

Editorial

The present issue of the *International Journal of Action Research* offers to the reader four articles from different fields of expertise, confirming again the relevance of Action Research for those who attempt and dare to go beyond what Boaventura de Sousa Santos, a Portuguese sociologist, identifies as *extractivistic* research, where experts collect, analyse and then share with their peers the “new” knowledge. There is today a worldwide movement where, under sometimes different nomenclature, conventional academic wisdom and research practice are questioned as a recognition of reductionisms that came under the name of universality and objectivity.

The first article focuses on innovation in a global high tech company. The selected participants, one team from Sydney and other from New York, were not those who could tell a success story about how to innovate, but were those who had failed to produce any technical innovation over the last three years. The Action Research sought to achieve technical innovation outcomes and analyze the social dynamics that facilitated any technical innovation achieved through this process. The basic insight generated by the data collected over the spirals of Action Research within each of the two teams is that *social innovation precedes technical innovation*. As the authors highlight and argue, leadership plays a key role when it comes to innovation. They then identify four leadership practices that laid the foundation for technical creativity and innovation: the facilitation of interpersonal empathy and mutual identification among team members; the inculcation of mutual openness to the correction or counsel of others, irrespective of status or role; the development of an authentic ‘negotiated order’, and the framing of interpersonal confrontation in positive terms,

Then follows an article that discusses thirteen academic projects undertaken by undergraduate and graduate students on the behalf of *Casa Assistencial Amor e Esperança-CAAE* (Home Care Love and Hope), a Brazilian

NGO that helps poor families with children with cancer and other non-communicable diseases. The article shows how an Action Research approach in a course called Project Management can bring students face to face with social reality, involving them in developing projects that bring direct benefit to those in need which, in the case of the poor families that have to look for assistance in big cities, can mean an adequate shelter. The acquisition of an air conditioning or the development of a website are achievements that point to learning with a far broader scope.

The third article is related to in-practice teacher education in the city of São Paulo Brazil. It refers to two important, and quite symbolic, places related to Paulo Freire's work. First it refers to his experience as the city's secretary of education, where continuing education for teachers was a high priority. The methodology of thematic investigation goes back to his first experiences in the 1960th, and is today considered a landmark for action and participatory research in Latin America. In this article the readers will find a good presentation of this methodology which, as the authors point out, operates within the paradigm of Action Research. The second place is the Paulo Freire *Cathedra*, situated in the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP), where Paulo Freire taught after returning from exile in 1979. The authors present and discuss the development of a process of continuing teacher education that starts with the critical reading of reality and leads to the identification of generative themes. Some of the questions stated at the end of the article show the relevance of Action Research in the field of continuing education for teachers, at a time when education becomes itself a commodity: "What power does a counter-hegemonic teacher education approach have? What actions can be administered within teacher education to allow better understanding and to oppose the policies and practices of dehumanizing educational practices?"

The last article of this issue could be understood as an invitation and challenge for Action Researchers to revisit their epistemological assumptions. As the author puts it, when identifying his philosophical sources: "The choice of these philosophers is the fruit of my own inquiry, rather than any attempt to be universal or comprehensive. Indeed I hope that this article will stimulate others to investigate and elaborate more extensive philosophical foundations

of practical and other forms of knowing for Action Research.” In the context of an extended epistemology, he identifies and explains four characteristics of practical knowing: the everyday concerns of human living; how practical knowing is socially derived and constructed; how its uniqueness in each situation needs to be attended to and how practical action is driven by values and is fundamentally an ethical process.

Welcome again to the *International Journal of Action Research*.

Danilo R. Streck

Editor-in-chief