

Dossier #07 Two Action-research samples on women in Yunnan and Guatemala

(Brief + presentation outline)

This presentation involves only one book (with many pictures) and one academic essay (report and analytical discussion of the findings for the Guatemala project). So it seems relatively simple. A digital set of copies of the pictures scanned from the Yunnan book is available with Sam or Linda. For the Guatemala project, there is no image available (unless you find it yourself).

Bibliography:

*Guatemala project: "Creative Arts and Photography in Participatory Action Research in Guatemala" by M. Brinton Lykes

(See: *Handbook of action research: participative inquiry and practice*, edited by Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury; Sage 2001; pp. 363-71)

*Yunnan project [Visual Voices, 100 photographs of village China by the women of Yunnan Province 中國雲南農村婦女自我寫真集]

(from the page: http://sweb.cityu.edu.hk/sm4134/Artist_Case%20studies.html)

The point is to compare and contrast the general methods adopted in the two projects.

Key questions:

- (1) What is the role of "action research" in these two projects?
- (2) How does the "process" of their action research differ from one another? (You can compare very simple things about the overall design such as long how, how many people involved, etc., then to other more sophisticated aspects..., such as the activities, the reasoning, etc.)
- (3) What is the role of creative activities in these projects?
- (4) What are the ultimate purposes and concern of the two works?
- (5) How differently do the local subjects involved?
- (6) What are the different aspects of women's everyday life these projects are tackling?
- (7) What are some hidden assumptions or values of the two projects?
- (8) Which project would you appreciate more? Why? What are some of the problems?

Potential Challenge:

The most difficulty aspect of this presentation should be careful reading and comprehension of the Guatemala project because it is long and the language is academic. This requires patient reading. The second aspect of challenge is: Guatemala project is thoroughly self-explanatory, whereas the Yunnan Project only survives as a think picture book which is more a publicity book than serious academic work. But this doesn't mean the Yunnan project is not interesting to read. You therefore need to carefully read between lines and exercise a lot of inductive as well as deductive ability to map a good comparison.