

Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change

1. Preamble

The Centre for Visual Methodologies for Social Change (CVMSC) came into existence in 2004, bringing together various projects drawing on visual methodologies with a social change focus. The CVMSC is located in the School of Language, Literacies and Media Education in the Faculty of Education functionally necessitated by the aims and objectives of the Centre.

2. Vision and Mission Statement

Vision statement

To promote visual methodologies as research for social change in Southern Africa.

Mission statement

The mission of the Centre for Visual Methodologies and Social Change has three areas of focus: First, it strives to provide leadership at the faculty-level in relation to visual methodologies, arts-informed research and approaching research as social change – with a particular interest in collaborative participatory outreach and community-based research. Leadership is also provided through its publications and through its linkages to several international projects. Second, it is committed to providing support to Media Studies modules in the School of Language, Literacies and Media Education at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level. Third, it offers a ‘home-base’ for funded research studies of staff involved in specific visual methodology projects, with the possibility of establishing itself as a national training centre in the area of photovoice and other action-based visual methodologies.

3. Aims and objectives

- To advance the study of visual and participatory methodologies (photovoice, video documentary, photo documentary, digital technology, the use of material culture, artistic representation, performance, community-based work with meta-data, ethical issues and visual evidence), specifically within schools in under-resourced settings such as rural areas;
- To promote a cultural production approach to Media Studies and working with the visual, both in the context of teacher development but also within community outreach involving youth, community health workers, and parents;
- To study and advance the idea of youth as knowledge producers within the area of Media Studies more generally and HIV and AIDS programmes more specifically through cultural production (including Hip-Hop, drama, video, photography);

- To study and promote the idea of democratizing the research process – “shifting the boundaries of knowledge” (Marcus and Hofmaener, 2006) – in educational research through the use of visual modes of inquiry and representation;
- To deepen an understanding of grass roots policy making through visual participatory methodologies within educational settings.
- To ensure appropriate training opportunities for staff and students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) in the Faculty of Education as well as those working with youth in communities settings who wish to incorporate visual methodologies into their research.
- To create and sustain a national, regional and international dialogue around participatory and visual methodologies and participatory educational research, particularly in the context of the question “what difference does this make?”.

While these goals are framed within already existing scholarship on youth as knowledge producers (see for example Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1994; Lankshear and Knoebel, 2002), research as social change (Schratz and Walker, 1994) and Smith’s work on decolonizing methodologies (1999), we have an overarching goal of contributing to a larger project of conducting research in relation to cultural production, engagement, participation, and social change in school and community settings using visual methods.

4. Structures and Governance

4.1 Leadership of the Centre

The Executive Director and Directorship will manage the Centre, supported by the Management Committee, and drawing on the advice of the Advisory Board.

4.1.1 Criteria for leadership

The Executive Director and Directorship will be either permanent staff members or honorary Associate professors or professors of the SLLME with a proven academic and leadership record, with clear indications through publications and research projects of the ability to promote the vision and mission of the Centre. The Directorship of the Centre’s workload will be weighted at 25% of the normal workload allocation.

4.1.2 Responsibilities of Leadership

- Co-ordination of CVM activities, staff, interns and students
- Management of programme planning and budget
- Maintain beneficial liaison with funding agencies and international research institutions and agencies

- Ensure sustainability through preparing and submitting grant proposals
- Manage the CVM finances in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the university

4.2 Advisory Board

- The Advisory Board will initially consist of the following members subject to their acceptance on approach:
 - Ex Officio members
 - Dean of Education
 - Deputy Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies
 - Head of School (SLLME)
 - Africagnite, in collaboration with MIET representative
 - Centre for Creative Arts representative
 - Culture, Communication and Media Studies Centre representative
 - CAPRISA representative
 - Two international experts
- The Advisory Board will be chaired by the Executive Director of CVMSC.
- The Board will meet once a year by means of video conferencing. Additional meetings may be called by the leadership from time to time if necessary.
- With the Leadership the Board will provide guidance and overall vision to the CVMSC programme.
- It will review and endorse the Annual General report and financial statement to ensure that the centre's operation is in accordance with the university financial administrative and ethical guidelines.
- It will receive the minutes of management committee meetings.
- Members of the Advisory Board will hold their positions for a three year term.

4.3 Management committee

The Executive Director and Directorship plus the members of the CVMSC will be the management committee.

4.4 International research associates

The CVMSC welcomes international research associates. These are active researchers in the field of visual methodologies who are interested in contributing to the mission of the CVMSC. A panel of international research associates suggested by the Management committee will be invited to participate in the research of the centre and comment on and make suggestions for the most effective international links and projects to give effect to the aims and objectives of the Centre. Its membership shall reflect the most important researchers and theorists in relevant fields, and the links which the Centre establishes in its operations'.

5. Membership

Any member of the Faculty of Education (or of the university more broadly) whose prime interest is to effect social change through visual methodologies, or whose research interests complement the projects in the Centre, may apply to the Executive Director and Directorship Management Committee to become a member of the Centre.

- Permanent staff members of the SLMME and Faculty of Education will contribute to the achievement of the goals of the CVM. Their involvement in the Centre will be to contribute to and further the achievement of the aims and objectives of the CVMSC through active research, project and teaching contribution.
- All persons who wish to be members will submit a formal application and curriculum vitae to be reviewed by the Advisory Board) every three years.
- Membership of the CVMSC (except that of the Director) will not be offset against a staff member's workload.

6. Location

The Centre will be housed in the School of Language, Literacies and Media Education in the Faculty of Education functionally necessitated by the aims and objectives of the Centre.

7. Administration

- a. An administrator will be appointed for the daily administrative functions of the centre.
- b. The University Finance and Human Resources division will administer the financial and staffing requirements respectively.

8. Relationship to University

8.1 The Centre shall be affiliated to the UKZN as a Centre in terms of the Policy for the establishment of Units, Centres and Institutes.

8.2 The Centre's affairs will be conducted according to the University policy's procedures and regulations governing Centres. All contracts entered into with third parties will be in the name of the University.

8.3 The Centre will be supported by the infrastructure of the University, particularly the Finance Division, Human Resources Division, Research office, UKZN Foundation, Information Technology Division, the Library, and the Office of the Registrar.

9. Obligations to the University

- The Centre will strive to be recognized as a centre of excellence of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- The Centre will promote the reputation of the University of KwaZulu-Natal through its teaching, research and community services.

10. Amendments to the Constitution

A minimum of half plus one members of the Management Committee shall, by notice in writing signed by these members, be entitled to recommend an amendment to the constitution, which shall be approved by the Faculty of Education Board and ratified by the University Research Committee.

11. Continuity

To ensure continuity in the operations of the Centre in the case of the resignation or departure of the Director (s) for whatever reason, the Management Committee shall immediately meet and appoint an Acting-Director from their number.

12. Dissolution of the Centre

11.1 In terms of the University's policy for the establishment and review of Centres, the review committee, after consideration and consultation, shall recommend continuation or disestablishment of the centre.

11.2 On dissolution, all assets of the Centre shall be assigned to a body within the university with similar aims and objectives to those of the Centre.