

Editorial

The present issue of the *International Journal of Action Research* presents practices of action research from a variety of social and professional contexts, evidencing the vitality of the action research movement. One can find today, in many places, a growing interest in action research due as much to the critique of conventional research methodologies, which today has been largely assimilated by the academic community, as to the possibility of experiencing new and alternative procedures to do research with people. The above mentioned vitality springs from the creativity that is not only possible but comes as a natural byproduct when the researcher divests him/herself from the role as a sole knower and producer of knowledge about reality and about people.

The first article, by *Mahesh Poudyal, Gun Lidestav, Per Sandström and Stefan Sandström*, is about the use of action research to introduce a Participatory-Geographic Information System (PGIS) as a tool to help with forest management plans and as a tool for communication between management and the shareholders in Vilhelmina Upper Forest Common in northern Sweden. Forest commons, as interestingly explained in the article, are private forest holdings owned in common through “shares” and jointly managed by an elected board and a professional manager (employee). In this study, the authors looked at the state of some of the major forest commons, particularly at the low and declining shareholder engagement in the management and governance of these commons and studied with action research methodology the impact of the use of a computer-based system to manage the commons. The conclusions point to a more pro-active role of the board in the communication of the shareholders, and an increased level of participation among previously passive shareholders.

Next, there is the study “Developing health programmes for refugees based on participatory action research: an experience from São Paulo, Brazil”

by *Carmen L A de Santana and Francisco Lotufo Neto*. The issue of refugees is today a major global challenge. Millions of people are obliged to leave their homelands and try to find a place where to live a decent life away from violence. Brazil is home to the largest refugee population in South America, comprising approximately 5208 people (based on statistics of 2013) from 79 different countries. Although numerically rather small, this population deserves special attention due to the impact of the dramatic shifts in their lives. Based on a study with refugees, using various participatory techniques, the professionals developed a series of therapeutic programmes, among them, art therapy groups for refugees at Caritas, seminars on African culture, and psychiatry and psychological care for refugees at a transcultural clinic located at University of São Paulo.

Gunilla Albinsson's article "Development-oriented Learning in a Project Team. Applying an Interactive Research Approach" is about a joint learning process where practicable and theoretical knowledge are in the foreground. The empirical data derive from an EU project that focuses on a group of course leaders and their experiences of carrying out a training programme targeted for a group of individuals with a weak position on the labour market. The author concludes that by communicating experiences and thoughts that could be attributed to interaction patterns in social relations, communication structures, emotions, influence and power, the course leaders and the researcher jointly created a learning environment where reflection, understanding and development-oriented learning were of vital importance. The study ends with the research question of how learning, knowledge, practical experiences and competence can be developed into being interaction processes, in daily practice and in professional work

In "Dialogic feedforward in group coaching" *Helle Alrø and Poul Nørgård Dahl* present a dialogic approach to group coaching developed from an action research project in an Elderly Care in Sweden. The four steps in this approach are observing, reacting, clarifying and wondering. Feedforward, as the authors explain, as opposed to feedback, is prospectively investigating not (yet) realised matters. Dialogic feedforward is thus an investigative process where the coach tries to make the group reflect in a clarifying

and wondering manner. The process has been particularly helpful in investigating and connecting to the ideas of one another

While working in a Brazilian university from Central Brazil, *Ruth Pavan, Maria Cristina Lima Paniago and José Licínio Backes* reflect on the possibilities and limits of action research with a population from a very different culture or, as it is the case with the Indian population in Brazil, cultures. In the article “Action research and intercultural dialogue: an experience with Brazilian Indians” the authors present some of their learnings with an approach of “critical interculturality” which questions the pattern of power that has been built around the ethnical-racial difference and how it serves the maintenance of submission and subalternisation of certain groups (power coloniality). Action research, in this perspective, can bring an important contribution to the decolonial studies.

At the end of the issue there is the report on *III International Symposium of Action and Participatory research* that took place in Bogotá (Colombia), from June 22 to 25, 2015. *Cheron Zanini Moretti and Danilo R. Streck* inform the reader about some of the key issues discussed, as well as communicate the *spirit* that animated participants during these days. Given the impact of the work of Orlando Fals Borda in Latin America, and particularly in Colombia, it is understandable why the symposium was also organised as a way of paying homage to him. The papers were largely centered on methodological creativity, and the discussions called attention to the importance of situating research practices and projects within the present global social and economic context.

The Colombian symposium is part of an initiative of the *International Journal of Action Research*. Since 2011 conferences have been organised on an itinerant basis every second year. The first one took place in Porto Alegre (Brazil), in 2011; the second in Copenhagen (Denmark), in 2013; the third in Bogotá (Colombia), in 2015. The fourth one will be held in Karlsruhe (Germany), in 2017. Soon we will be glad to share the invitation from our German colleagues.

Danilo R. Streck

Editor-in-chief