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Arts & Resilience in a Rural Community

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CHAPTER 5

Creative and arts-based research methods in academic research. Lessons from a participatory research project in the Netherlands.

Abstract

This chapter contributes to the discussion on the value of creative and arts-based research methods to academia. Based on a participatory research project conducted in a Dutch village that used a mix of these methods, we provide more nuanced, concrete insights into their value. In our discussion, we elaborate on how the three project stages (comprising walking interviews, group discussions, and a creative workshop that resulted in an exhibition) contributed to producing *multifaceted knowledge*. We conclude that, despite some challenges, creative and arts-based research methods have much to offer researchers. We found that they: 1) generate deep insight by providing new ways of understanding people's real lived experiences and views, by going beyond rational-cognitive ways of knowing; and 2) present ways to "give back" and contribute to a community, potentially igniting a spark among community members to engage in action and contribute to their community's resilience. This aligns with the, currently often articulated, aims of research to directly benefit those involved and to share research findings with a broader non-academic audience.

5.1 Introduction

The early 21st century is seen as ‘a dynamic and exciting time for research methods’ (Kara, 2015, p. 3), with methodological boundaries expanding across all social science disciplines. A century ago, research was considered a neutral activity, somehow separated from society, and researchers were seen as having no effect on the research process or its outcome. In the second half of the 20th century, things started to change and a new paradigm emerged. Kara (2015, p. 34) noted that:

‘researchers began to view their work as value laden, symbiotically linked with society and inevitably affected by the researchers themselves [...] researchers began to reach out beyond the bounds of conventional research to the arts, other research methods and technology, to find more useful ways to explore the world around us’.

Nowadays, creative and arts-based research methods are also to be found in a researcher’s toolkit and researchers from various disciplines have successfully adopted these methods in their work (Coemans & Hannes, 2017; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Woodgate et al., 2017).

However, Coemans & Hannes (2017) noted a lack of methodological reflection on arts-based methods. They argued that, for researchers in this field, discussions about the process and implications of these methods could be very helpful. In this chapter, we explore what creative and arts-based research methods offer researchers by reflecting on a participatory research project that we conducted using of a mix of these methods. Below, we first provide a brief introduction to creative and arts-based research, explain why these methods are appealing to researchers, and note that it can be challenging for researchers using these methods to deal with academic conventions. Next, we introduce Pingjum, the village where we conducted the participatory research project, and the project itself. We describe the three consecutive stages of the project, giving background on the research methods used and explaining how we used them in Pingjum. Following this, we discuss the participatory research project by elaborating on how the several project stages contributed to producing *multifaceted knowledge*, with each stage providing another facet of the topics of our research. We conclude by reflecting on what creative and arts-based research methods can bring academia.

5.2 Creative and Arts-Based Research

Arts-based research is seen as ‘any social research or human inquiry that adapts the tenets of the creative arts as a part of the methodology [...] the arts may be used during data collection, analysis, interpretation and/or dissemination’ (Jones & Leavy, 2004, pp. 1-2). There are many dimensions to arts-based research reflecting the large variety of art genres (such as performance, writing, painting, photography, collage and installation art) and these genres can be used in a variety of ways (for

example, as a method or as technical, communication or aesthetic elements) (Franz, 2010). Furthermore, as Kara (2015) stressed, creativity in research is context-specific, depending on the knowledge, skills and abilities of those involved, when and where the research is carried out and other contextual factors.

Artist – researcher collaborations are a part of the emerging, expanding “research genre” of research involving the arts (Knowles & Cole, 2008). Foster & Lorimer (2007) remarked how this “coming together” of researchers and artists seems to be the mood of the moment (at least for some researchers and artists). Being themselves a cultural-historical geographer and an environmental artist who had enjoyed a three-year alliance, they reflected on their own practice of collaboration. In general, they argued that ‘all kinds of art-geographical relationship make it possible to learn from each other’s way of intervening in the world, and to offer better informed critique of respective practices’ (p. 431). Hawkins (2011, 2012) also highlighted researchers’ (specifically geographers’) embrace of a broad terrain of creative and artistic “doings”. She noted that this includes geographers working as artists, collaborating with artists in creating work, participating in curatorial projects and, more extensively, also their engagement with a wider field of creative practices. Hawkins (2012, p. 65) argued that such ‘practices provide a means to engage with, and to convey, aesthetic – embodied, sensory – experiences that are suited to the demands of site, topic or theory’. This “coming together” of researchers and artists is a two-way process as, on the other hand, artists employ geographical theory and use research methods (such as interviews, participant observation, questionnaires) as a starting point or as the main body of their work (Hawkins, 2011; O’Donoghue, 2011). In this context, Hawkins (2011) noted that discourses on art and geography both share questions of space and community. Site-based socially engaged art practices, for instance, can benefit from ‘the sorts of site-sensitive critical frameworks [...] that geographers are well suited to develop’ (Hawkins, 2012, p. 59).

In this chapter, we focus on the use of creative and arts-based research methods. Researchers using such methods are often situated within the qualitative research tradition (Coemans & Hannes, 2017; Knowles & Cole, 2008). However, as Kara (2015) rightly observed, in quantitative methodologies, there is also very creative work going on. She explained that creativity involves ‘knowing about various methods but not being bound by that knowledge, such that, if the need arises, you can manipulate and develop theories and methods, within the constraints of good practice, to help you answer your research questions’ (pp. 21-22).

5.3 Why Bother?

There are several reasons why researchers may be interested in creative and arts-based research methods. First, these methods can provide fresh approaches and different perspectives (Dunn & Mellor, 2017). They can be used to ask questions of one's own conventions and disciplinary practices (Foster & Lorimer, 2007; Hawkins, 2011). O'Donoghue (2011, p. 649) noted that artists 'will bring to research [...] very different ways of seeing, imagining, understanding, articulating, and inquiring, which leads to better questioning and more robust inquiry practices'. He explained that artists' freedom and ability 'to work on an edge and between borders of the familiar and the emergent create new possibilities for knowing and working together differently' (ibid.). On a similar note, Eisner (2008) argued that, compared to conventional forms of research, arts-informed methods of inquiry may do a better job when it comes to generating questions or raising awareness of important complex subtleties.

Second, creative and arts-based research methods can add value when it comes to *answering* research questions that cannot (or, at least, not fully) be answered using more traditional research methods such as interviews or questionnaires (Dunn & Mellor, 2017; Franz, 2010; Kara, 2015). Dunn & Mellor (2017) argued that the emotional and symbolic aspects of people's experiences might not be accessed by such mainstream methods that rely on people's verbal or written competence. Quoting Ellsworth (2005, p. 156), they added: 'some knowings cannot be conveyed through language'. In this regard, Lawrence (2008) observed that, by engaging the senses, the arts provoke strong, affective responses for both the creator and the witness of art. Our emotions, she continued, can subsequently provide a catalyst for learning beyond traditional, cognitive ways of knowing. Johnston & Pratt (2010), for example, co-wrote a testimonial play that drew on research on domestic care work. The play transformed conventional research transcripts from interviews with Filipino migrant domestic workers, their children, Canadian employers and nanny agents into a performance installation, and aimed to bring academic research to a wider public in an immediate and engaging way. The authors (ibid., p. 133) reflected that 'the play forced a sensual exchange, involving much more than words, often evoking an emotional, visceral response'. In this regard, Eisner (2008, p. 7) argued that 'the arts in research promote a form of understanding that is derived or evoked through emphatic experience', which provides deep insight into what others are experiencing. Moreover, creative and arts-based research methods can offer a safe space for participants to express themselves and foster dialogue, especially about sensitive topics such as experiences of trauma or depression, and topics that are difficult to verbalize such as community and identity (Askins & Pain, 2011; Coemans & Hannes, 2017; Dunn & Mellor, 2017). Furthermore, Kara (2015) observed that one of the defining features of creativity in research is that it tends to resist categorical or binary thinking, and that instead, creative methods

value contextual specificity and are able to reflect the multiplicity of meanings existing in social contexts more accurately. Given this perspective, creative and arts-based research methods are often combined with other practices and methodologies in order to enrich or compliment traditional (qualitative) approaches and achieve a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under study (Coemans & Hannes, 2017; Franz, 2010).

Third, creative and arts-based research methods are highly suitable for participatory, community-based and action research. Coemans & Hannes (2017) noted that, thanks to their participatory nature and openness to different ways of understanding, the use of arts-based methods in community-based settings can seem a natural fit. They explained that these methods can be used to overcome power imbalances between the researcher and those researched by conducting research *with* the participants rather than *on* them (for more on participatory (action) research see, e.g., Bostock & Freeman (2003) on their research with young people; Cahill (2007) on her project with young women of colour; Salmon (2007) on her research with Aboriginal women whose mothering experiences include substance use and foetal alcohol syndrome/foetal alcohol effects). Many scholars who adopt these methods, as Coemans & Hannes (2017) noted, hope that they will give a voice to their participants, facilitate richer reflection and dialogue, and enable them to better articulate participants' unique experiences. Moreover, creative and arts-based research methods have a flexible application in a variety of contexts and can serve as an effective bridge between generations, cultures, socioeconomic classes and people who are divided along habitual lines determined by existing agendas and interests (Anwar McHenry, 2011; Askins & Pain, 2011; Brice & Fernández Arconada, 2018; Taylor & Murphy, 2014). Anwar McHENRY (2011) argued that they are useful in engaging with and empowering participants through increasing their confidence and facilitating understanding and the development of a stronger sense of place. In line with this, Capous Desyllas (2014) argued that arts-based research has the ability to transform and empower, and has the potential to create social change through creativity. Her own research project with sex workers is a good example. She conducted an arts-based project involving photovoice, which aimed to 'highlight sex workers' visual voices and their subjective experiences, through a process that increased their involvement, creativity and investment in the research process' (p. 478). Her participants used photography to create art, and in this way, collaboratively generated knowledge and raised community awareness of their needs. The resulting exhibition provided a forum for the participants to share their artworks, their perspectives and lived experiences with individuals beyond academia, including policymakers, influential community advocates and the broader public. Their art was used as a form of activism and resistance to sex-work-related stigmas that lead to discrimination, stereotyping and violence.

The above three arguments help explain why creative and arts-based research methods are so appealing to some researchers. Compared to other creative and interactive research methods such as mental maps, photo or video projects, diary keeping (see, e.g., Trell & van Hoven, 2010), arts-based research methods more actively engage people's senses and provoke strong, affective responses, hereby going beyond cognitive ways of knowing (Lawrence, 2008). Coemans & Hannes (2017) conducted a scoping review focused on the use of arts-based methods in community-based research and found similar reasons to those discussed above for why scholars had decided to use arts-based methods in their research. They summarized:

'to overcome the limitations of conventional qualitative research approaches as a way of addressing power imbalances between researcher(s) and researched, to give (more vulnerable) participants a voice, to enrich reflection and dialogue, to investigate issues that are difficult to verbalize, to heighten the interest of participants and to share the findings with a broader non-academic audience' (p. 44).

Despite creative and arts-based research methods having tremendous appeal for a variety of reasons, it can be challenging for researchers using these methods to deal with academic conventions, an aspect to which we now turn our attention.

5.4 Challenges

Several scholars have observed that creative and arts-based research methods challenge the dominant assumptions and conventions concerning what constitutes "research", "knowledge" and "impact", and that this can make it difficult for scholars using these methods to obtain funding or publish their arts-based data (see, e.g., Coemans & Hannes, 2017; Foster, 2012; Hamilton & Taylor, 2017; Kelemen & Hamilton, 2015; Lawrence, 2008). Foster (2012), for instance, noted that arts-based research produces less tangible knowledge than the more traditional forms of social inquiry that produce familiar, "robust" data which can be tested for objectivity, reliability and validity. While the arts can make "embodied experience" central to the process of knowledge (co-)creation (Kelemen & Hamilton, 2015), such emotional and embodied ways of knowing are often ignored and dismissed in the dominant Western culture where rational-cognitive ways of knowing are prized (Lawrence, 2008). Coemans & Hannes (2017) added that the analysis of arts-based data can be difficult. They noted that researchers using creative and arts-based methods can be overwhelmed by the amount of data generated and their diverse and multi-layered nature. Subsequently, as they observed, it is often not clear what exactly counts as data, and conventional modes of analysis do not always seem appropriate for interpreting the collected data. Here, Lomax (2012) addressed the difficulties of interpreting image-based data while Green & Kloos (2009) noted that the number of images generated in a photovoice project can overwhelm conventional modes of analysis and discussion.

With regard to the notion of “impact”, Pain et al. (2015) argued that although “impact” has become an important dimension in how research is evaluated and funded, the way in which it ‘is conceptualized and measured tends to be very narrow, and unreflective of the diverse approaches to creating knowledge and affecting change that researchers today utilize’ (p. 4). Here, Kelemen & Hamilton (2015) indicated a more co-productive approach to knowledge that involves new forms of engagement between academics (those traditionally seen as “knowledge makers”) and those traditionally seen as “research subjects” (or even “consumers” of academic knowledge). Pain et al. (2015) stated that the dominant current understanding and measurement of “impact” is especially problematic for such co-produced or participatory research (where research is conducted together by a community, organization or group with academic researchers). We would argue that this equally applies to research that employs creative and arts-based research methods. As Hamilton & Taylor (2017) noted, advocates of these research methods are also asking important questions, such as ‘how can we decentre subject expertise and interact with research sites in more democratic ways?’ (p. 134) that are relevant given the current focus on “impact” in research.

5.5 Pingjum and the Research Project

For this chapter, in which we explore what creative and arts-based research methods can bring researchers, we draw on a participatory research project that was conducted in Pingjum. By discussing a research project in which a mix of creative and arts-based research methods was used, and elaborating on each project stage in detail, more nuanced, concrete insights into the value of such methods for researchers can be obtained.

Pingjum is a village of approximately 600 inhabitants located in the northern Netherlands. It is situated along the Wadden Sea coast and surrounded by mainly agricultural land. Relative to other villages in the northern Netherlands, Pingjum hosts many cultural activities and has a relatively large presence of artists (see Chapter 3). In the media, Pingjum is presented as being open and tolerant, and has the reputation of being an “artist village” (e.g. van Santen, 2013).

The research project was conducted as a part of a broader study addressing the role of “the arts” in the resilience of communities. We adopted a participatory approach consisting of three stages in which creative and arts-based research methods were used: walking interviews, group discussions, and a creative workshop that resulted in an exhibition in the village (see also below). Our participatory research project had two main aims:

First, we aimed to gain a thorough understanding of the key issues at play in the community and a deep insight into people's sense of place. Through this, we intended to obtain a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the context in which the local arts and artists exist since this would enable us to better grasp the role of the arts in the community's resilience. Pain (2004) argued that adopting a participatory approach is useful for research 'where people's relations with and accounts of space, place and environment are of central interest' (p. 653). She stated that, in being designed to be context-specific, participatory research often results in thick descriptions of place and produces situated, rich and layered accounts. Furthermore, research that actively engages a community is more likely to come from and reflect lived experiences, creating more authentic and multi-faceted knowledge (Pain et al., 2015). Moreover, our employment of a mix of creative and arts-based research methods, as part of our participatory approach, helped us to understand people's sensory and affective responses to their village and its surroundings. In so doing, we were able to go beyond cognitive ways of knowing (Lawrence, 2008). Kelemen & Hamilton (2015, p. 22) noted that, through the use of such methods, researchers can 'gain a degree of immersive, embodied experience of other peoples' "situated knowledges".

Second, and connected to the first aim, we sought to contribute positively to the community's thinking about and actual resilience. This second aim can be regarded as a form of "giving back" to the community (see, e.g., Fortmann, 2014; Gupta & Kelly, 2014; Salmon, 2007) and is in line with an objective of participatory research practices, namely to benefit the community from which the research participants are drawn (Diver & Higgins, 2014; Vigurs & Kara, 2017). We hoped that the participants, through their involvement in the project, would be stimulated to think together about important places in their village and (potential) changes and, where deemed necessary, come up with possible solutions or ways to deal with (anticipated) changes. Through the three consecutive stages, the participatory research project worked towards an exhibition in the village hall. The aim of this exhibition was to engage the broader community and generate discussion on the meanings of certain places in Pingjum. The above constitutes a somewhat intangible form of research "legacy" that Kelemen & Hamilton (2015, p. 24) described as 'something left behind for others to use or think about while they engage in their own practices' (e.g. new ideas that others may build on, changes in attitudes and culture, or new connections and working relationships). In this regard, Coemans et al. (2015) noted that the use of "artistic elements" in participatory research can stimulate participants to create ideas for their community (and their own lives). They further stated that this very often induces community action and change, which is subsequently important in terms of community resilience (see also Chapter 1). On a similar note, Mitchell et al. (2015) argued that the "empathic power" of the arts can help open research participants to the existence of different experiences and

views, creating a broader perspective and a deeper awareness of “other”. This, they noted, will make people more prepared to relate to their community and to take action in it.

The participants for our participatory research project were recruited in several ways, such as by giving a promotional presentation at the annual meeting of the village’s interest group, the door-to-door distribution of flyers, an online blog about the project⁸, and snowball sampling. In total, twenty-eight villagers participated in the project, including thirteen men and fifteen women from different age groups (below 25 years, between 25 and 65 years, and 65 years and above).

Below, we describe each stage of the participatory research project in more detail, giving background on the methods used and explaining why and how we used them in Pingjum.

5.5.1 Stage 1: Walking interviews

The first stage of the participatory research project comprised 28 walking interviews that would enable the researcher to get to know Pingjum, the key issues at play in the community, and the participants and their personal experiences with, and opinions on, living in Pingjum. A growing body of academic literature highlights the value of walking interviews (and other mobile methods) in terms of gaining insight into the spatiality of place experiences (Carpiano, 2009; Hitchings & Jones, 2004; Kusenbach, 2003; Lager et al., 2015; Trell & van Hoven, 2010). Evans & Jones (2011) noted that the method’s capacity to access people’s attitudes and knowledge about their surrounding environment is seen as a major advantage. They considered walking to be an intimate way to engage with landscape and an approach that can provide insights into both the place and self, resulting in walking interviews being able to generate more place-specific data than “traditional” interviews. Trell & van Hoven (2010) argued that, when producing knowledge about place (experiences) in “standard” interview settings, some small details or “layers” of place (experience) might be lost because participants need to draw on their mental image, or memories, of the place, without visual, audible, olfactory or tactile stimuli. They stated that ‘sometimes, it is necessary to see, hear, smell or feel a place in order to make sense of it and to communicate it to outsiders’ (p. 92) and that therefore, researchers, have started to explore research methods that take participants “into the field”. Hitchings & Jones (2004) illustrated that, when walking “in place” with participants, they were taken closer to the ways in which people encounter their environment, thereby producing richer data. Walking provided an array of unfolding prompts for discussion, triggering conversations and insights that might well have been overlooked during an interview indoors.

8 <https://onderzoeksprojectpingjum.wordpress.com/>

Walking interviews are also praised for allowing informal interaction, making participants feel more at ease and making it easier for them to express themselves in everyday language (Lager et al., 2015). Further, the method is credited for its ability to put participants “in charge”, effectively empowering them in the research process as the researcher is the one “going along” (Carpiano, 2009; Ecker, 2017). In this way, walking interviews can reduce the power imbalance between the researcher and the participants.

During the walking interviews in our study, the participants were asked to take the researcher on a “tour” through Pingjum and show the places that were meaningful to them and places which, in their eyes, were disputed in the community or were facing potential changes. A camera was taken along during the walks and the participants were asked to take photographs of the meaningful places they showed the researcher during their tour through Pingjum. Such a participant-driven approach, by creating opportunities for the participants to be more meaningfully involved, partially shifts the control over data generation from the researcher to the participants themselves (Vigurs & Kara, 2017). In addition, as Woodgate et al. (2017) noted, such a participatory *visual* approach enables participants to reflect on issues that are significant to them and to think through how they want to represent their own perspectives and experiences around a given topic. Since we informed our participants about the walking part of the interview process in advance, they could already think about the route and the places they wanted to show and talk about prior to their walking interview taking place. We did not provide detailed instructions to the participants about how the walk should be completed. The participants were free to take the researcher to any place they thought appropriate, take whatever route and as long as they wanted. In addition to the walking element, there were interview questions focused on people’s opinions on, and experiences with, the arts and artists in Pingjum, the village community and changes and potential changes to the village.

The walking interviews generated situated knowledge on participants’ personal village experiences and their views on key issues at play in the community. The outcomes of this first stage were intended as input for the second and third stages of the research project (see below).

5.5.2 Stage 2: Group Discussions

The second stage of our participatory research project consisted of three group discussions. We aimed to bring the participants together and have a further discussion on the shared and divergent meanings of particular places in Pingjum among people of the different age groups (<25, 25-65, >65). In this way we could grasp how certain places are seen and valued in the community and, as noted above, hoped to stimulate

the participants to also think about (potential) changes and come up with possible solutions or ways to deal with (anticipated) changes in light of our project's aim to contribute to the community's (thinking about) resilience.

The group discussions can be seen as a form of focus group, a method which has received considerable attention from a broad range of disciplines since the 1990s (Wilkinson, 2004). Bostock & Freeman (2003) explained that focus groups are a form of group interview in which data are generated through the communication between the participants, and that they aim to encourage debate and to examine what people think, how and why. Kamberelis & Dimitriadis (2013) noted that focus groups encompass a wide range of discursive practices, ranging from formal structured interviews around clearly delimited topics to less formal, open-ended conversations that can unfold in myriad and unpredictable ways. Generally, the researcher acts as a moderator, but rather than presenting the participants with a set of questions, the researcher can instead present stimulating materials (such as photographs or video clips) or ask them to engage in a specific activity (such as a rating exercise or card-sorting task) (Wilkinson, 2004).

A benefit of focus groups is that they can result in insights that are unlikely to have arisen from individual interviews. Wilkinson (2014) described how the researcher's control over a group's interaction is reduced simply by virtue of the number of participants simultaneously involved, making focus groups a relatively "egalitarian" method. This subsequently enables participants to develop those themes that they see as most important, discussing topics that might have gone unnoticed or given insufficient attention by the researcher. In addition, focus groups often lead to the production of more elaborate accounts. Wilkinson (2004) noted that they can create a "synergistic effect" by enabling participants to react to, and build upon, responses by other group members. Participants, for example, do not always agree with one another and may force each other to justify or defend their beliefs. Moreover, participants may feel empowered by a sense of group membership and cohesiveness (Sim, 1998). On a note of caution, a potential disadvantage of focus groups is that they may lead to bias in the results as some people talk more than others and dominate the discussion because of different personalities or power differences within a group (Bostock & Freeman, 2003).

For this second stage of the participatory research project, the participants were invited to the village hall, for one morning, to discuss further the meanings of the places they photographed during their walking interviews. Sixteen of the participants joined the meeting. Those absent were either unable to join due to a scheduling conflict or lacked interest in participating. The participants were divided into three "discussion groups"

of mixed ages. The morning started with an icebreaker game, so the members of each discussion group could get to know each other (insofar as they did not already) and a relaxed environment was stimulated. This promotes openness and willingness to talk, which are important factors in the success of a focus group (Barnett, 2007). All the photographs of public places taken during the walking interviews were printed and spread out on the tables. In the icebreaker game, each participant was asked to choose one photograph that particularly appealed to her/him. Subsequently, the participants were asked to shortly introduce themselves and explain why they chose that particular photograph.

Following this, each discussion group started with the main goal of the morning: discovering each other's opinions on, and experiences with, certain places in Pingjum and reflecting more deeply on the significance of those places. The photographs from the walking interviews were again used as stimuli, serving as starting points for the group discussions. We particularly wanted to see if there were any differences with regard to how different age groups saw and valued certain places in their community. Therefore, each "age group" within the three discussion groups was asked to select one or two photographs they would like to discuss in their group. As each discussion group included at least one person from each age group (<25, 25-65, >65), all groups discussed three to six photographs. Discussing photographs can help participants to better reflect upon and explain their perceptions and experiences, and promotes dialogue concerning issues (Loeffler, 2005; Purcell, 2007). In addition to the photographs, the discussion groups were given some guiding questions to support their discussions of their chosen photographs:

- What does this [photographed] place mean to you personally?
- Why does this place have this meaning for you?
- Has this meaning changed over time? How?
- Do you think this meaning will change in the future? Why (not)?
- Are there differences [with regard to the above] between the younger and older members in your discussion group?

In addition to the photographs and guiding questions, the discussion groups were provided with large sheets of paper and coloured pencils and asked to make a poster with which they could present the main results of their discussions to the entire group. This stimulated the participants to keep their discussions focused on the photographs/ places and their shared and/or divergent meanings over time, and encouraged each discussion group to reflect on their discussion and summarize its main points. After approximately one hour, each discussion group was asked to briefly present their poster so that all the groups could get a sense of each other's discussions. After these three poster presentations, the morning ended with a concluding discussion on the main results of the morning.

The group discussions generated co-produced knowledge on the discussed topics and revealed shared and divergent intergenerational views that existed within the community on the meaning of particular places in Pingjum. Together with the personal village experiences captured during the walking interviews, these outcomes served as input for the final stage of the participatory research project, described below.

5.5.3 Stage 3: Creative Workshop and Exhibition

The third stage of our participatory research project involved a creative workshop that resulted in an one-day exhibition in the village. This final stage served two purposes, the first, during a hands-on creative workshop, being to engage the participants further by asking them to visualize the meanings they assigned to certain places in Pingjum. In this regard, Walsh et al. (2013, p. 121) commented that arts-based research is ‘founded on the idea that the arts are useful as a means to *engage* in research as a participatory act that allow those involved to more directly express their voices through artistic media with the goal of enhanced self-expression’ (emphasis added). By asking the participants to visualize the meanings they assigned to certain places in Pingjum, we offered them a different means of communication to those used earlier (see below, and Coemans et al., 2015; Foster, 2012). It is important to note that the main function of the artworks is not aesthetic but, rather, to provide a medium through which the participants can exchange their ideas and thoughts (Hamilton & Taylor, 2017).

The second purpose of the third project stage was to “give back” to the village, by exhibiting the participatory research project and trying to engage the broader community and generate discussion on the meanings of certain places in Pingjum. Several scholars have noted that creative and arts-based research can make research findings more accessible for a broader non-academic audience and provoke changes in their understanding (see, e.g., Capous Desyllas, 2014; Coemans & Hannes, 2017; Foster, 2012; Hamilton & Taylor, 2017; Kara, 2015; Kelemen & Hamilton, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2011). Diver (2014) explained how local communities are often excluded from knowledge production because academic research uses specialized “academic” language and tends to rely on the written word. In comparison, collaborative research methods with artistic outputs can be a means of “giving back” to communities by reducing the focus on the written word by looking at other means of communication (Coemans et al., 2015; Foster, 2012). In this regard, Sorin et al. (2012) noted that images of art can transcend words and consciousness to, quoting Russell-Bowie (2006, p. 3), ‘embody and communicate emotions, ideas, beliefs and values; to convey meanings through aesthetic forms and symbols; and evoke emotive responses to life with or without words’. As Lawrence (2008) noted, the arts invite a conversation with the viewer by being able to stir up emotions by touching something deep inside them. Subsequently, they can be stimulated to connect to a personal experience of their own,

to tap into empathic connections with issues of (universal) concern, or 'to envision alternative realities for a more promising future' (p. 75). This could be important in terms of community action and change and, as noted, community resilience.

Nine of the participants were willing and able to take part in the creative workshop (six of whom had also attended the group discussions), which required them to come to the village hall for another morning. At the start of the morning, the participants were introduced to four students from the Minerva art academy in Groningen who would assist them in their visualization processes. Collaborating with art professionals (or, in our case, art academy students) can ease the artistic process for those with little or no expertise or skill in the arts (Kara, 2015). Just as the group discussions built on the photographs taken during the walking interviews, this final stage also built on the materials gathered during the previous project stages. A few weeks before the creative workshop, the participants were sent a printed "inspiration booklet" compiled by the researcher. This booklet contained an overview of the photographs (of public places) taken during the walking interviews and a selection of corresponding quotes from the walking interviews and group discussions. As such, the "inspiration booklet" presented the participants with an overview of the results of the first two project stages and stimulated them to contemplate the deeper meanings behind the photographs and quotes. Whereas in the previous stages there had been a lot of talking about the meanings of the places photographed, the aim of the hands-on creative workshop was to visualize some of these "stories" attached to these places in Pingjum. The participants could decide for themselves with whom they wanted to work during the morning. Four groups emerged (two groups consisting of two people, one of four people, and one person worked on his own), and each received assistance from one of the art academy students. In addition to the materials that some participants brought with them, the participants were offered a range of materials (i.e. paint, pencils, the printed photographs, different sizes of paper, old magazines) such that, to an extent, they were free to choose a means to express themselves. At the end of the morning, the groups were asked to present their artworks so everyone could see and hear about each other's work.

A few weeks after the creative workshop, a one-day exhibition of the participatory research project was organized in Pingjum's village hall. The exhibition featured an overview of the photographs of public places taken during the walking interviews and the four artworks created during the creative workshop (see Figures 3 and 6). Each artwork was accompanied by a short text that explained its theme. Although the participants were given the opportunity to write these texts themselves, only one group delivered input for the text. The exhibition also presented opportunities for the visitors to respond to the artworks as an aim was to engage the audience and generate discussion on the meanings of certain places in Pingjum in order to contribute to the

community's (thinking about) resilience. Each artwork had its own sheet of paper on which the visitors could write their own opinions on, and experiences with, the themes of the artworks (stimulated by guiding questions printed on these sheets). For example, two sheets of paper were hung next to the artwork photographed in Figure 6. One asked 'What do you experience when you are standing on the dike', and the other 'Which "side" are you most focused on: the Wadden Sea (like Ria) or the inland landscape (like Pepijn)? Why?'. These questions were intended to stimulate the visitors to reflect on their own feelings, experiences and views on Pingjum's coastal landscape (see below for more background on the artwork).

Approximately thirty-five visitors came to the exhibition, including the four art academy students, seven of the participants (six of whom participated in the creative workshop) and their families and friends, and other villagers of Pingjum. After the exhibition, the researcher took the four art academy students to the local pizzeria to thank them for their help and engage in an evaluative group talk on the exhibition.

The third project stage generated "affective knowledge" on the participants' sense of place (see also below). As noted, arts-based research methods actively engage people's senses and can place "embodied experience" central in the process of knowledge creation (Eisner, 2008; Kelemen & Hamilton, 2015). As Lawrence (2008) observed, the arts can provoke strong, affective responses in both the creator and the viewer of art that, subsequently, can provide a catalyst for learning beyond traditional, and dominant, cognitive ways of knowing. In this regard, Eisner (2008, p. 7) noted that involving the arts in research can 'promote a form of understanding that is derived or evoked through empathic experience' and provide deep insights into what others are experiencing.

5.6 Multifaceted Knowledge

Our participatory research project provided a rich insight into Pingjum's village life, the key issues at play in the community and the participants' sense of place and village experiences. Through its three stages, we gained *multifaceted knowledge*, with each project stage providing another facet of these topics. This helped us to understand the context in which the local arts and artists exist and the role of the arts in the resilience of the community. A major theme that emerged from the participatory research project was our participants' appreciation of Pingjum's open landscape. In light of our study on the role of the arts in the resilience of communities, this is an interesting theme. It relates to people's place attachment and their coping with (potential) place change (see Chapter 4) and, ultimately, the community's resilience. During the walking interviews, several participants took us to personal favourite and/or meaningful places from which they encounter and enjoy Pingjum's landscape. Others, who did not select specific places related to the landscape during their walking interviews, expressed

their appreciation of Pingjum’s landscape in general terms. Overall, during the first project stage, it emerged that the participants greatly value the tranquillity and space of Pingjum’s surroundings. During the second project stage, Pingjum’s landscape again emerged as one of the discussed topics. The group discussions revealed shared and divergent views, with people, for instance, valuing different elements in the landscape (e.g. trees vs. the open views). During the creative workshop, one group specifically created an artwork around Pingjum’s coastal landscape (see Figure 6 and below for more background on this artwork) and another person visualized his “future wish” for Pingjum, painting a landscape in which human beings are intertwined with the landscape (see Figure 3). Marc (man, 25-65) introduced his painting as follows:



Figure 3 Painting Marc (own photograph).

‘This is actually just a view, from Pingjum towards the meadows, to the landscape. And these [*pointing to the white shapes*] are humanlike beings in the landscape, who are a bit intertwined with the landscape. A lot of people are intertwined with the landscape, I think, at least in spirit. But perhaps we should grow even more with the landscape, so we no longer live *on* and *against* the earth, but a bit more *with* and *through* the earth [...] so we are *part* of the earth instead of standing apart from it’.

With his painting, Marc shared his “future wish” for Pingjum, calling for more consideration of the landscape and the earth in general (i.e. ‘we should grow even more with the landscape’ and ‘we are *part* of the earth instead of standing apart from it’). This links well to our study on community resilience, as it concerns people’s place attachment and care for their landscape (see also Stocker & Kennedy, 2011).

As noted, we also gained an understanding of key issues that are at play in the community through the participatory research project. Some of these could potentially induce place change and inflict changes on Pingjum's landscape. In earlier work, we reflected on the role of the arts in people's coping with potential place change in light of wind energy developments (see Chapter 4). During our project, it became clear that, for many participants, the plans for the construction of a new wind turbine park were difficult to reconcile with their feelings for, and attachments to, Pingjum's open landscape. Acquiring *multifaceted knowledge* on people's sense of place, Pingjum's village life and the key issues at play, helped us to understand the role of the local arts and artists in people's interpretations of, and dealing with, potential place changes in light of the wind energy developments (see Chapter 4).

In order to provide more nuanced, concrete insight into what creative and arts-based research methods can bring researchers, the next section reflects on the participatory research project by elaborating on how the various project stages contributed to producing *multifaceted knowledge*.

5.6.1 Personal, In-Place Accounts

During the first stage of our research project we got to know Pingjum, the key issues at play in the community and our participants. As noted earlier, walking interviews are praised for their capacity to access people's attitudes and knowledge about their surrounding environment (Evans & Jones, 2011). Walking with our participants through their village provided an opportunity to gain in-depth understanding of their personal sense of place and village experiences (including their opinions on, and experiences with, the local arts and artists). We learned about the places which are meaningful to our participants and which, in their eyes, are disputed in the community or facing (potential) changes. The walking interviews resulted in "thick" descriptions of the places and personal situated and rich accounts (Pain, 2004). As we were "in place" with our participants, we were brought closer to the ways in which they experience their village and given a feeling for their sense of place. Instead of only hearing the participants describe the places they wanted to discuss, the researcher walked with them through their village and experienced the places first hand, also seeing, hearing, smelling and feeling the places herself. Moreover, as the places themselves provided prompts for discussion, the walking interviews also triggered new conversations (see also Hitchings & Jones, 2004; Trell & van Hoven, 2010).

An example of a personal, in-place account generated through the walking interviews is provided by Abby (woman, 25-65), who took the researcher to a personally meaningful place during her walking interview (see Figure 4). Abby explained that she selected this spot on the outskirts of Pingjum as it is one of the places in Pingjum that are important to her. She noted:

Abby: 'Here, I became emotional for the first time [while being in Pingjum's landscape], I thought "what a nice spot" [...] that curvy little ditch, those horses and those flowers [...] Here I can really find peace and also something nostalgic, I think'.

Interviewer: 'What makes it so special?'

Abby: 'I very much love green, that is my favourite colour. And also because it is not that tight, that curvy ditch. There is plenty of space, the horses that are walking around. In spring, the foals are walking around here, playing during the evening. It is the slowing down. Just having a look, enjoying'.



Figure 4 One of Abby's personally significant places in Pingjum (photograph Abby – walking interview).

This quote shows Abby's appreciation of Pingjum's landscape, its tranquillity and space. Actually being in the place during the walking interview, rather than recalling from a mental image or memories of the place, resulted in an in-place account of this personally meaningful place. The place itself played an active role in Abby's explanation of her sense of place, as illustrated by her pointing out the horses and choice of words (i.e. 'here', 'those'). Seeing the horses during her walking interview triggered Abby to reflect on her memories of the place, of being there in springtime and seeing the foals playing around. Abby also invited the researcher to look at the place together (i.e. 'just

having a look, enjoying’). In this way, the researcher was taken closer to the way in which Abby experiences Pingjum’s surroundings as she could herself experience the peace (i.e. ‘the slowing down’) that Abby finds there. This corresponds to the ideas of Kelemen & Hamilton (2015, p. 22), who noted, that when using creative and arts-based research methods, researchers can ‘gain a degree of immersive, embodied experience of other peoples’ “situated knowledges”.

5.6.2 Shared and Divergent Intergenerational Views

During the second project stage, our participants from different age groups (<25, 25-65, >65) were brought together to discuss further the meanings of the places they photographed during their individual walking interviews. As already noted, creative and arts-based research methods can serve as a bridge between generations, cultures, socioeconomic classes and people who are divided along habitual lines determined by existing agendas and interests (Anwar McHenry, 2011; Askins & Pain, 2011; Brice & Fernández Arconada, 2018; Taylor & Murphy, 2014). By bringing the participants together in discussion groups, a “synergistic effect” emerged. The participants were reacting to and building upon each other’s responses, leading to elaborated accounts of the issues discussed (see also Wilkinson, 2014). By sharing their views, the participants co-produced knowledge on the topics discussed and revealed shared and divergent intergenerational, views that exist in the community on the meaning of particular places in Pingjum.

In addition, the group discussions led to the disclosure of issues, anecdotes and ideas on Pingjum and its future that had not been raised (or perhaps thought of) during the walking interviews. This benefit was also identified by Pain et al. (2015) who observed that new ideas can be sparked through the process of people coming together (with each person bringing ideas, expertise and skills). The ideas that emerged during our second project stage (such as constructing an underground parking lot just outside Pingjum and building a “village bench” to stimulate interaction among community members) showed that the participants were thinking and discussing about ways to deal with (potential) changes and to improve village life. This aligns with the aim of our research project to contribute to the community’s (thinking about) resilience. A similar finding was noted by Brice & Fernández Arconada (2018) when reflecting on their arts project in Somerset, UK. They noted that the project provided a starting point for the participants to develop and share ‘new frames of reference’, with some participants ‘seiz[ing] the inspiration to imagine possible responses to current and future challenges’ (pp. 237-238). The concluding discussion and poster presentations at the end of the project’s second stage provided an overview of the discussion groups’ most important places and “core values” of Pingjum.

To illustrate the facet that the participatory research project's second stage added to our knowledge on Pingjum, the key issues at play in the community, and our participants' sense of place, we take a closer look at the discussion on the overview of photographs featuring Pingjum's landscape (see Figure 4) that took place in one of the discussion groups. The following exchange took place between Jenny (woman, >65) and Vera (woman, 25-65). Talking about the shell path alongside the water on the west side of Pingjum (top-left photograph in Figure 5, taken by Pepijn (man, >65) during his walking interview), Jenny noted:

Jenny: 'If you look at the shell path, which we all walk with our dogs, a tree regularly falls down there, and it is never replaced by a new one. And the trees that are there are quite poor. Yes, I think that is all a shame. I would like to see things differently'.

Vera: 'Perhaps that is something we could accomplish together?'

Jenny: 'No, that is not going to happen, because I once talked about it with the municipality's gardener. It [planting trees] does not belong in this area, people are more fond of meadows and stuff. I think that is a pity, that we do not have a park'.

This exchange illustrates that the participants reacted to each other's experiences and views. For example, after Jenny pointed out the poor conditions of the trees in Pingjum, Vera proposed joining forces to work on this. The exchange also provides an example of new information that came forward during the group discussions. Jenny had not, to this extent, expressed her appreciation of the trees in Pingjum('s landscape) during her walking interview, but now, seeing someone else's photograph during the group discussions, it appeared that she was strongly in favour of trees being part of Pingjum's landscape and had even discussed this matter with the municipality's gardener.

Figure 5 Overview of photographs featuring Pingjum's landscape (as used during the group discussions) (photographs made during the walking interviews, by: ❶ Pepijn (man, >65), ❷ Henry (man, 25-65), ❸ Donald (man, >65), and ❹ Eric (man, >65).



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Pepijn (man, >65), who was also part of this discussion group himself, also reflected on the overview of photographs featuring Pingjum's landscape:

Pepijn: 'I love the space, I love the agricultural farm, I love farms. This is a village where, if you step out of your front door, you look outside at once. Nowadays that no longer happens anywhere. Here, you have it [the views] on all sides [of the village]. You are completely outdoors. That gives me so much space. I think it is very beautiful. You [referring to Jenny] are in favour of parks, I am not a fan of parks at all. On the contrary [...] I love the space as it has developed through agriculture over the centuries.'

Vera: 'But you do not have to agree with each other, I believe.'

Jenny: 'But one does not exclude the other, right? I also love the space. Of course, I think it is wonderful that we can still see the horizon.'

Pepijn: '...the sky, those old dikes...'

Jenny: 'But I am extremely annoyed by the spraying with pesticides, which we all suffer from. So [looking at Pingjum's surrounding], I see different things than you do'.

Reacting to Jenny's earlier remarks on the trees in Pingjum's landscape, Pepijn shared his personal view on Pingjum's landscape. As already noted, discussing photographs can help participants to reflect on and explain their experiences and perceptions (Loeffler, 2005; Purcell, 2007). In this case, the photographs served as stimuli and illustrations for the discussion by the participants. Jenny, for instance, used them to point out the trees, and Pepijn to illustrate the open views from the various sides of the village. As becomes clear from the two quoted exchanges, these two participants had divergent views on Pingjum's landscape and they each value different elements within it (i.e. trees vs. the open views). Together, they co-produced knowledge on Pingjum's landscape, with each of them expressing a different view and highlighting different elements in the landscape (i.e. 'I see different things than you do'). By listening to each other, the participants become aware of the existence of different views and experiences, and a broader perspective on Pingjum's landscape is created. This corresponds to the literature in the field of creative methodology, which, as Hamilton & Taylor (2017) noted, is beginning to show effects on the participants of arts-based projects such as improved empathy for other people and new experiences and ways of thinking. As noted, such effects can make people more prepared to relate to their community and to take action in it (Mitchell et al., 2015), changes which are beneficial with regard to the community's resilience.

5.6.3 Deep Insights through Empathic Experiences

Research methods that rely solely on verbal or written competences can, as previously noted, provide limited access to emotional and symbolic aspects of people's experiences (Dunn & Mellor, 2017). Compared to the first two stages, the final stage of the participatory research project allowed the participants to communicate their views and feelings in a different way (see also Coemans et al., 2015; Foster, 2012). During the hands-on creative workshop, the participants were asked to visualize the meanings they assigned to certain places in Pingjum. As Dunn & Mellor (2017) commented, this enables participants to draw on both their cognitive capacities and their emotions, experiences and imagination. The four artworks/visualizations that resulted from the creative workshop provided deep insights into the participants' sense of place and also exposed issues that has not previously come to the surface. Eisner (2008) explained that this deep insight into what others are experiencing can be obtained because 'the arts in research promote a form of understanding that is derived or evoked through empathic experience' (p. 7).

To illustrate the above, we consider one of the created artworks in more detail (see Figure 6). At the end of the morning of the creative workshop, Ria (woman, 25-65) introduced this artwork (which she had made together with Pepijn (man, >65)) as follows:

'This is the dike [pointing to the horizontal line in the middle of the painting], and we are standing back to back with each other. I am watching the Wadden Sea because the Wadden Sea is the reason why I have come to live here. And Pepijn is looking at the other side, to the open landscape. We have painted from these two perspectives. So the sea, of course [pointing to "her" side of the artwork]. What I like so much about the Wadden Sea is the vastness. But also the entire trench system, because it so strongly reflects the dynamics of the Wadden Sea, and that is also something I feel for, so therefore I included that [in the painting]'

Both Ria and Pepijn have a strong attachment to the coastal landscape around Pingjum. The creative workshop stimulated them to reflect on and talk about their feelings. This outcome is supported by Lowe (2000), who noted that working on an arts project can give participants the opportunity to talk about their experiences. In this way, she argued, they can discover common concerns and shared definitions of the situations in their neighbourhood. In the case of Ria and Pepijn, different interpretations of the "coastal landscape" concept emerged. Whereas Ria is more oriented towards the *seascape*, Pepijn is more oriented towards the *landscape*. Through their mutual painting, they each tried to capture the elements of the landscape that appeal to them and for which they feel an attachment (i.e. 'I am watching the Wadden Sea [...] Pepijn is looking at the other side').



Figure 6 Ria and Pepijn's artwork hanging at the exhibition (own photograph).

The artworks that were created during the creative workshop were displayed during an exhibition in the village hall. With this in mind, Ria, during her introduction of their artwork, remarked that some elements were still missing:

'What also belongs to this, and which we hope to include during the final exhibition, look.. this is two dimensional, and when you look outside or actually, when you are standing there [on the dike], you see everything as three dimensional. But you *experience* it as four dimensional because the senses are also added. Because the Wadden Sea has a certain smell, and you feel the wind through your hair, and you can taste something. So we hope we can include some odours and sounds in our work, or around it. To complete the picture. And that will be very much in line with what we both strongly experience here'.

As noted, the creative workshop stimulated Ria and Pepijn to reflect on their personal experiences while standing on the dike. Thinking about how to convey these, they realized that they needed to include material additional to their painting in order to present a more complete expression of their sense of place on the dike (i.e. 'to complete the picture'). As can be seen in Figure 6, Ria and Pepijn indeed added extra material to their artwork during the exhibition. On the left side of the painting, they added a box with materials they found along the coastline and a note saying '*look, smell, and admire*'. On the right side, they added a box with recorded sounds of the coastal landscape and a note '*hear, listen, and grow quiet*'. By including the materials and sounds, Ria and Pepijn added several layers or dimensions to their artwork (i.e. 'you *experience* it as four dimensional because the senses are also added'). In this way, they appealed even more to the visitors' emotions and imagination, offering them an "empathic experience" and insight into what they experienced when standing on the dike (see also Eisner, 2008).

As the above example illustrates, the third project stage generated affective knowledge, providing deep insights into the participants' sense of place through empathic experiences. Compared to the first two project stages, the hands-on creative workshop enabled the participants to communicate their views and feelings in a different way, and move beyond cognitive ways of knowing. In this regard, Lawrence (2008) observed that experiential learning opportunities are present in both the creating and the witnessing of art. Quoting Burnard (1988), she noted that 'affective knowledge' or the 'experiential domain of knowledge' can be 'gained through direct personal encounter with a subject, person, place, or thing. It is the subjective and affective nature of that encounter that contributes to this sort of knowledge' (p. 69).

5.7 Discussion and Conclusions

Our reflection on our participatory research project conducted in Pingjum provides nuanced, concrete insights into what creative and arts-based research methods can bring to academia. The three project stages produced *multifaceted knowledge*, with each stage providing another facet of Pingjum's village life and the participants' sense of place and village experiences. The walking interviews generated personal, in-place accounts of people's village experiences and their views on key issues at play in the community (see also Pain, 2004; Trell & van Hoven, 2010). The group discussions brought the participants together and revealed both shared and divergent intergenerational views that existed within the community on the meaning of particular places in Pingjum (see also Wilkinson, 2014). Lastly, the creative workshop provided deep insights into people's sense of place through empathic experiences (see also Eisner, 2008; Lawrence, 2008). In addition, both the second and third stages of the project disclosed issues that had not been previously raised. This adds support to the practice of combining more traditional research methods with creative and arts-based research methods in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study (Coemans & Hannes, 2017; Franz, 2010).

Our participatory research project had two main aims: to actively engage the inhabitants in generating knowledge about their community and its resilience and, linked to this, to contribute positively to the community's thinking about and actual resilience. With regard to the first, we can conclude that the project helped in gaining deeper insights into people's sense of place and village experiences and in comprehending the key issues at play in Pingjum's community. The creative and arts-based research methods, by actively engaging the participants' senses and provoking strong affective responses, enabled us to go beyond cognitive ways of knowing (see also Lawrence, 2008). These findings are in line with the views of scholars such as Capous Desyllas (2014) and Woodgate et al. (2017) who argued that, with the help of creative and arts-based research methods, a more meaningful understanding of the complex realities of

people's lives can be obtained. The *multifaceted knowledge* that was produced enabled us to get a good grasp of the role of the arts in the resilience of the community. We, for instance, found that the arts play a role in people's interpretations of, and dealing with, (potential) place change (see Chapter 4) and that the influence of the arts is context-dependent, with the arts having both binding and dividing influences on the community (see Chapter 3).

In terms of our second aim, we can conclude that the participatory research project: a) stimulated the participants, and the visitors to the exhibition, to think about and discuss their community and their attachments to it, (potential) changes in the village, and ways to deal with these, and to improve village life; b) brought together some community members who would normally rarely meet or did not even know each other (especially those of different age groups); and c) generated discussion on the meanings of certain places in Pingjum and, thereby, opened people up to the existence of different views and experiences (e.g. different interpretations of the "coastal landscape"). As noted, this can lead to a broader perspective and deeper awareness of "the other", which, subsequently, can make people more prepared to relate to their community and to take action in it (Mitchell et al., 2015). These three outcomes amount to an intangible research "legacy" that the community members can use or continue to think about outside the research project (see also Kelemen & Hamilton, 2015). As an example, during the group discussions, the participants were expressing their wishes, and had some ideas for the construction of a "village bench" to stimulate interactions among community members. Although these were only ideas, the participants might follow them up and be inspired to work together to achieve the installation of a "village bench". This could stimulate the build-up of social capital, which would further contribute to the community's resilience by stimulating people's willingness and ability to work together for a common good (see Chapter 1).

Having discussed the positives, we must also address some of the hurdles and challenges in using creative and arts-based research methods. We initially noted the challenge of accommodating this kind of research within academic conventions, and we now reflect on other challenges in using creative and arts-based research methods encountered during our research project.

First, engaging the community in our participatory research project was not easy. Although we received positive feedback from the participants once they were engaged, it took quite some effort in the first place to find villagers willing to take part in our project. Moreover, despite the positive feedback, we "lost" some participants over the course of the project. Whereas the project started with twenty-eight walking interviews, the group discussions involved only sixteen participants and the creative workshop

just nine participants. In addition, although approximately thirty-five people visited the exhibition, this is only a small proportion of Pingjum's 600 inhabitants. Further, the people who attended the exhibition did not use the opportunities provided to respond to the artworks to the extent that we had hoped. Macpherson et al. (2017) reported a similarly weak level of participation by the general public when reflecting on the challenges and tensions they encountered in a collaborative exhibition they organized. Despite our slight disappointment, our visitors did at least take their time to wander around the exhibition space and talk and have a drink with one another.

Second, there was quite some uncertainty linked to our participatory research project. Coemans & Hannes (2017) have observed that it is common in arts-based research for not all the details of the process, conclusions and possible impacts to be known in advance, and this was certainly true for our project. With our creative and arts-based research methods, we, to a certain extent, put our participants "in charge" (see also Carpiano, 2009; Trelle & van Hoven, 2010). They could decide which places they wanted to show the researcher and discuss during their walking interviews, which photographs to discuss during the group discussions, and which meanings and places to visualize (and how) during the creative workshop. This meant that, at the start of our project, we did not know which topics would emerge and what the final exhibition would look like. Such uncertainties make creative and arts-based research methods both challenging and exciting (see also Askins & Pain, 2011). More importantly, however, through actively engaging the participants in this way, our research was more likely to come from and reflect the lived experiences of the community members (Pain et al., 2015), and be relevant to the community's resilience (see Brice & Fernández Arconada, 2018).

Third, conducting such a participatory research project took considerable time for all those involved. Participants and art academy students had to be found, time-costly walking interviews had to be conducted, the group discussions, creative workshop and exhibition had to be planned and prepared, and the gathered data had to be transcribed and analysed. Maybe these demands were a reason why community members might have been reluctant to get involved in the research, or dropped out along the way. Coemans & Hannes (2017) also highlighted this time-consuming nature of arts-based research methods, and added that costs can be another practical limitation of these methods (e.g. costs related to organizing an exhibition, collaborating with artists, or buying equipment of good quality such as digital cameras).

Despite these challenges, our study shows that creative and arts-based research methods can deliver substantial benefits and, therefore, have much to offer researchers. Specifically, our reflection on our participatory research project in Pingjum

demonstrates that creative and arts-based research methods can: 1) generate deep insight by providing new ways of understanding people’s real, lived experiences and views, by going beyond rational-cognitive ways of knowing (see also Hamilton & Taylor, 2017); and 2) present ways to “give back” and contribute to a community, potentially igniting a spark among community members to engage in action and contribute to their community’s resilience. This is in line with currently often articulated aims of research, namely to directly benefit those involved and to share research findings with a broader non-academic audience (Macpherson et al., 2017).