

Storytelling to interrogate urban crisis in 'disorderly' Southern cities across South Africa and Colombia

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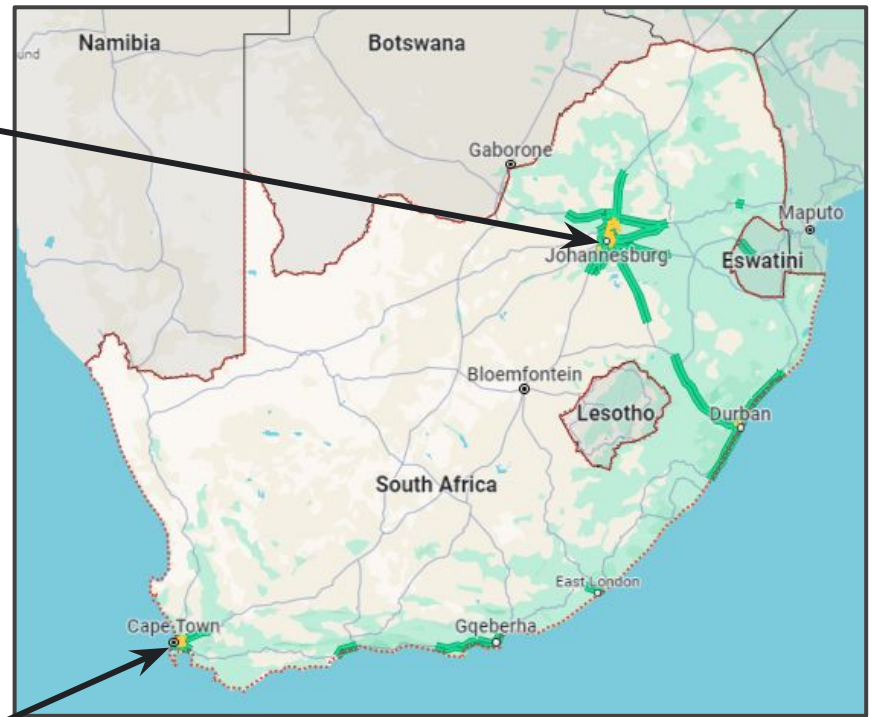


Comparative storytelling - why do it?

1. Storytelling can “bring about **new imaginations** for shaping urban planning”.
2. Comparative approaches are a “powerful means of **disrupting and deepening our understandings** of the world”.
3. Storytelling can “both humanize and politicize learning processes by building new and **collective possibilities** for social change”.

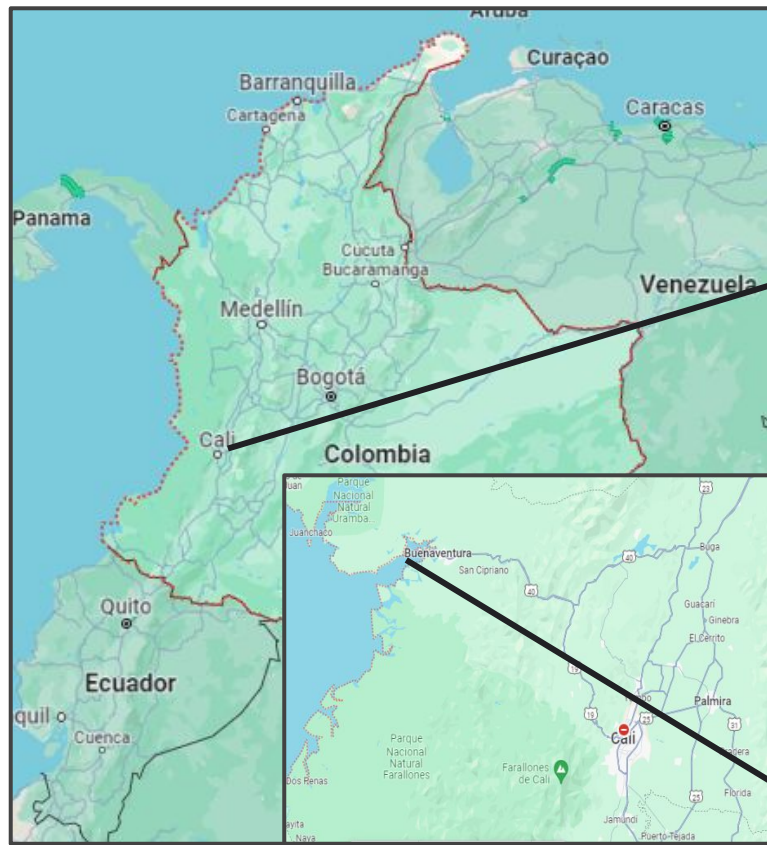
1. Ortiz, C. (2022) ‘Storytelling otherwise: Decolonising storytelling in planning’, Planning Theory.
2. Cooper-Knock, S. J. and Ndlovu, D. Eds. (2021). Liberating comparisons? Reconsidering comparative approaches. York: York Tree Publications.
3. Davidson, B. (2017) Storytelling and evidence-based policy: lessons from the grey literature Humanities and Social Sciences Communications.

Johannesburg



Cape Town





Process Overview



Day 1

- Working together
- What is storytelling
- Creative activities
- River of Life

Day 2

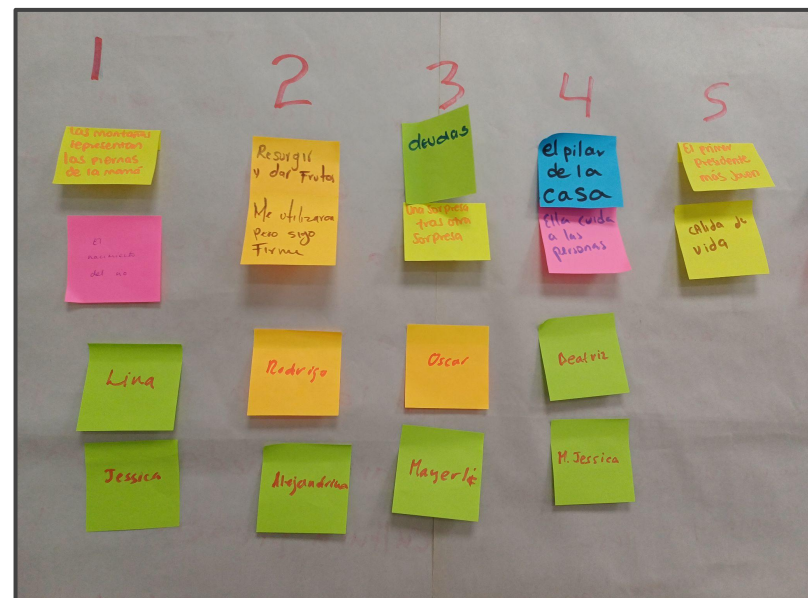
- Story seeds
- Character sketch
- Key scene
- Peer feedback

Day 3

- Formats
- Script writing
- Polishing/editing
- Recording / production

Day 4

- Story showcase
- Reflection
- Celebration



	South Africa	Colombia
Storybooks	5	3
Podcasts	3	2
Films	2	4

(1) New imaginations

- “participants felt part of the process - contributed to the development of the methodology”
- “high level of respect and willingness ...to tell personal stories”
- “we all felt welcome, valued and respected”



(1) New imaginations



"A participant came to me during the workshop to express how the process of the story was the first time he had come to terms with his friend's passing. It was a really important moment that demonstrated the value of reflection and the storytelling process, particularly for people who do not feel that they have the luxury to do so."



(2) Disrupting and deepening our understanding

- “the realities of the communities, not only of crisis ...but also of their experiences and identities”
- “ethical-political dilemmas in the intervention of non-governmental organizations”
- “a fresh perspective on long-standing and entrenched issues”

“participants articulated systemic problems in really personal ways”



Johnny and I built our first home with our own hands because we did not have money for builders. We were so proud of our wood and iron shack.

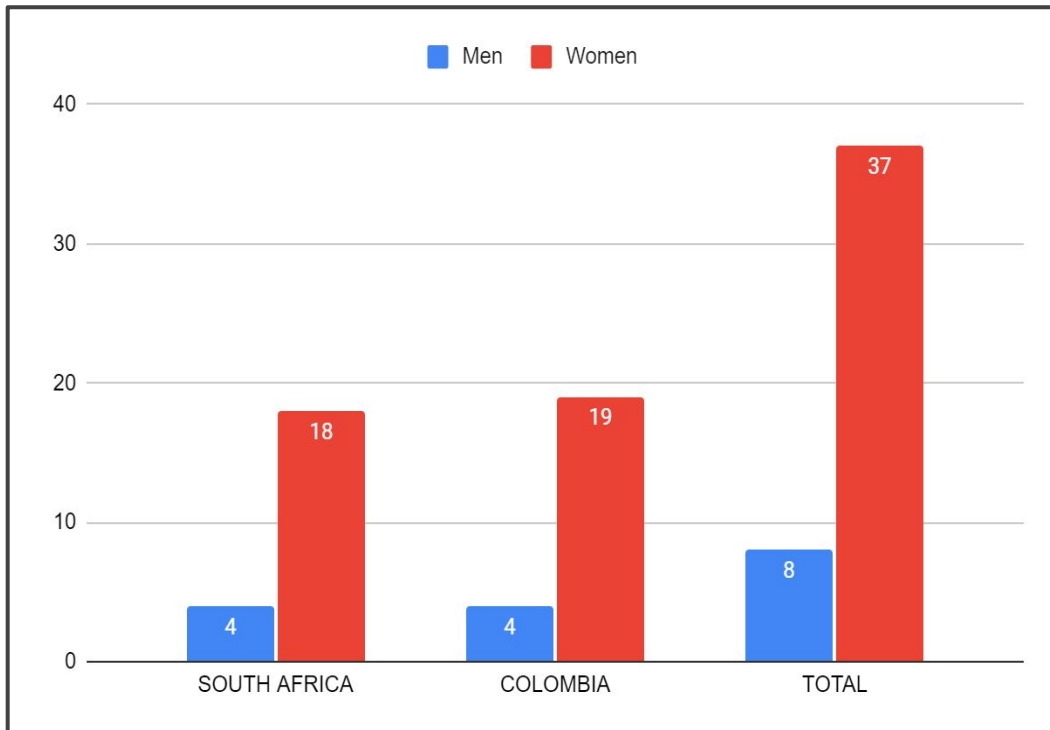
(2) Disrupting and deepening our understanding



In Gloria's Hands

- “has such a clear structure and ‘journey’ to it”
- “I love the magical elements, the voice acting including a combination of languages and the brilliant use of drawings”
- “the message was clear and powerful”
- “it would resonate with many different types of people even if they could not relate to the specific storyline”

(3) Collective possibilities - participants



- “a feeling of support”
- “collaboration and sharing of responsibilities”

BUT

- “there was some tension between participants due to gender... this had to be managed carefully.”
- “participants knew each other ... and so had some preexisting dynamics that caused some tension”

(3) Collective possibilities - facilitators



- "we were able to laugh a lot and be understanding"

BUT

- emotional toll ("frustration", "concern", "sadness" "shock", "pain", "anger")

Should we have...

- "introduced facilitators to participants before the session to build trust" ? (this was done in some cases but not all)
- "visited parts of the city where participants are from" ?

(3) Collective possibilities - process vs outputs



- “make (more) space for political expression”

OR

- “Have more time to develop the final products”

Closing reflections



- Critical reflexivity
- The 'what next' question
- "if research hasn't changed you as a person, then you haven't done it correctly"*

*Wilson, S. (2008) *Research is ceremony: indigenous research methods*. Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing.