implementation modality, and in particular when working with marginalised people on complex challenges, such as WFCL. A participatory approach to research highlights that people who are directly affected by a problem or a solution become co-researchers. Their own in-depth knowledge about their situation is theorised as the starting point for PAR. Much PAR, then, is facilitated through working with groups of individuals to form a collective space for inquiry and generating actions together. This emphasis on working with groups necessitates a focus on enabling equal voice

and engagement in decision-making, and ultimately, on how power relationships are navigated.

Feminist and critical approaches to PAR highlight that much PAR practice, in fact, falls far short of its transformative intent, precisely because an emphasis on the collective process can obscure intragroup power dynamics (Maguire 1987; Reid, Tom and Frisby 2006; Sardenberg 2016). Further, power dynamics between the facilitator – often an external researcher – and the group and individuals within the group become potential barriers to meaningful participation. These barriers are further magnified when working with children, especially those exploited and in hazardous and harmful work. As Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) specialists emphasise, recognition of this challenge should shape the way adults work with children in PAR (Ozer and Piatt 2018; Rodriguez and Brown 2009).

#### 2.1.2 Action-oriented

The action element is directly linked to the goal of PAR as generating social change and, in some cases, fostering transformative change. In particular, PAR as a programming modality becomes a problem-solving approach to specific challenges, and so is best understood as a potential mechanism for shifting social norms and systems dynamics. In the context of working with marginalised or at-risk children, shifting social norms further requires attention to inter-generational power dynamics and complex inter-relationships that lead to children's exploitation in the first place. Systemic approaches to PAR, such as systemic action research are particularly concerned with changing system dynamics and engaging with the complexity of the system of oppression that group members are part of (Burns 2014).

In all forms of PAR, however, the intention is that once group members gather knowledge about what is influencing or causing the issue to be addressed, they can then start taking action. Systemic approaches assume that other stakeholders will also need to be engaged to shift system dynamics, but recognises the need to start with the lived experience of the oppressed. There are no agreed definitions of 'action' in PAR, as it is necessarily specific to the group. Generally, however, it is built through mobilising community knowledge and interweaving this with other types of knowledge (e.g. technical knowledge) to generate transformative change. Critiques of PAR, and more broadly, participatory development (see Hickey and Mohan 2004, for example), highlight that challenging power and structural inequality is only possible when the process is understood as inherently political.

#### 2.1.3 Practical knowledge

Finally, the research element refers to the knowledge generation processes within PAR. Knowledge is generated by group members when they analyse their own situation. Knowledge generation, however, also happens when they act, as they learn through doing. The experiential learning focus underpins the iterative and facilitated cycles of action and reflection, generating new knowledge through reflecting on the changes that resulted from the actions taken by the participants and researchers together. This is referred to as praxis, the combination of action and reflection that will lead to both transformative change and new knowledge. The relational space in PAR is central to knowledge generation and importantly, in contrast to much academic research, the researcher accepts that she becomes part of the messy process of change. As such, PAR creates a space for researchers and community members that share the same concern and to work together.

These three elements of PAR separate it from other forms of research with communities around development challenges, such as collaborative research, community development, and applied research (Bradbury 2015; Burns 2018; Chevalier and Buckles 2019; Chiu 2006; Freire 1970; Heron and Reason 2001; Rowell *et al.* 2015; Taylor Aiken 2017). It differs from community-based development in that PAR intends to also produce knowledge that can be shared more widely (either through academic or other means), as opposed to only implementing actions and creating change with community members. Collaborative research aims to progress the knowledge base through participation but does not require action to be taken as part of these processes and is less oriented towards facilitating change. Finally, applied research is about taking action to generate new knowledge but does not require participation from those affected by the issues or the actions.

## 2.2 PAR as an intervention modality in CLARISSA

Children end up in WFCL in supply chains through an interplay of causal factors, relationships, and changing dynamics – it is a complex problem. Evidence suggests that drivers include poverty, entrenched social norms around child labour, family dynamics, and oppressive societal structures, which means that children in WFCL

have little access to resources to change their situation. Social norms held by children and families in South Asia suggest that children have a role in contributing to family income and wellbeing through renumerated work (Oosterhoff and Hacker 2020). Related social norms also exist among employers, who see their role as supporting families in their community by providing children with employment. Children in WFCL, especially those working as garbage pickers or in the adult entertainment industry are often marginalised or stigmatised because of the type of work they are doing. This means that they are experiencing high levels of social and economic exclusion, with very little access to resources (e.g. health care, education, money) and so have limited power to shift their reality.

Furthermore, children in WFCL work long hours under hazardous working conditions, leading to a range of health issues. Given the lack of access to resources such as health care, their conditions often deteriorate, making their work even more unhealthy. Finally, a large proportion of WFCL takes place in small and medium and family businesses, which means that it sits within the informal and more hidden workplaces. This means that it is harder to regulate for governments and harder to address. The picture that emerges is one of social norms on the one hand that view child labour as a positive force, and situations in which children have agency as a result of their work, while on the other hand they often lack resources to shift their reality (Abebe and Bessell 2011; Bhukuth 2008; Horgan *et al.* 2017).

The complexity of WFCL and the lived experience of children and associated contested social norms held by their families, caregivers, and employers around work, require programming modalities that do not predefine the 'solution' but rather build it through engagement with the change agents – children and others. Such localised development programming and the use of research within it, is increasingly pursued within a broader decolonising development agenda (Brun and Lund 2010; Spence 2021). The open-ended nature of PAR, its focus on meaningful participation based on experiential knowledge, and the focus on acting to create change make it a suitable approach. Alongside other interventions, PAR is one intervention modality, through which the CLARISSA programme aims to generate knowledge and innovative solutions to respond to the drivers of WFCL. It is an innovation generation modality which combines evidence gathering and learning from actions. Box 1 details what is meant by innovation in CLARISSA.

**Box 1: Innovation in CLARISSA**

> By innovation we refer to new or improved interventions, solutions, and processes for tackling WFCL that combine adapting and trialling effective solutions from other arenas (working with new populations such as hidden workers and small businesses – imitative and contextualised innovations); generating innovative action by connecting unusual mixes of people through action research and other dialogic processes (participatory development of novel innovations). Innovations will be identified through (A) rigorous assessment of research evidence; (B) **cogeneration in action research groups**; and (C) identification of examples of positive innovation that already exist (positive defiance) and nurturing to scale.
> (CLARISSA 2019)

Types of innovations resulting from the PAR groups are, for example: new ideas, new actions, households doing things differently, solutions being implemented from other contexts, employers doing things differently, new dialogues between the same people, or dialogues between new groups.

Source: Authors' own.

PAR processes in CLARISSA are designed to enable (diverse[1]) groups to meet over a period to consider evidence and generate theories of change about innovative actions; plan and programme innovative solutions; test the solutions in real time, and then evaluate them. The cycles of action and reflection continue until a robust model of action is developed and trialled. The PAR groups combine evidence gathering and learning from action. In this way, PAR groups act as engines of innovation. CLARISSA will link multiple and parallel PAR groups to form a learning architecture that addresses multiple entry points into system dynamics that drive WFCL. Participants will likely be children who are in WFCL, employers, parents, and other stakeholders. Where there are extreme power inequalities between

1 A typology of PAR groups is in development and will inform evaluation research design. It includes different types of groups, such as groups of children working in WFCL (identity based), multi-stakeholder groups (such as different stakeholders across a supply chain), as well as location-based groups (people living in a neighbourhood affected by WFCL).

participants, parallel groups investigating the same issues will be established.

The PAR groups will be facilitated by trained local CLARISSA facilitators who know the context well. They will facilitate multiple sequenced group meetings as well as unstructured and informal processes of engagement over a period of between a year and eighteen months. The facilitator's role is to guide the group towards critical and reflexive thinking. The facilitator should not take on full leadership and direction of the PAR groups, and distributive leadership is encouraged between the people in the groups. The first three to six months of this process are focused on relationship and trust-building between the participants and to establish the core purpose of the group. This is followed by approximately three months of local evidence gathering around the issue the group is addressing and multiple meetings to analyse and make sense of the evidence that is gathered. Using this evidence, the groups will then develop theories of change (articulating how an action will cause an outcome), detailing how they can bring change to the issues identified and develop their actions, including how they will assess whether their action has been successful in achieving its aim. The group will then go on to the implementation of their actions, followed by an evaluation of these actions, which includes facilitated reflection on the action and next steps. Following the action and reflection, the groups will then start a new cycle of action and reflection.

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*Section 3:*

# METHODS

## 3 METHODS

The purpose of conducting the realist review at this stage of the programme is to evidence the CLARISSA ToC and so further refine it. The process will then enable identification of where more evidence is needed in order to inform the evaluation research design (see Box 2 for an explanation about realist evaluation and Apgar *et al.* (2020) for further detail on CLARISSA's ToC and realist contribution analysis approach). Specifically, the review aimed to answer two questions:

### Box 2: Realist review and evaluation concepts in a nutshell

Realist evaluation aims to uncover not just whether an intervention works but is more interested in developing an explanation of how and why change happened. It asks the question: What works for whom, under what circumstances, and why? A realist approach, therefore, goes beyond the observable reality (the change that we can empirically observe) and explores the ontological depths by searching for the mechanisms that are causing the changes in the observable reality. These **mechanisms** are real processes but are not necessarily observable (e.g. they are thought processes, emotions, interpersonal relations, motivations, peer pressure). When, and to what extent, these mechanisms are activated and generate the observable changes depends on the context and the changes in the context by the intervention.

**Context** is the setting within which the intervention is implemented and refers to the psychological, organisational, economic, social, and relationships dynamics that interact and influence each other in this setting, which are influenced by the implemented intervention and together influence the mechanisms leading to change.

An **intervention** is a set of activities that are implemented to contribute to a set of outcomes. In realist evaluation, it is not the intervention that produces the change, but it provides resources that together with the context, trigger mechanisms resulting in outcomes.

**Outcomes** are unintended or intended consequences that are activated by the mechanisms through the intervention and within the context. The main analytical tool for realist evaluators is to identify **context-intervention-mechanisms-outcome (CIMO) configurations** in which each element is identified in relation to, and interconnected with, the other elements. CIMO configurations lay out the relationship between the context, intervention, mechanisms, and outcomes of the change processes. It is used to generate causative explanations relating to the data.

A realist evaluation aims to develop middle-range theories that help to understand how and why an intervention and context trigger mechanisms lead to outcomes. Middle-range theories try to explain a piece of human existence and can be tested with empirical data. They sit between programme theory (which aims to explain how and why a specific programme generates change) and formal theories (such as psychological or sociological theories) which aim to explain social phenomenon in general terms.

Realist review differs from standard systematic or scoping literature reviews in various ways: (i) it is interested in programme theories, not topics; (ii) in the synthesis, the unit of analysis is the programme theory, studies are assessed according to how they contribute to the programme theory based on the quality, and it steps away from hierarchies of evidence that rank studies according to their research design – with randomised controlled trials as gold standard; (iii) searching is done more iteratively; when new theories are identified, new searches can be conducted, and searching is done until theoretical saturation is reached; (iv) it searches for rival theories that can dispute the initial programme theory to further refine the explanatory power of the theory; and (v) it includes literature from a range of fields to identify and develop a conceptual platform (Pawson *et al.* 2004).

Furthermore, a rapid realist review takes a more focused approach and aims to develop a theoretical understanding of how the context and mechanisms interact with the intervention (PAR) to produce the outcome of interest (innovations). A rapid realist review takes a participatory approach as it emphasises the involvement of expert panels and knowledge users (those who will develop and/or implement the intervention) to help develop initial theories and identify relevant literature as a short-cut for comprehensive literature searching, and to make the reviewing process more participatory. The latter is helpful as programme implementers often have an in-depth understanding of how a programme might generate change and it helps identify theories that might not exist in the published literature.

Source: Authors' own.

1 What are the key mechanisms[2] triggered by PAR that result in innovations, in which contexts, and for whom?

2 What are the important contextual influences[3] on the ways in which different mechanisms produce innovations?

## 3.1 Steps

Figure 1 shows the steps that were taken in this rapid realist review. There were broadly three phases of (i) developing initial programme theories; (ii) refining initial programme theories; and (iii) finalising initial programme theories. Within each of these phases, there were iterative steps of literature searching and reading, steering group feedback, activities with CLARISSA participatory researchers, and meetings with CLARISSA consortium partners. The synthesising of information into the initial programme theories was an ongoing process during each of these steps.

## 3.2 Steering group

A steering group was set up with experts in realist evaluation, PAR, and innovation research. They provided feedback on the programme theories as they were developing and helped identify relevant literature. They also provided advice in undertaking the synthesis as well as how to move from the review to evaluation design. The steering group provided feedback in writing and met twice.

## 3.3 Developing and refining programme theory with CLARISSA researchers

Three activities with CLARISSA participatory researchers and community mobilisers were undertaken to integrate their perspectives in the initial programme theories. The first activity was completed during a PAR training, during which the participatory researchers were invited to develop causal statements for how they thought PAR would generate innovations in their local context.

The second activity was led by the social protection evaluation team within CLARISSA that explored the impact pathways of community mobilising and what works, for whom, and why.[4] During this session, we worked with the community mobilisers on what context and mechanisms[5] are triggered by participation in community mobilising and how they lead to behaviour change.

The final activity took place during training on life story analysis and specifically focused on identifying mechanisms and outcomes related to the conscientisation IPT. Adult participatory researchers and documenters were asked to add what other mechanisms they think might be triggered and what other outcomes may result from the specific part of the PAR process that looks at participants sharing and analysing their own situation.

## 3.4 CLARISSA consortium partners input

Various meetings took place with CLARISSA consortium partners about PAR and innovations. Early on, these meetings focused on how PAR would look like in CLARISSA and how this would generate innovations. Later on, meetings with consortium partners involved presenting the emerging initial programme theories and partners providing feedback on these theories based on their expertise with participatory research approaches.

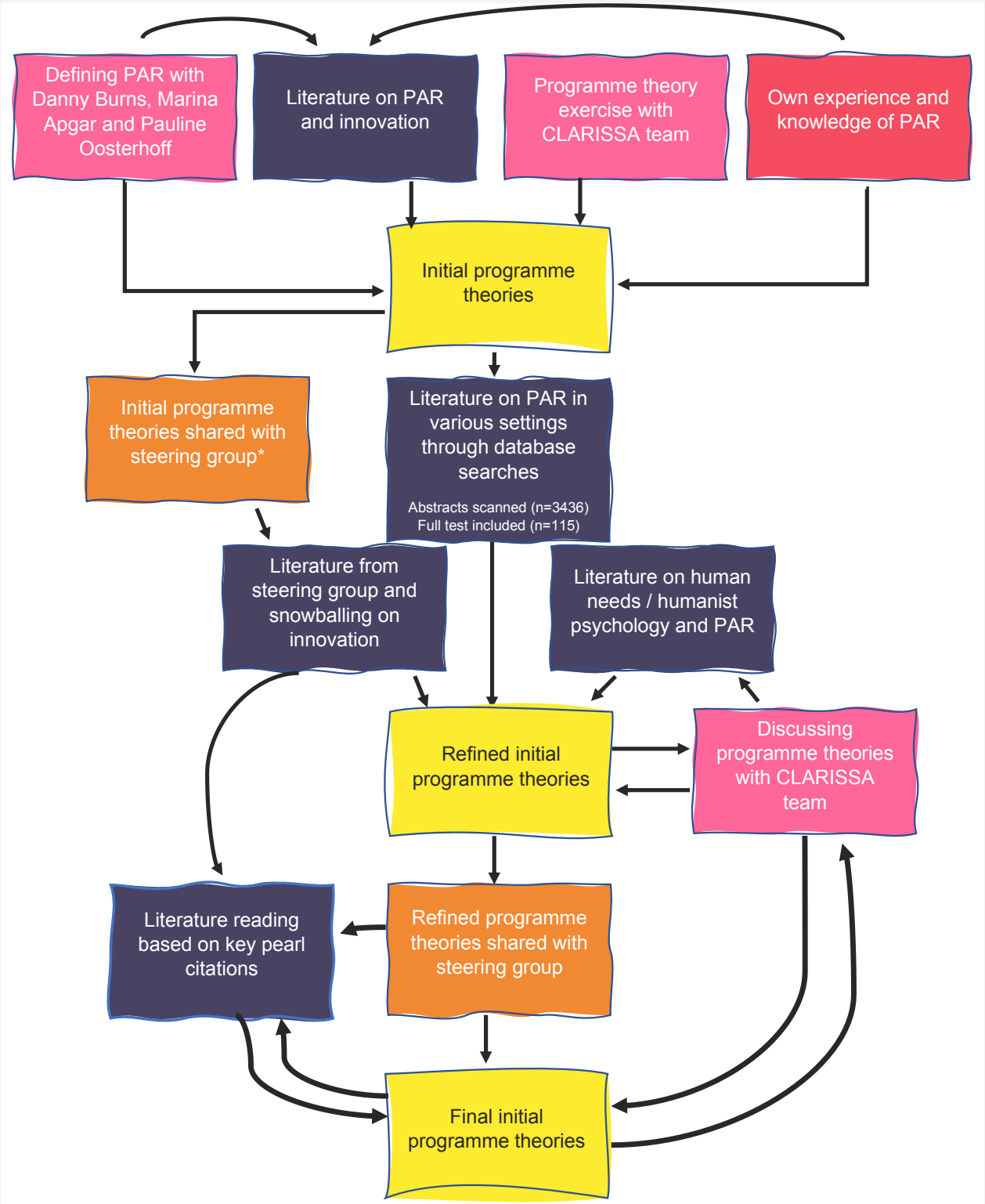
## 3.5 Database searches

As is common in rapid realist reviews, literature was identified through conversations with CLARISSA consortium partners, the steering group, and our own knowledge of the PAR literature. These literature sources formed the basis for snowball searching, using the reference lists of publications to identify further relevant literature, and searching citing papers for further relevant literature.

Initial searches were undertaken in electronic databases to identify literature on PAR from a broad range of fields (including health, development, education) and to identify

2 Mechanisms are the generative forces that lead to the outcome. They are not directly observable and therefore go beyond what happens, and provide explanatory power as to why and how change happens. Mechanisms are split up into resource (what the intervention offers the participant) and reasoning (what goes on inside the participant that leads to behavioural change).
3 Context is defined as any condition external to the intervention that triggers and/or modifies the behaviours of a mechanism. Context on multiple levels: individual, interpersonal, institutional, and infrastructure.
4 Community mobilising is different from PAR as it focuses less on participants analysing their own situations and evaluating their actions, and more on acting.
5 In this session, defined as capabilities (what is in the heads of the participants), and opportunities (what is available around the person).

**Figure 1: Steps taken in this rapid realist review**




Source: Authors' own.

papers discussing PAR as it is used in CLARISSA. Annexe 1 details the search strategy. Additional documents were identified through networks such as the Peregrine Discussion Group for Better Evaluation (previously Pelican) and the IDS Participation, Inclusion and Social Change cluster. Specific searches through the Journal of Action Research[6] and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) Notes[7] were also conducted. Titles and abstracts were screened using Rayyan.[8] While this resulted in a rather large number of results, it helped to identify relevant literature from a broad range of professional and academic literature. This database of 115 additional documents was useful to help conduct searches using the mechanisms identified in the initial programme theories to further refine the programme theories. A key pearl citation strategy was used in which papers that are particularly relevant to the review are used for forward and backward searching as well as for accompanying papers or other documentation about the same study (Booth, Wright and Briscoe 2018; Booth 2020).

6 **Homepage of the Action Research journal**.
7 **Participatory Learning and Action**.
8 One coder scanned all the identified titles and abstracts (n=3,436), of which 115 were included. A second coder reviewed 65 per cent of all titles and abstracts. There was overall strong agreement between the two coders with 2.2 per cent conflicting decisions.

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*Section 4:*

# FINDINGS: PAR PROGRAMME THEORIES

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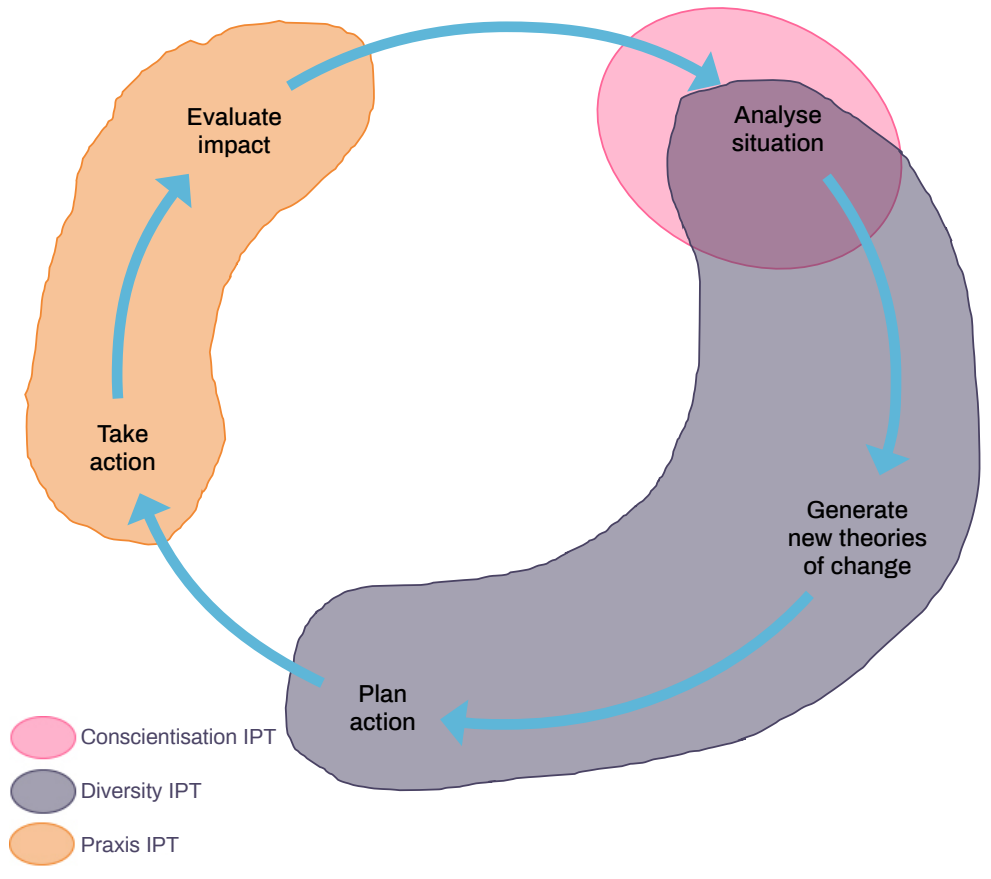
Three initial programme theories (IPTs) were developed: (i) conscientisation theory; (ii) diversity theory; and (iii) praxis theory. Whilst these are described as three separate programme theories, they are interlinked, as together they cover the whole PAR cycle (see Figure 2). Conscientisation theory mainly relates to the 'analysing situation' phase of PAR as people become critically aware of their situation through their collective analysis of it. Diversity theory also relates to the analysing situation phase, but primarily relates to the 'generation of new theories of change' and 'planning action' phases as it highlights the importance of people's diverse backgrounds and perspective in generating new action. Finally, praxis theory relates to the 'taking action' and 'evaluating impact' phases of PAR. The rest of this report will discuss each of the three theories in detail and discuss their implications for CLARISSA.

## 4.1 Conscientisation IPT

> *It is in the knowledge of genuine conditions of our lives that we must draw our strength to live and our reasons for action.*
> (Simone de Beauvoir)

The conscientisation IPT posits that when people are analysing their own situation, including factors contributing to this, they become critically aware about what is happening in their lives and what needs to change, leading them to take ownership over their situation and to develop innovative actions to change their situation. The full summary of this IPT is detailed in Box 3. The conscientisation IPT is based on PAR and critical pedagogy/popular education literature (Bashir, Atfield and Wells 2014; Burns 2021; Burns 2014; Burns, Sharma and Oosterhoff 2017; Burns, Joseph and Oosterhoff 2020a; Chiu 2006; Ekboir and Rajalahti 2012; Esienumoh, Allotey and Waterman 2020; P. Foster-Fishman *et al.* 2010; Foster-Fishman *et al.* 2005; Freire 1970; Gutberlet 2015;

**Figure 2: IPTs and how they relate to the PAR cycle**




Source: Adapted from Burns (2014).

IDIA 2015; Leal 2007; Morrison *et al.* 2005; Nair *et al.* 2012; Ritterbusch *et al.* 2020; Rosato *et al.* 2006; Trott 2016; Tschakert *et al.* 2016; Williams *et al.* 2017; Wilson *et al.* 2007, 2008).

It usually takes part over an extended period and evidence suggests that multiple, regular meetings are required for this analysis to successfully take place by the group members.

#### 4.1.1 Trust, power, and good relationships

An important context for the analysis to successfully raise critical consciousness of the group is that trust and good relationships need to be established between the group members. During the situation analysis, group members share their thoughts, experiences, and emotions. Trust is needed for PAR group members to feel comfortable to openly share their thoughts and experiences with the group during dialogue. Trust is also needed for a greater commitment to the group, more thorough knowledge sharing, and better conflict resolution (the latter is discussed in more detail under the diversity IPT) (Ekboir and Rajalahti 2012; Jagosh *et al.* 2012; Lasker, Weiss and Miller 2001; Ramalingam and Bound 2016).

Explicitly taking the time and activities to build the trust are essential at the start of and throughout a PAR process. Situation analysis usually happens over an extended period of time and evidence suggests that multiple regular meetings are required for this analysis to successfully take place by the group members. Being power aware and navigating power balances within the group is needed to help build trust as power imbalances can obstruct dialogue. Addressing power imbalances involves acknowledging that each individual has their own abilities and strengths, humility to not feel better than others, and love (Freire 1970).

#### 4.1.2 Seeing own experiences in a new light

By collectively analysing their own situation, the group members undergo a process of sense making together and they start defining their own problems. During this process of dialoguing, PAR group members hear perspectives from others about their shared situation which helps them to see their own experiences in a new light and as part of a bigger picture.

Foster-Fishman and colleagues (2005) found that the meaningful dialogue that was facilitated between group members who had some commonalities (i.e. from the same neighbourhood) allowed the group members to explore their similarities, but also the different and unique perspectives that each brought to the issues in their community. This helped them to see their neighbourhood in new ways.

Ritterbusch and colleagues (2020), in their YPAR work with street-based youth in Uganda using photovoice and future visioning exercises, also found that critical dialogue

**Box 3: Conscientisation theory**

If (marginalised) people (including children), with a limited understanding and control over underlying factors influencing their lives, are participating in regular facilitated meetings over a period of time, in which they share their experiences and jointly analyse their situation through critical dialogue, with enough time to build trust and relationships, they will start seeing their own problems and their role in society in a new light. This includes becoming aware of factors that have contributed to the current situation and how their own strengths and resilience have contributed to their survival so far. They will see their role in society and contribution to the situation as part of a bigger picture they share with other people.

Seeing things in this new light will make them feel valued and help them move from a sense of individual responsibility to a collective understanding of the drivers of their situation. This collective understanding allows them to take ownership over their situation. If people take ownership over their situation through a facilitated process over a period of time, they will be able to create meaning and develop deeper understanding of what is happening in their lives, including the things that need and can be changed.

This critical awareness combined with their ownership over the situation will motivate them to be involved in the knowledge and action generation processes to address the situation, resulting in them becoming change agents. People who see themselves as change agents and who have ownership over their situation will feel confident in communicating their ideas and having their voice heard, and taking control and challenging existing power structures. This confidence, combined with enough time to develop actions, access to resources, support from others with power, and regular facilitated critical dialogues with others in their PAR group, will bring a sense that as a group they can do something to improve their situation, resulting in them planning and executing innovative actions.

Source: Authors' own.

helped the youth to reflect on their ongoing strengths and resilience in their survival strategies to deal with their situation up until now and see their own resilience in a new light.

Seeing their own experiences as shared by others and in a new light helps PAR group members to feel valued and to know that their individual experiences matter and are shared by others in similar situations. It can help them feel like their situation is not their personal responsibility alone and so help them move from guilt and shame towards a collective understanding of what factors are driving their situation. In Foster-Fishman and colleagues' (2010) photovoice study with young people, the participants reflected that the facilitated dialogue provided them with an opportunity to see new things and understand the perspectives of others, which helped them to think about their issues beyond just the individual level.

In Gutberlet's (2015) PAR work with garbage collectors in Brazil, PAR group members reflected that by seeing their verbally expressed ideas written down and stuck on a wall together with ideas and experiences from their group members, they felt part of a bigger whole. By reflecting on their own place and strengths in the whole, PAR group members feel a sense of value and that they have some control over their own situations (Foster-Fishman *et al.* 2010; Gutberlet 2015; Ritterbusch *et al.* 2020).

#### 4.1.3 Ownership

These mechanisms of seeing their situation in a new light and feeling part of the bigger whole results in the PAR group members taking ownership over their situation and feeling that it is *their* problems that *they* want to find solutions to (Burns *et al.* 2020b), because they feel like they matter and this gives them choice, freedom, and a sense of caring that their actions have an effect, thereby motivating them to become involved (Kashtan 2015).

Once the PAR group members feel ownership over their situation, the ongoing critical dialogue will allow them to dive further into their situation and develop a collective understanding of the factors contributing to their problems and where change is needed and, importantly, possible. Three large trials of women's groups to improve maternal and newborn health in Eastern India (the Ekjut trial, Rath *et al.* 2010), in rural Nepal (the Makwanpur trial, Gram 2018; Gram *et al.* 2018, 2019; Manandhar *et al.* 2004; Nair *et al.* 2012), and in rural Malawi (the MaiMwana trial, Lewycka *et al.* 2010, 2013; Rosato *et al.* 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012; Rosato n.d.) found that the process of problem identification and prioritisation helped develop a deeper understanding of what is causing maternal and child deaths and health problems amongst the women and what strategies they could develop to address these underlying causes.[9] Evidence from these trials showed that the collective understanding of the women's group was deeper and more complete than the individual understandings of each group member (Morrison *et al.* 2005; Nair *et al.* 2012; Rath *et al.* 2010; Rosato *et al.* 2006).

The collective understanding of the problems in their communities, combined with the sense of ownership over these problems triggers a motivation to act together. This was also illustrated in the action research project with spinning mill workers in Tamil Nadu by Burns and colleagues (2020a) in which eight out of the 12 action research groups undertook household surveys to identify the underlying factors contributing to their debts and high loan rates, which was identified as an important factor contributing to bonded labour in the spinning mills. By undertaking the household survey and reflecting on their own spending, the groups identified that much of their money was spent on festivals, gifts, and funerals and, importantly, that this was a trend across their village. This gave them a clear insight into where they could act to start making changes together.

#### 4.1.4 Ownership to be a change agent

The feeling of ownership over their situation is essential to trigger the motivation to act on it. It gives participants a sense that they can influence what is happening in their lives and the deeper understanding of their situation helps them to identify where they can try to influence change amongst all the factors that contribute to their situation. People will feel motivated to take part in knowledge and action generation processes and to work together with their peers (this motivation to work together is also an important factor in the diversity IPT; see Section 4.3). This results in group members seeing themselves as change agents, i.e. people who have the power to bring change to their circumstances (Foster-Fishman *et al.* 2005; Gutberlet 2015; Weinberg, Trott and Sample McMeeking 2018).

9 These trials used a participatory learning and action (PLA) intervention, which is based on Paulo Freire's popular education. PLA interventions in these trials employ a trained facilitator to hold regular community meetings in which groups of local women were led through a cycle of problem identification, prioritisation, action planning, strategy implementation, and outcome evaluation.

Once PAR group members see themselves as change agents with ownership over their situation, they can deliberate about what to do and shift towards planning their actions. As they now see themselves as change agents and have ownership over their situation, they feel confident about having their ideas and voices heard by group members and in taking control over their situation (Weinberg *et al.* 2018).

#### 4.1.5 Access to opportunities

However, the group needs to have access to opportunities to develop and implement their innovative actions. In-group opportunities are having a facilitator who encourages the group to identify new ideas and enough time to discuss and develop their actions.

Opportunities outside of the group include having powerful others supporting the group's actions and having access to the right resources to implement their actions (e.g. social networks, financial resources). In their Youth Empowerment Strategy (YES!) project with high-school youth, Wilson and colleagues (2007, 2008) found that those groups who had support from their school principal, or the janitor, or the school board, managed to develop and implement their innovative actions.

Esienumoh and colleagues (2020) in their PAR work to improve maternal and child health in rural Nigerian communities, also found that the support from the local village Chief was essential for the PAR group to actually develop actions. Having access to these opportunities triggers in the group members a sense that they can take action together on their issues ('we can do this!') leading them to use their own ideas and experiences to plan and execute their innovative actions (Tschakert *et al.* 2016).

#### 4.1.6 When critical consciousness is not raised in PAR processes or does not lead to effective innovative actions

##### Group dynamics

In their YES! project, Wilson and colleagues (2006, 2007, and 2008) found that in some of their groups with adolescent boys there were negative group dynamics that interfered with the processes. These dynamics were shaped by ostracism, clowning around, and putdowns resulting from the boys' preoccupation with approval from others and establishing their dominance in the group. Wilson and colleagues (2007) attributed this to the adolescence life phase of forming an identity. These group dynamics, combined with less socially mature members of the group and an inability of the facilitator to constructively navigate these group dynamics then triggered an unwillingness of the group members to work together and to denigrate each other's ideas, meaning voices were silenced and a shared understanding of the problem and solutions could not be developed.

##### Not understanding causality deep enough

Wilson and colleagues (2008) found that some groups got excited about ideas for actions early in the process. This premature excitement reduced the groups' motivation for continued engagement in critical dialogue about underlying causes. Combined with the low ability of the facilitator to facilitate the critical dialogue, the group did not engage in the dialogue to develop a deeper and more complex understanding about their issue. As a result, the groups would either implement actions that did not appropriately address the underlying causes of their issue, or their action would not be particularly innovative as they had not taken the time to develop new ideas.

This is also confirmed by Ramalingam and Bound's (2016) work on innovation in international development, who found that one of the key pre-conditions for innovations to come about is a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to the problem that the innovation is aiming to solve.

##### Facilitator ability to guide critical dialogue

The facilitator has a key role in encouraging PAR group members to engage in critical dialogue and their ability to facilitate this is essential, including how to manage power relationships (Foster-Fishman *et al.* 2010). This includes facilitation of group members' reflexivity and power awareness, as well as being reflexive about their own positionality. In the YPAR field, an important assumption is that from an early age, children and young people have the ability to critically reflect on their own lives (Conrad *et al.* 2015; Foster-Fishman *et al.* 2010; Ozer and Piatt 2018; Rodriguez and Brown 2009). Facilitators can use specific questions and approaches to elicit critical dialogue in young participations (Foster-Fishman *et al.* 2010), but where a facilitator fails to do this, the PAR process will not trigger critical consciousness of the participants on their situation.

##### Support from external actors

A lack of support from (powerful) external actors can undermine PAR group members' sense that they can take

action to address their problems. Wilson and colleagues (2008) identified that for their groups who did not have permission from school staff to access the resources that they needed, their excitement for their actions and motivation to work together to improve their situation quickly withered.

Additionally, Esienumoh and colleagues (2020) found that the local community members were able to generate change on multiple levels, but were thwarted in their ability to create higher level system change because of unsupportive structures. Whilst there was support from traditional and contemporary policymakers for the actions, the bureaucratic constraints meant that practical assistance for the actions of the PAR group never came to fruition, limiting the implementation of the innovative actions on a higher system level.

## 4.2 The importance of diversity

> *Differences must not be merely tolerated but seen as a fund of necessary polarities which our creativity can spark like a dialect. Only then does necessity for interdependence become unthreatening. Only within this interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters*.
> (Audre Lorde)

The diversity IPT states that PAR groups consist of individuals bringing their own situated experiences and who share their unique and personal perspectives to solve their shared problems. It is the combination of their diverse perspectives that generates new ideas and actions (Foster-Fishman *et al.* 2005; Gutberlet 2015). However, the innovation literature warns that just putting different people together does not necessarily bring innovation. It can lead to situations of compromise in which no one is comfortable with the direction of travel. It can push the group towards what the most dominant person wants to do, thus minimising innovating, or can lead to conflict that ends with dismantling the group (Chevalier and Buckles 2019; Jantuah, Moench and Bond 2019; Labonne and Chase 2008).

The diversity IPT therefore highlights the importance of the relational space, trust, and good facilitation of conflict that are needed for a group of people to actively use their diversity to generate innovation. Box 4 summarises how PAR leads to innovation according to our 'diversity IPT'.

### Box 4: Diversity programme theory

When a group of people with a motivation to collaborate come together in a relational safe space, where power is shared, to participate in a dialogue for self-expression, they will experience freedom to express their authentic self and take the risk to be vulnerable and share all different parts of themselves (including their ideas, creativity, emotions, knowledge, experiences). When people hear others talk about their authentic self and share their experiences, it helps group members think outside their own personal experiences and identities, feeling more supported in their experiences and be open to other perspectives and realities. The coming together of a variety of perspectives and being confronted with different perspectives can be challenging for people and generate conflict, or friction, or sparks. When there is a relational space in which people feel safe and there is good facilitation with a focus on sharing power, synergy can emerge, meaning that the knowledge and perspectives are weaved together in new and creative ways which will result in innovative actions being planned and implemented.

Source: Authors' own.

This IPT is based on PAR, and innovation and humanistic psychology literature, including non-violent communication (Burns 2015; Cea and Rimington 2017; Chiu 2006; DMPSSP 2015; Ekboir and Rajalahti 2012; Foster-Fishman *et al.* 2005, 2010; Gunnlaugson, Baron and Cayer 2017; Gutberlet 2015; Heron and Reason 2001; Jagosh *et al.* 2012; Jantuah *et al.* 2019; Kashtan 2015; Lasker *et al.* 2001; Lorenzo *et al.* 2017; Margalit 2017; Ramalingam and Bound 2016; Reason 2006; Snow 2018).

#### 4.2.1 Relational safe space to share authentic self

The context that drives the mechanisms in this IPT is partly formed by processes earlier in the PAR cycle. The people who have been meeting over a period of time have developed (or strengthened) their motivation to work together. They may have already had this motivation at the start of the process, but as described in the conscientisation IPT section above (Section 4.1), this motivation is also triggered or strengthened through their participation in the collective analysis of their situation. Furthermore, because the group has been meeting regularly and has taken the time to participate in relationship and trust-building exercises, there is a

sense of group identity and a safe relational space where participants trust each other.

The relational safe space, with trust, empathy, and navigation of power differences allows the participants to engage in critical dialogue, and makes them increasingly feel valued and that they matter as part of a bigger whole. People have a need to matter: when this need is met, they will feel more motivated to collaborate with others (Kashtan 2015). They will also feel the freedom to feel vulnerable enough to take the risks of letting their guard down and openly being their authentic self, when prompted by the facilitator to do so (Burns 2015; Ekboir and Rajalahti 2012; Heron and Reason 2001; Jantuah *et al.* 2019; Lasker *et al.* 2001; Margalit 2017).

The authentic self refers to all parts of the individual, their experiences, their knowledge, their ideas, their vulnerabilities, their identity, their thoughts and beliefs. The authentic self of the PAR participant is the cornerstone and the prime asset of groups striving for innovation. As Jantuah and colleagues (2019, unpaginated) describe in their work on humanitarian innovation:

> People often check the 'messy' parts of themselves – what makes them vulnerable or doesn't reflect the status quo – at the door when they go to work. Yet vulnerability can be the birthplace of new ideas, and organisations that support an environment where people believe they can take risks, and bring their thoughts, beliefs, and feedback to the table, will foster more imagination, innovation, and productivity.

The authentic self is so important in PAR, because PAR is built on the premise that people are the experts in their own lives. Therefore, participants need to be able to access and share their authentic self to use this expertise to build their innovative solutions; this includes all their experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical knowledge (Cea and Rimington 2017; Chiu 2006; Gunnlaugson *et al.* 2017; Heron and Reason 2001; Jantuah *et al.* 2019; Lorenzo *et al.* 2017).

#### 4.2.2 Hearing other perspectives

Consequently, PAR group members will hear other ideas and other perspectives that are openly shared by their peers (Foster-Fishman *et al.* 2005, 2010; Gutberlet 2015). This will trigger the group to think outside of their own identities and own experiences. Once group members start sharing their perspectives, they are confronted with other perspectives. The innovation literature notes that friction, tension, or sparks can occur when varied perspectives come together and it is this tension that then leads to innovative ideas and actions.

Evidence from organisational innovation highlights that, indeed, conflicting perspectives and opposing ideas lead to innovation (Snow 2018). However, this is not a direct causal relationship as it will require the group to properly navigate these potentially opposing perspectives and to constructively deal with any conflict that may ensue. Lorenzo and colleagues' (2017) study of 171 German, Swiss, and Austrian companies found that companies with more diverse boards developed more innovative ideas, but there needed to be frequent interpersonal contact between individuals, an openness for people to speak their minds, and participatory meetings where everyone is ensured to have their say. These factors help the organisation deal with conflict constructively, resulting in creative and innovative ideas. This is also reflected in literature on agricultural innovation and humanitarian innovation, which highlights that innovation can come out of conflict, but only when this is dealt with constructively within a context of collaborations that are built on trust and good relationships (Cea and Rimington 2017; Ekboir and Rajalahti 2012).

Therefore, when conflicts are emerging in PAR groups because of the sharing of different ideas that are based on group members' authentic selves, it is, again, the relational space, with trust and empathy that becomes the essential context. Additionally, it is the facilitated conflict resolution and dialogue through which power is shared between the participants that triggers synergy between the ideas of the group members, which results in innovative ideas (Kashtan 2015).

#### 4.2.3 Synergy

Evidence from health research partnerships shows that collaborative efforts are more effective than individual efforts in developing new ideas because of synergy (Israel *et al.* 1998; Jagosh *et al.* 2012; Lasker *et al.* 2001). Synergy is defined as 'the power to combine the perspectives, resources, and skills of a group of people and organizations' (Lasker *et al.* 2001: 183).

Synergetic thinking has its foundation in evolutionary biology, in which synergies are the cooperative effects produced by relationships amongst different forces or individuals that create effects that can only result from these relationships (Corning 2012). The whole is more

than the sum of its parts and the team can do what individuals cannot do alone. Additionally, synergetic effects help the survival of the individual parts, making cooperative interactions beneficial for the individual parts on an ongoing basis.

Jagosh and colleagues (2015) in their realist review of 23 participatory research partnerships on health in North America, found that partnership synergy was the best way to explain the link between the participatory processes and the outcomes that the partnerships achieved. They found that through the multi-stakeholder collaborations, a variety of skills and perspectives were brought together, that helped the group make more progress towards their goal than any of the individual organisations could, including the development of new ideas and actions to tackle complex problems.

### 4.2.4 When diversity does not generate innovations

#### Managing power and conflicts

Lasker and colleagues (2001) highlight that how power is managed within a group can undermine the triggering of synergy in the group. When power is not managed appropriately, there will be a limit to whose thoughts are included, whose opinions are considered valid and who is making the decisions in the group. Given the focus on weaving together different perspectives and skills in collaborative efforts to generate innovative actions, power can interfere with people's voices being heard or people's willingness to share their thoughts. As mentioned in the conscientisation IPT, this was illustrated in Wilson and colleagues' (2007, 2008) PAR groups with boys, in which some boys were dominating the group and thereby reducing other voices being heard, and only certain viewpoints were being integrated into the action planning.

Whilst conflicts have been identified in the diversity theory as a source from which innovative actions can be generated, it can also disrupt PAR processes. In the causal pathways exercise with the CLARISSA social protection team (see Section 3 on Methods) the team identified that conflict between group members can stand in the way of collaboration and that this needs to be carefully negotiated by the facilitator. Evidence from health research partnerships also showed that conflict needs to be dealt with constructively, otherwise it may lead to strained relationships or the groups falling apart and abandoning the project (Lasker *et al.* 2001). Furthermore, the social protection team also identified that conflict may exist in the context external to the group (e.g. between families or because of societal structures such as ethnic groups, social status, caste). Conflict may also exist between community members and can stand in the way of the group members collaborating. Such conflict will either need to be resolved through processes of restoring communication and justice between the groups. Or where this is not possible (or outside of the brief scope of most projects) groups may need to be facilitated in parallel.

#### Social norms and the tyranny of the present

A rival theory that was posed by CLARISSA staff during an after-action review in Bangladesh early in 2020, was that PAR group participants would not develop innovative solutions as they would be bound in their thinking by what is happening for them currently and what has been tried before (Paul and Snijder 2020). Furthermore, ingrained social norms about children needing to work to support their families and employers helping out families by providing employment to the children are an important factor driving WFCL (Oosterhoff and Hacker 2020), and these norms will make it challenging for PAR groups to develop innovative responses to their problems as their social norms may restrict what they think is possible in terms of innovative solutions. These ingrained social norms might make it hard for groups to escape 'the tyranny of the present' (Ramalingam and Bound 2016: 81).

Esienomuh and colleagues (2020) found in their study that innovative actions to reduce maternal and child deaths were restricted by people's traditional beliefs such as that only going to church could prevent maternal death or that traditional birth assistance is the only appropriate care during childbirth. This links to innovation diffusion theory (Greenhalgh *et al.* 2004) that not everyone will take up innovation straight away and that there are individual differences in the extent to which people are able and willing to do things differently. The latter has to do with a range of individual and collective capacities and preferences, including how willing people are to take risks, how attractive the alternative is compared to the current options, people's capacity to identify opportunities, their access to resources, and their empowerment (i.e. that they feel like they can influence the process) (Ekboir and Rajalahti 2012; Greenhalgh *et al.* 2004). However, Burns and colleagues in their action research with spinning mill workers in Tamil Nadu identified that the action research groups managed to overcome norms of paying temple tax or supporting child marriage (Burns *et al.* 2020a).

## 4.3 The interplay of action and reflection

> *Action without reflection is mere activism, and reflection without action is mere verbalism. Action and reflection combined are praxis and are needed to transform the world*.
> (Paulo Freire)

The praxis IPT explains how and why, when a group goes through iterative cycles of action and reflection, it will lead to more and more effective innovative actions (Box 5 details this IPT). This programme theory builds on the PAR and innovation literature, and social movement theories around prefigurative action and collective action.

Cycles of action and reflection are well represented in both PAR and innovation literature. In innovation, iterations of learning and reflection are essential because it helps the innovators make adaptations based on what they see work and what did not work (Douthwaite *et al.* 2009; Vogel 2017). In PAR, the cycles of action and reflection are based on Freire's (1970) idea of praxis, in that action needs to be combined with reflection to generate transformative change. It is the combination of action and reflection (= praxis) that leads to transformative or innovative changes, and taking action is the way through which new knowledge is generated in PAR.

**Box 5: Praxis IPT**

When people have taken action together, changes will happen because they are enacting the future that they would like to see themselves, rather than demanding this to be implemented by others. Because of this, PAR group members will be their own change and by reflecting on this, they become confident to see themselves as agents of change in their own lives. Powerful others will experience surprise about people taking their own innovative actions without demanding change from them. They will start perceiving the people as agents in their own lives. This, combined with the confidence of the PAR group members, will result in a shift in the power dynamics between powerful actors and the PAR group members, because they are now a coalition of people who implement their own change through innovative actions. When people – who are now seen by themselves and others as a coalition with 'power to' – participate in facilitated reflection on the actions they have successfully taken together, this provides them with even greater awareness of their own ability to take collective action. It contributes to building a collective spirit and the idea of 'We can do this together' which will result in people embracing and using new avenues for innovative actions.

Source: Authors' own.

### 4.3.1 Prefiguration and creating their own future

The praxis IPT starts with two causal pathways of how taking action leads to an emancipatory shift. First, the participants perceive themselves as having the power to act, and second, others then view the participants as a collective who can take action. After PAR group members have undertaken action, they move to evaluate and reflect on the impact of that action. This reflection process is guided by the group facilitator. Through reflecting on their action, participants can appreciate their own ability to take action, and this builds confidence to take further action.

PAR groups taking their own action can be viewed as a form of prefigurative action, as described in the social movement literature (Gayá and Brydon-Miller 2017). PAR is prefigurative because instead of collecting data, presenting this evidence, and demanding others to act on it, the groups use their own analysis to develop their own actions. There is a direct link between the identification of the issue and creating solutions, rather than simply a creation of hope for a better future. A better future is enacted on in the here and now (*ibid*.; Maeckelbergh 2011). As the desired future and pathway towards it are yet unclear, by reflecting on their actions, the group works towards clarifying and getting closer to this future.

Prefigurative action helps groups break out of the loop of demanding or expecting change from others by starting to enact changes in the here and now (Day 2004). Maeckelbergh (2011) describes in her reflections on the prefiguration strategies of the After Globalisation Movement that prefigurative actions are effective when the goals of social change are complex and not predetermined. They help shift the power balances, as the group is no longer dependent on waiting for powerful others to create change for them, but rather they enact their future vision in the here and now. Therefore, even if the action does not achieve its aims, it still creates change as the participants themselves are enacting the future they would like to see.

Burns and colleagues (2020a) describe how various action research groups successfully chased out

moneylenders who had kept many villagers in debt, and banned them from coming back. In my own research with Aboriginal communities, I found that once the community started to implement the planned interventions, the people involved started to feel more empowered to undertake further actions and more people came on board. Where at the start of the project the community would say 'who is going to do this for us?', at the end of the project, there was a greater sense of belief that they could enact their own changes (Snijder *et al.* 2020).

#### 4.3.2 People seizing their own power

We can relate this back to the important contextual factor of 'support from powerful others' in the conscientisation IPT. By taking action, the PAR group can generate support from others as they themselves become active in starting to implement the changes they would like to see. Moreover, based on the social movement theory and practice of prefiguration strategies, the group can go without support from powerful others as they find they can enact their own change (Day 2004; Leal 2007; Maeckelbergh 2011). The latter fits in with the original definition of empowerment which is about 'poor people seizing and constructing popular power through their own praxis' (Leal 2007: 545). It is in this sense that PAR becomes prefigurative as it is not waiting for the powerful to give power to the powerless, but power is actively generated by the powerless through their actions, which are embedded within their own analysis of the situation and their own solutions.

In sum, taking action and reflecting on their action triggers an emancipatory shift in PAR group members seeing themselves as actors with 'power to'. This, combined with external (powerful) others seeing them as a coalition that can generate change, results in a shift in power dynamics between marginalised individuals and powerful others.

#### 4.3.3 Surprising powerful others

The second causal pathway relates to changes in external (powerful) others towards seeing the PAR group members as actors with 'power to'. Again, drawing on social movement literature and prefiguration strategies, when a group starts enacting their own solutions, rather than demanding change from powerful others, it surprises powerful others as there is no longer a necessity for change to be demanded from them. The actions can be a form of resistance against oppressive others (Day 2004; Nair *et al.* 2012; Ritterbusch *et al.* 2020).

Ritterbusch and colleagues (2020) found that when the youth shared their images and stories related to police violence at the National Child Welfare Conference, this elicited many questions from policy actors as well as critical feedback and anger from the police, indicating their surprise about the youth having voice. The surprise that comes when PAR group members, who are often marginalised people with historically little control over factors influencing their lives, take action and participate in spaces of power, allows the external actors to see the PAR group members as actors who can make changes to their own lives.

#### 4.3.4 Reflection generates knowledge and more action

The PAR group members who have taken action are seen (by themselves and others) as actors with 'power to' participate in reflection on their actions. In turn, this process further solidifies their identity as a collective that can take action to improve their own lives, which gives them confidence. The facilitated reflection also allows them to identify what worked and what did not and bring to the table any issues that remain in their situation that they would like to address (Betts, Bloom and Weaver 2015; Burns *et al.* 2020a). Their previous action has helped them become aware of their ability to take collective action and the ongoing reflection helps them build a collective spirit to together address the existing gaps with further innovative actions (Douthwaite *et al.* 2009; IDIA 2015; Vogel 2017).

#### 4.3.5 When taking action does not lead to emancipatory shifts

As mentioned in the diversity theory, social norms can play a strong role in preventing change from happening through PAR. This can prevent powerful others changing their view of the PAR group when they are taking action. Especially when the members of the group are part of a highly stigmatised and/or marginalised group, powerful others might continue to ignore them, or even reprise them when they start speaking out about issues that are sensitive and that might create backlash (Howard, Lopez-Franco and Wheeler 2017).

*Section 5:*

# DISCUSSION

# 5 DISCUSSION

## 5.1 Strength of evidence base for each IPT

The extent to which the three IPTs developed are supported by evidence from empirical studies is varied.

### 5.1.1 Conscientisation IPT

The conscientisation IPT is supported by evidence from empirical studies in which we coded CIMO configurations that helped refine this IPT. The evidence for this IPT is both PAR-specific and more broadly based on critical pedagogy and adult education. Given the central space that analysing their own situation has in empowering individuals in participatory approaches, most literature focuses on this early stage of the PAR cycle.

Evidence is weaker relating to group-level mechanism in the conscientisation IPT. The studies that were used in developing this IPT mainly evidenced changes on an individual level. However, the group format and building of a network or coalition is an important element of PAR work. Therefore, the forming of ownership over the situation and conscientisation ideally happens on a group level. For CLARISSA, it would be interesting to explore what mechanisms are triggered on the group level and especially for marginalised children who work in WFCL.

### 5.1.2 Diversity IPT

There was empirical evidence that supports the second part of the diversity IPT regarding good relationships and good facilitation as key contextual factors towards synergy of diverse perspectives that leads to innovation. This evidence mainly comes from research partnership and innovation literature. In CLARISSA, we have an opportunity to gather evidence directly from PAR processes that can support testing, whether synergising of different perspectives takes place in PAR, and whether and how this leads to innovative actions.

Less evidence so far was found in empirical studies for the first part of the diversity IPT. This covers the importance of relational space and the expression of the authentic self which is important to bring out diverse perspectives in the first place. More evidence for the mechanisms around people feeling comfortable to express their complete self and ability to think outside of their personal experiences is needed to further test this theory. In CLARISSA, specifically testing this theory with marginalised children is of interest and through the use of creative and embodied methods.

### 5.1.3 Praxis IPT

Evidence and theory from social movement literature helped develop the praxis IPT, in combination with some evidence directly from PAR. However, to test this IPT, more PAR-specific evidence is needed and in particular for children in WFCL. This lack of evidence from the PAR literature relates back to the point above, that most published studies focus on the first phase of situation analysis, or that projects finish after the first cycle of taking actions:

- **The maternal and child health trials treated the implementation of actions as the end point of the PLA process, while shifts in power dynamics were hypothesised based on the actions that the women took; no explicit evidence was shared to support this (Nair *et al.* 2012).**
- **In the YPAR studies by Wilson and colleagues (2007, 2008), Foster-Fishman and colleagues (2005, 2010), and Ritterbusch and colleagues (2020), the focus was mostly on youth analysing their own problems and sharing their results, with some ideas for actions shared, but not reflections on the implementation of the actions.**
- **In the Freedom Fund action research project by Burns and colleagues, most action research groups completed one cycle of action research and the reports document the actions taken and the changes reported following the action, which included some evidence for the theory that emancipatory shifts take place once people start taking action together (Nanda *et al.* 2019; Sharma, Oosterhoff and Burns 2019; Burns *et al.* 2020a). However, they do not report on how reflecting on their actions helped the groups innovate further.**

This leads to two interesting areas of inquiry to test this IPT. Firstly, evaluations should investigate whether PAR processes support transformative changes, including a shift in power dynamics. To test this, an evaluation needs to focus on changes that are taking place outside of the PAR group and how the group has contributed to these changes (e.g. views of external actors, systems changes, shifts in power dynamics). Secondly, the innovation potential of the PAR process is strengthened through iterative cycles, but there is little empirical backing. Therefore, an evaluation should investigate how action and reflection cycles in PAR groups supports their innovative actions. In CLARISSA, we have the opportunity to gather evidence around these two issues and specify this for marginalised children.

## 5.2 Homogenous versus heterogenous groups

An interesting reflection based on the literature that is worth further investigation, is the difference between homogenous and heterogenous groups involved in PAR and how this contributes to innovation generation. PAR group members in the included literature tended to be relatively homogenous. Members were included based on shared identities such as that they live in the same neighbourhood/community, go to the same school, have similar life experiences, and so forth. In the conscientisation IPT, we identified these common identities as a contextual factor that helped group members feel open to learn each other's perspectives and work together to address their common issues. However, the diversity IPT highlights the importance of diversity of viewpoints to generate innovation and that innovation teams should preferably be a heterogenous group.

The literature reviewed in this rapid realist review suggests that there are different mechanisms triggered depending on whether a group is a more homogenous or heterogenous group. Their shared identity helped the group members to collectively analyse their situation, meet the needs of connecting with similar people, and generating a critical mass that can advocate for changes together. Heterogenous groups, on the other hand, bring in multiple sides to look at the problems, allow for combining knowledges, and there is potentially a greater need to focus on building relationships that give people the space to speak their minds. For CLARISSA, an interesting evaluation inquiry will be to test whether the similarities or diversity (including age, gender, ability, experience in work, and so forth) of group members trigger different mechanisms leading to innovations.

## 5.3 Gender and intersectionality

A criticism on the emphasis of group working in PAR is that individual differences get lost, especially in terms of gender differences (Maguire 1987; Sardenberg 2016). Most of the included studies specified the gender of the participants, others did not. For example, Wilson and colleagues (2007, 2008) clarified that it was groups with boys that suffered most from disruptive group dynamics due to adolescent behaviours and also that mixed gendered groups spent more time on personal issues. The maternal and child health trials were all completed with female-only groups and specified that the women managed to get support from the men in the community (Rosato *et al.* 2012). Most of the Freedom Fund action research groups in Nepal and Tamil Nadu were made up of women (Nanda *et al.* 2019; Sharma *et al.* 2019; Burns *et al.* 2020a). There was not a great deal of discussion of how gender power relations were managed in mixed gender groups.

Given the importance of power and equity in PAR processes, gender relations and other intersecting sources of power/inequality, such as race, caste, social status, and ability should be an important focus of PAR processes. How and whether the PAR processes work to reshape these power relations is important. For example, with women experiencing more oppression in most (if not all) societies, PAR as a liberating and transformative practice has the potential to shift gender power dynamics. PAR should explicitly deal with intersectional power relations, so that it does not unintentionally perpetuate these power relations of the broader societal context in which they operate, as this can undermine PAR's empowering and liberating potential for women and girls. However, given the lack of gender specificity in the PAR literature, it is not possible to draw conclusions on how PAR works for different genders. In the evaluation of CLARISSA, we have an opportunity to refine the IPTs by specifying how they interact with intersecting inequalities and how power dynamics evolve over the PAR process.

## 5.4 The importance of good facilitation

In group processes such as PAR, facilitation can be seen as the intervention. In each IPT, the abilities of the facilitator (context) and facilitation of dialogue (intervention) were identified as important in generating innovations through PAR. In the first phases of the PAR process, the facilitator is essential in creating a relational space that is safe and non-judgemental. The facilitator also requires skills and abilities to guide group members through critical dialogue in which they are analysing their situation. As Wilson and colleagues (2008) and Foster-Fishman and colleagues (2010) highlight in their work with children and young people, the facilitator's role was essential in facilitating the groups to undertake critical dialogue. Where they failed to do so due to a lack of skills, ability, or confidence, the negative group dynamics, lack of motivation for dialogue, and overexcitement for the ideas for action too early in the process would interfere with the PAR process generating innovative actions.

The facilitator needs to be able to manage group and power dynamics, which includes ensuring that all group members' voices are heard and have an equal say in decision-making. This realist review highlighted that when

power dynamics are not dealt with, they can undermine the process of synergy in which diverse perspectives spark new ideas, and lead to domination in the group and the silencing of some group members. In PAR, an important assumption is that all people have innate ability to analyse and understand and act upon their situations. Especially in the early stages of the critical dialogue and analysis of the situation, the facilitator plays a critical

**Table 1: Facilitation typology based on the three IPTs**

| Programme theory (+PAR stages) | Facilitation goals | Typology |
|---|---|---|
| **Conscientisation theory** (Analyse situation, ToC generation, plan action) | • Facilitate analysis of local/personal situation of group members<br>• Using analysis and own situation (incl. strengths) of group members to identify solutions (set new agendas)<br>• Ownership of the group members over their situation | **Joint learner**<br>Cooperative. Facilitator sets out to work with the group to learn and analyse their situation. Facilitator may propose tools that the group can use to undertake the analysis and use their skills to support the group where needed. Facilitator guides critical dialogue in which group members can share their own experiences (or what they have learnt from their analysis). Facilitator makes sure that everyone is listened to in full and that everyone's contribution is noted equally. Facilitator synthesises the group's discussions and checks this back with the group. Whilst the facilitator takes a position of joint learner, they try to ensure that the analysis is of the group members and not theirs. They reduce their own input to providing their skills and knowledge of tools that can help the group in their analysis. |
| **Diversity theory** (Generate ToC and plan actions) | • Create space for group members to access and express their authentic selves to address the situation<br>• Guide conflict and friction transformation | **Collaborative and creative**<br>Autonomous and cooperative. The facilitator creates a space where group members can be open and express themselves (heart-emotions, hand-actions, and head-thoughts) in sharing their ideas to address the situation, using approaches and tools to facilitate different types of self-expression and openness among group members. Facilitator encourages opposing ideas, ideally starting with a question or provocation and nurturing people's curiosity in each other's ideas and in trying out new things. By encouraging opposing ideas, conflict/friction might ensue, and the facilitator will guide the group through this conflict constructively (co-operatively by working with the group members, or autonomously by creating an environment in which the group can confront their own conflict). The facilitator is aware of power in the group (incl. their own power) and facilitates a process of power sharing. |
| **Praxis theory** (evaluate action and commence new cycle) | • Facilitate a process of reflecting, learning, and evaluation | **Facilitating reflexivity**<br>Facilitator guides the groups through reflecting on their actions. Reflecting on what they did, what worked, and what did not work, and why. Facilitator creates an environment in which failure is OK and important to learn from, rather than something to be avoided. Facilitator can provide their skills and knowledge of tools to help the group evaluate their actions. The facilitator can help and guide the group to implement their learning for the next cycle of action. |

Source: Authors' own.

role in stimulating the dialogue by asking the group the right questions and using age, cultural, and literacy-appropriate tools in stimulating dialogue. For example, the use of visual participatory methods such as photovoice, participatory video, and mapping, can be helpful in starting the dialogue between PAR participants. This is key in the PAR process as the understanding of the underlying factors that contribute to the lives and situation of the group members is crucial in enabling them to take ownership over their situation and seize their own power over their lives by developing innovative actions that effectively address the problems they are aiming to solve (Burns 2021; Foster-Fishman *et al.* 2010; Leal 2007; Ramalingam and Bound 2016; Ritterbusch *et al.* 2020; Wilson *et al.* 2008).

Furthermore, the diversity IPT highlights the importance of a diversity of perspectives coming together and being woven into new ideas for action. Bringing together new perspectives can generate conflict and when this is dealt with constructively, it can lead to innovation. The facilitator, again, has a key role in ensuring a safe space in which group members feel like they can openly share their authentic selves (see Section 5.5.) and also to guide the group through any conflict that may result (Howard *et al.* 2017).

Finally, the praxis IPT highlights that reflection after the action is essential in developing effective innovations and to generate knowledge from the action. Here the facilitator can guide the group through a process of evaluating, reflecting, and learning from their actions. Through this process, the facilitator needs to continue to create a safe environment in which the group feels comfortable to discuss any critical reflections, including reflections on any failure.

The diverse and varied roles and responsibilities of the facilitator of the PAR group has implications for how they are trained and supported throughout. Facilitators need to be aware of their role in the different steps in the process and adjust their facilitation style accordingly. Based on the IPTs from this review and combined with Heron's (1999) modes of facilitation, we developed a CLARISSA typology of facilitation (see Table 1).

## 5.5 Good relationships and time

Good relationships, or a relational safe space is another context that was identified in all three IPTs to be important for PAR to generate innovation. From this realist review, it has become clear that the relational space needs to be safe, non-judgemental, and non-hierarchical, a space in which there is trust and empathy and where group members feel valued and safe to express their authentic selves. Building this takes time and the temporal nature of the IPTs (i.e. that they follow on from each other in the PAR process; see Figure 2) means that the relationship-related context, mechanisms, and outcomes link the three IPTs together. The building of the relational safe space, especially trust, is highlighted as an important contextual and intervention factor in the conscientisation IPT that happens early on in the PAR process. The trust and relationship that are described in the conscientisation IPT form important context in the diversity IPT, as the PAR group members need to feel safe to express their authentic selves for their unique perspectives to be used to generate innovations. Expressing themselves in turn builds trust and empathy and this provides further important context to support the critical reflection that is central in the praxis IPT.

Non-hierarchical or horizontal relationships are essential for critical dialogue to take place because everyone needs to be able to have their voice heard for this to be a true dialogue. As mentioned above, the facilitator has a crucial role in creating a safe space and holding this space. For example, the facilitator may put in effort to encourage more marginalised members to speak up, to ensure that adequate translation is available, and to undertake a power analysis with the group to make them aware of power differences (Howard *et al.* 2017).

Mutual trust can be established in this context of horizontal relationships. Trust means that people feel that they can rely on their peers to be there for the group and that they will complete their commitments to the group with the best intentions for the group and the group members. Trust forms the foundation for the group to form a group identity and to see themselves as a collective who are working together towards a shared goal because it helps participants to feel committed to the group. As highlighted in the conscientisation and praxis IPTs, this move from being an individual to a collective is an important mechanism in becoming a change agent and the group seizing their power to act on their situation.

Trust also helps people to feel safe and comfortable amongst their peers, which is highlighted in this realist review as an important mechanism to allow people to share their thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and experiences (i.e. their authentic selves). A positive feedback loop can develop when people start to share their vulnerabilities in the group where trust, empathy,

## Box 6: Evaluation implications for CLARISSA

**For praxis IPT:**

- Collect data on how groups are reflecting on their actions and how this helps the innovation process.
- Collect data on the changes that are taking place outside of the PAR groups and what contributions the group's activities have made to them (e.g. shifts in power dynamics, views of external actors on the group).

**For diversity IPT:**

- Collect data on diversity of group members and analyse how this context triggers which mechanisms in the PAR groups.

**For conscientisation IPT:**

- Identify the mechanisms involved in moving from being an individual in a group towards being a collective, and the formation of a group identity and group members' feelings of safety, vulnerability, empathy, value, and mattering.

**Regarding facilitation:**

- Collect data on how the facilitators are facilitating the PAR groups, with a specific focus on guiding critical dialogue, navigating power dynamics, and dealing with conflict (e.g. through observations, facilitator reflective journaling, reflections from the participants).

**Regarding intersecting inequalities:**

- Take into account sources of inequalities and how they interact with the CIMO configurations, and pay specific attention to how groups are navigating power relations.

Source: Authors' own.

and connectedness to the group will increase as people become increasingly open. Diverse group members sharing their authentic selves with the group was identified as important to develop a deeper, collective understanding of the underlying factors contributing to their situation (i.e. critical consciousness raising) and through this, people see their own experiences as part of this bigger whole and feeling valued within the group and that their actions matter outside of the group, which is a foundation to engage in dialogue and to deal with conflicts that may ensue from working together with a diverse group of others (Kashtan 2015).

### 5.6 Evaluation implications

As highlighted throughout the discussion, this realist review identified opportunities for CLARISSA to gather further evidence to test and further refine the IPTs. Box 6 summarises the key points of interest for evaluation research in CLARISSA.

*Section 6:*

# CONCLUSION

# 6 CONCLUSION

This rapid realist review developed three initial programme theories that explain how PAR can generate innovations for whom and under what circumstances. The three IPTs can broadly be mapped onto the PAR cycle, with the conscientisation IPT aiming to explain what happens during the first part of the cycle, the diversity IPT relating to when the groups are generating actions, and the praxis IPT aiming to explain what happens once people start acting and reflecting towards the end of the first cycle of PAR. The IPTs are connected to each other because of this temporal relationship, but also through other elements. The trust and collective identity that are built according to the conscientisation IPT becomes an important part of the context within which diverse perspectives can be shared, which is central to the diversity IPT.

The review also highlighted the importance of developing a deep understanding of the underlying issues to develop effective innovative actions. Therefore, the process of conscientisation described in the conscientisation IPT becomes an important prerequisite for the other two IPTs. The shifting power dynamics that are described in the praxis IPT link to the context of support from powerful others in the conscientisation IPT, and indicates the interplay between the context, the intervention, and the mechanisms in the IPTs and how the intervention (PAR) can change the context. Across all three IPTs, a safe relational space, group facilitation, and the abilities of facilitators are essential context and intervention components through which PAR can generate innovation.

For the evaluation of PAR in CLARISSA, it therefore becomes important to look at these three IPTs in conjunction. We have an opportunity to test these IPTs on a large scale with different types of PAR groups, in different locations, and with different group members. The current IPTs are mainly focused on the intragroup dynamics and CLARISSA will have an opportunity to research context and mechanisms related to PAR externally to the groups and deepen our understanding of how PAR can generate change.

Additionally, we have an opportunity to identify relevant context on the macro and meso level that triggers or obstructs mechanisms within the group. Furthermore, the review found gaps in evidence, such as whether group formation around shared identity or diverse identities trigger different mechanisms. More evidence is needed as to how intersecting inequalities (including gender) interplay with the context and intervention, and whether context, intervention, mechanisms, and outcome configuration are gender specific. A lack of evidence was available on how power relations were dealt with in PAR groups.

# ANNEXES

# ANNEXE 1 SEARCH TERMS, DATABASES, AND CRITERIA FOR ELECTRONIC DATABASE SEARCHES

## A1.1 Search terms and databases

| Search terms | Databases |
|---|---|
| **Web of Science:**<br>(TS=("participatory action research" OR "participatory learning and action" OR "participatory intervention" OR "community mobilization" OR "community mobilisation" OR "women's groups" OR "children group" OR "men group" OR "action research" "participatory learning")) – only LMIC n=1,932 1/6/2020<br><br>**Scopus:**<br>TITLE-ABS-KEY ("participatory action research" OR "participatory learning and action" OR "participatory intervention" OR "community mobilization" OR "community mobilisation" OR "women's groups" OR "Children group" OR "men group" OR "action research" "participatory learning") n=303 1/6/2020<br><br>**ERIC:**<br>"participatory action research" OR "participatory learning and action" OR "participatory intervention" OR "community mobilization" OR "community mobilisation" OR "women's groups" OR "Children group" OR "men group" OR "action research" "participatory learning" n=1,213 1/6/2020 | Peer reviewed:<br>• Scopus<br>• ERIC<br>• Web of Science<br><br>Grey literature:<br>• IDS OpenDocs (n=50)<br>Repositories (n=138): PLA notes, Oxfam repository, Save the Children resource library, CSC resource library |

## A1.2 Quality review

Selection of the initially identified documents for inclusion in our database were those identified to be relevant to this review based on their relevance and rigour (Adhikari *et al.* 2019; De Weger *et al.* 2018; Jagosh *et al.* 2011; Pawson *et al.* 2005; Saul *et al.* 2013). Given that this rapid review is specifically interested in PAR as a family of interventions to generate innovation, the relevance criteria are more restrictive than they would be in a traditional realist review:

**Rigour:** Does the inference in the original study make a credible contribution to the theory/ies under testing (Pawson *et al.* 2004)? Are the methods credible and trustworthy (Pawson 2006)? Identify any red flags (e.g. unaccounted for conclusions, data collection/ analysis that does not align with the research questions).

**Relevance:** the study contains information about what change in condition (through intervention) triggered what type of mechanisms for what type of innovation outcomes. See Table A1.

**Table A1: Exclusion and relevance criteria**

| |
|---|
| **Exclusion** |
| Is PAR the main subject area and an important aspect of the wider programme (e.g. the main implementation modality, or the intervention itself)? Papers that only tangentially discuss PAR or discuss a different kind of PAR will be excluded. |
| **Relevance -> inclusion criteria** |
| Does the paper discuss innovation as an outcome of PAR (e.g. new ideas, new actions, households doing things differently, solutions being implemented from other contexts, employers doing things differently, new dialogues between the same people, or dialogues between new groups)? |
| Does the paper describe PAR in low- and middle-income countries? |
| Does the paper explicitly describe PAR as defined in CLARISSA (see Section 2.2)? |
| **Relevance -> preference criteria** |
| Does the paper describe contextual details in sufficient detail? |
| Can examples of context + mechanisms be extracted from the paper? |
| Does the paper describe PAR strategies, processes implemented, team/facilitator capacities? |
| Does the paper describe PAR models? Does it discuss programme theories? |
| Does the paper describe PAR in the context of child labour or a related area (e.g. modern slavery, bonded labour, supply chains, other hidden/illegal/taboo topics)? |

# ANNEXE 2 INCLUDED STUDIES

| Study | Publications reviewed* |
|---|---|
| 1 Freedom Fund IDS+Praxis PAR on bonded labour in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Nepal | 1. Nanda, R.; Chandrasekharan, A.; Oosterhoff, P. and Burns, D. (2019).<br>2. Burns, D.; Joseph, S. and Oosterhoff, P. (2020a).<br>3. Burns, D.; Oosterhoff, P.; Chandrasekharan, A. and Nanda, R. (2020b).<br>4. Burns, D.; Oosterhoff, P.; Joseph, S.; Narayanan, P. and Bharadwaj, S. (2020c).<br>5. Chandrasekharan, A.; Nanda, R.B.; Burns, D. and Oosterhoff, P. (2020).<br>6. Joseph, S.; M.J., J.; Mary, A.A.; Chandrasekharan, A.; Burns, D.; and Oosterhoff, P. (2020).<br>7. Oosterhoff, P.; Bharadwaj, S.; Chandrasekharan, A.; Shah, P.; Nanda, R.; Burns, D. and Saha, A. (2019a).<br>8. Oosterhoff, P.; Burns, D.; Bharadwaj, S. and Joseph, S. (2016).<br>9. Oosterhoff, P.; Joseph, S.; Shah, P.; Bharadwaj, S.; Chandrasekharan, A.; Burns, D. and Saha, A. (2019b).<br>10. Oosterhoff, P.; Sharma, B. and Burns, D. (2020).<br>11. Sharma, B.P.; Oosterhoff, P. and Burns, D. (2019). |
| 2 MaiMwana Trial | 1. Lewycka, S.; Mwansambo, C.; Kazembe, P.; Phiri, T.; Mganga, A.; Rosato, M.; Chapota, H.; Malamba, F.; Vergnano, S.; Newell, M.-L.; Osrin, D. and Costello, A. (2010).<br>2. Lewycka, S.; Mwansambo, C.; Rosato, M.; Kazembe, P.; Phiri, T.; Mganga, A.; Chapota, H.; Malamba, F.; Kainja, E.; Newell, M.-L.; Greco, G.; Pulkki-Brännström, A.-M.; Skordis-Worrall, J.; Vergnano, S.; Osrin, D. and Costello, A. (2013).<br>3. Rosato, M.; Malamba, F.; Kunyenge, B.; Phiri, T.; Mwansambo, C.; Kazembe, P.; Costello, A. and Lewycka, S. (2012).<br>4. Rosato, M.; Mwansambo, C.; Kazembe, P.; Phiri, T.; Soko, Q.; Lewycka, S.; Kunyenge, B.; Vergnano, S.; Osrin, D.; Newell, M. and Costello, A.M. de L. (2006).<br>5. Rosato, M.; Laverack, G.; Grabman, L.H.; Tripathy, P.; Nair, N.; Mwansambo, C.; Azad, K.; Morrison, J.; Bhutta, Z.; Perry, H.; Rifkin, S. and Costello, A. (2008).<br>6. Rosato, M.; Mwansambo, C.; Lewycka, S.; Kazembe, P.; Phiri, T.; Malamba, F.; Newell, M.-L.; Osrin, D. and Costello, A. (2010).<br>7. Rosato, M. (n.d.). |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 Mukwanpur Trial | 1. Gram, L. (2018).<br><br>2. Gram, L.; Daruwalla, N. and Osrin, D. (2019).<br><br>3. Gram, L.; Skordis-Worrall, J.; Manandhar, D.S.; Strachan, D.; Morrison, J.; Saville, N.; Osrin, D.; Tumbahangphe, K.M.; Costello, A. and Heys, M. (2018).<br><br>4. Manandhar, D.; Osrin, D.; Shrestha, B.; Mesko, N.; Morrison, J.; Tumbahangphe, K.; Tamang, S.; Thapa, S.; Shrestha, D.; Thapa, B.; Shrestha, J.; Wade, A.; Borghi, J.; Standing, H.; Manandhar, M.; Costello, A.; Manandhar, D.; Osrin, D.; Shrestha, B.… MIRA Makwanpur Trial Team (2004).<br><br>5. * Nair, N.; Tripathy, P.; Costello, A. and Prost, A. (2012). |
| 4 Youth Empowerment Strategies (YES!) project | 1. * Wilson, N. *et al*. (2007) '**Engaging Young Adolescents in Social Action Through Photovoice: The Youth Empowerment Strategies (YES!) Project**', *The Journal of Early Adolescence* 27.2: 241–61 (accessed 29 June 2021)<br><br>2. * Wilson, N. *et al*. (2006) '**Training Students as Facilitators in the Youth Empowerment Strategies (YES!) Project**', *Journal of Community Practice* 14.1–2: 201–17 (accessed 1 July 2021)<br><br>3. * Wilson, N.; Minkler, M.; Dasho, S.; Wallerstein, N. and Martin, A.C. (2008) '**Getting to Social Action: The Youth Empowerment Strategies (YES!) Project**', *Health Promotion Practice* 9.4: 395–403 (accessed 29 June 2021) |
| 5 PAR experience for undergraduates | 1. Trott, C.D. (2017) '**Engaging Key Stakeholders in Climate Change: A Community-Based Project for Youth-Led Participatory Climate Action**', Department of Psychology, Colorado State University (accessed 1 July 2021).<br><br>2. Trott, C.D. (2016) '**Constructing Alternatives: Envisioning a Critical Psychology of Prefigurative Politics**', *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* 4.1: 266–85 (accessed 29 June 2021)<br><br>3. * Trott, C.D.; Weinberg, A.E. and Sample McMeeking, L.B. (2018) '**Prefiguring Sustainability through Participatory Action Research Experiences for Undergraduates: Reflections and Recommendations for Student Development**', *Sustainability* 10.9: 3332 (accessed 1 July 2021)<br><br>4. * Weinberg, A.E.; Trott, C.D. and Sample McMeeking, L.B. (2018) '**Who Produces Knowledge? Transforming Undergraduate Students' Views of Science through Participatory Action Research**', *Science Education* 102.6: 1155–75 (accessed 29 June 2021) |
| 6 PAR to prevent maternal health in rural southern communities in Nigeria | 1. * Esienumoh, E.E.; Allotey, J. and Waterman, H. (2020) 'A Participatory Evaluation of the Outcome of Actions Taken Toward the Prevention of Maternal Mortality in a Rural Community in Nigeria', *African Journal of Biomedical Research* 23.2: 181–91.<br><br>2. Esienumoh, E.E.; Allotey, J. and Waterman, H. (2018) '**Empowering Members of a Rural Southern Community in Nigeria to Plan to Take Action to Prevent Maternal Mortality: A Participatory Action Research Project**', *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 27.7–8: e1600–e1611 (accessed 1 July 2021) |
| 7 Youth ReACT for social change | 1. * Foster-Fishman, P.G.; Law, K.M.; Lichty, L.F. and Aoun, C. (2010) '**Youth ReACT for Social Change: A Method for Youth Participatory Action Research**', *American Journal of Community Psychology* 46.1–2: 67–83 (accessed 28 June 2021) |
| 8 Yes We Can! | 1. * Foster-Fishman, P.G.; Nowell, B.; Deacon, Z.; Nievar, M.A. and McCann, P. (2005) '**Using Methods That Matter: The Impact of Reflection, Dialogue, and Voice**', *American Journal of Community Psychology* 36.3–4: 275–91 (accessed 28 June 2021) |

| | |
|---|---|
| 9 PAR with garbage collectors | 1. * Gutberlet, J. (2015) '**More Inclusive and Cleaner Cities with Waste Management Co-Production: Insights from Participatory Epistemologies and Methods**', *Habitat International* 46: 234–43 (accessed 28 June 2021) |
| 10 Prefigurative action in the After Globalisation movement | 1. Maeckelbergh, M. (2011) '**Doing is Believing: Prefiguration as Strategic Practice in the Alterglobalization Movement**', *Social Movement Studies* 10.1: 1–20 (accessed 29 June 2021) |

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**CLARISSA** works by co-developing with stakeholders practical options for children to avoid engagement in the worst forms of child labour in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Nepal.

The participatory processes which underpin the programme are designed to generate innovation from the ground which can sustainably improve the lives of children and their families.

The programme's outputs are similarly co-designed and collaboratively produced to enhance local ownership of the knowledge, and to ensure that our research uptake and engagement strategy is rooted in the direct experience of the people most affected on the ground.