

Editorial

In this issue of the International Journal of Action Research we are pleased to offer the reader a set of articles on action research that originate in quite different academic and cultural contexts. It is probably a sign of the growing vitality of the action research movement, not only in different academic fields, but also in diverse social practices. It may also be taken as a sign that the International Journal of Action Research is reaching a wider audience.

The first article, “Challenges of participation in cross-cultural action research”, deals with the complexities of doing action research in cross-cultural contexts. *Sirkku Männikkö Barbutiu* describes and analyses a one-year educational development project with participants from one country in Sub-Saharan Country and a country in Northern Europe. The article, as the author points out, intends to contribute to the ethical and methodological discussions within participatory action research, in terms of collaboration between subjects with different cultural backgrounds. I would like to highlight the six recommendations derived from the study: a) Making known the understandings and interpretations of action research; b) Recognising the different power traditions; c) Nurturing equal participation, making every voice heard; d) Recognising participants’ differing backgrounds and turning them into an asset; e) Supporting collaborative work among participants; f) Creating trust through openness and transparency. They are recommendations that may as well apply to other action research practices

Then follows the article “Recognising participants’ professional identities through analysis of narratives in educational action research” where *Eleni Katsarou and Vassilis Tsafos* focus on the researchers’ narratives as an important parameter of educational AR development. Through narratives, participants in research describe and interpret their experiences, constructing together the research process. The project developed with school headmasters revealed their reluctance in dealing with the contradictions in their narratives,

not being able or willing to analyse their own narratives and thus broadening their reflective scope. The paper will help researchers to understand the underlying narratives of participants and understand deeper dimensions of communication in action research. Besides, the figure of the “critical friend” in action research also deserves attention.

Layla Al Sager in the article “How Can Teachers Motivate Students to Study Theoretical Modules in Public Relations?” tells us about her teaching experience in public relations (PR) at the University of Bahrain, where she analyses how to motivate students through learning-by-doing. She argues that through this methodology she was able to increase the students’ “wants” and “needs”. Action research, according the author, facilitates the co-operation between teacher and students, empowering the latter to take part in designing their course objectives and activities. Although the study was carried out in a specific public relations course, it could as well serve as inspiration for teaching in other fields.

The fourth article titled “There and back again: International Collaboration for Participatory Health Researchers’ journeys to Evidence Based Practice and Practice Based Evidence,” by *Wendy Madsen*, outlines the stories of eight members of the International Collaboration for Participatory Health Research (ICPHR): how they came to embrace participatory action research within a health context; challenges they faced; and how they came together to strengthen and develop their understanding of their research practice. The author explores key issues in participatory action research, such as integrity and rigour, the latter related to community relevance and impact. It is also an account of the creation of an important international action research network devoted to a specific field of practice.

This issue also includes the review of the book *Action research for democracy: new ideas and perspectives from Scandinavia*, edited by E. Gunnarsson and H.P. Hansen. The reviewers, *Telmo Adams*, *Paloma Daudt* and *Carolina Nunes Ramos*, call attention to the fact that the deficits of democracy, which is the backdrop of the book’s arguments, reach beyond Scandinavia, although with different nuances. After carefully analysing the content, they conclude that the Scandinavian perspectives have much in common with their own experience, such as the search for methodological rigour, the

critical, ethical and political perspective linked to the rise in quality of the scientific standard, the involvement of participants in the entire process articulating the educational dimension, and the benefit to the subjects.

At the end, we would like to announce to our readers that, beginning in 2017, the *International Journal of Action Research* will have a new “home”. Barbara Budrich Publishers (Verlag Barbara Budrich) a well-known publishing house based in Germany will take on the responsibility to publish the journal. We, the editors, thank Rainer Hampp for his efficient and friendly companionship as our publisher in recent years, and reaffirm our commitment to maintain and improve the quality standard of the International Journal of Action Research.

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Editor-in-chief