

## **Reimagining bottom-up approaches with marginalised communities**

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This workshop will facilitate dynamic focus group discussions and the accumulation of knowledge with participants. The aim is to reconsider the opportunities and challenges related to bottom-up approaches to research and professional practice with marginalised communities. Marginalisation is defined by conditions of isolation, exclusion and migration that exacerbate the vulnerability of communities. Bottom-up approaches are widely discussed in sciences, such as natural, management and social sciences, to name a few. These approaches have also received attention from social design, service design, community-based art, participation and sustainable development. Top-down, provider-led approaches are often juxtaposed against community-based approaches. Bottom-up approaches emphasise decision making at a local level, community participation and grassroots mobilisation, while top-down approaches focus on lobbying, campaigning, advocacy and negotiations that involve authorities at decision-making levels (Panda, 2007). Past experiences from community-focused activities have shown significant obstacles to community involvement and public participation, while the centralisation goals of local authorities is at odds with 'bottom-up' action that often needs improvised approaches and tolerance of failure (Foley & Martin, 2000). When local flexibility is enabled for dealing with the tensions and ambiguities that may exist within communities and the implementation of 'bottom-up' action, the differences that exist within communities may be better reconciled (Foley & Martin, 2000). Tensions also exist in the dimensions between stakeholders due to power differences, different realities (and how they are constructed) and how the value of local knowledge is perceived, which influence how participatory processes may benefit vulnerable communities (Butler at al., 2015). The focus group discussions will contribute to the conference theme 'Cultural and Participatory Perspectives'. The discussions will draw on the participants' experiences with arts-based research and professional art and design initiatives with marginalised communities or in marginalised contexts. Forthcoming proposals from the workshop will be analysed, reiterated and documented to produce a set of best practices that will be shared and can be tested by the workshop participants in ongoing activities with marginalised communities. Another outcome of the workshop will be the initiation of a network of participants that will continue to share their experiences in marginalised contexts through ongoing discussion. A suitable platform will be selected by the workshop participants to achieve this goal.

Butler, J. R. A., Wise, R. M., Skewes, T. D., Bohensky, E. L., Peterson, N., Suadnya, W., ... & Bou, N. (2015). Integrating top-down and bottom-up adaptation planning to build adaptive capacity: a structured learning approach. *Coastal Management*, 43(4), 346-364.

Foley, P., & Martin, S. (2000). A new deal for the community? Public participation in regeneration and local service delivery. *Policy & Politics*, 28(4), 479-492.

Panda, B. (2007). Top down or bottom up? A study of grassroots NGOs' approach. *Journal of Health Management*, 9(2), 257-273.