

Editorial

With this issue of the *International Journal of Action Research* we join the worldwide movement celebrating the centennial of Paulo Freire's birthday (1921–2021). The Brazilian educator, who started his educational work with an innovative literacy methodology in the Northeast of his home country, soon also became a reference for participatory research methodologies in Latin America and elsewhere. That is because in his work he used to see teaching/educating and investigating as dimensions, although with distinct roles and characteristics, of the same act of knowing. The investigation of the generative themes and words for learning how to read were to be identified not only by an interdisciplinary team of professionals (sociologists, linguists, psychologists, and others), but with the participation of members of the local communities. It was a process that went beyond listing words while trying to understand how people think and construct their worldview.

Doing research, in the Freirean perspective, means pronouncing the world, which is always a collective endeavour that involves action and reflection. Reading the world, as a prerogative we have as humans, actually precedes the reading of the word. That's why alphabetisation or education in general cannot be reduced to a merely technical activity. There is a political and ethical dimension built into the process of "saying one's word". This applies to research, particularly to action research. From Freire we also learn that there is a dialogical imperative in action and participatory research. Dialogue, he tells us, has some preconditions that research shares with education, such as trust in people as companions in the process of understanding and changing the world, love to people and the world, and hope that allows working towards a different and better future for all.

In this issue we present an interview with Richard Ennals, whose experience exemplifies these preconditions of trust, love and hope, and has witnessed the development of the *International Journal of Action Research* as a member of the editorial team. In the interview we have an account of the many facets of Richard's professional activities in various parts of the world. He grants us a testimony of how to learn from and with different cultural situations, and how to make sense of life and deal creatively in difficult situations. Life, as he tells us, can be itself a project of action research, of acting to understand and to change. As editors of this issue and interviewers, we thank Richard for the interview, as well as for his collaboration with the journal over these more than two decades.

The three articles that integrate this issue come again from different fields of practice and cultural contexts. Pablo Costamagna and Eleonora Spinelli, in "Systematisation of experiences within the framework of the pedagogical approach towards territorial development: a contribution to action research from the Latin American tradition", attempt to link different approaches to action research by sharing a concept that holds an important place in the processes related to participatory action research in Latin America. Drawing on concepts of Paulo Freire, Orlando Fals Borda and other Latin American researchers, systematisation of experiences indicates that it is a particular research method generated from popular education and social work, and that it shares the same commitments regarding social transformation.

Besides the theoretical foundations of systematisation of experiences, the article presents and analyzes didactically the 7 moments of systematisation of experiences in Territorial Development: 1) Gather the systematisation team; 2) The definition of what to systematise (core of systematisation); 3) Reconstruction of experience (Memory); 4) Analysis and in-

terpretation of events: learning from dialogue processes in systematisation; 5) Development of transformative proposals: stage of co-construction; 6) Learning from experience: construction of new knowledge and the “return to academia”; 7) The communication of the experience. Action researchers from different traditions will find important insights for their practice.

The next two articles address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in action research. The article “A Creative Framework of Online Teaching of Public Relations Modules during Covid-19 Pandemic: An Action Research Approach,” by Layla AlSaqr, uses a reflective action research methodology to improve the on-line teaching of skill-oriented modules of public relations at the university-level in Bahrain during Covid-19. The instructor/researcher developed two action research cycles where she planned and implemented new teaching strategies based on the students’ needs, observed, evaluated, and reflected. The paper finds that action research has been useful in creating a collaborative relationship between the instructor and the student and has helped to reflect on the e-learning process of public relations modules during Covid-19 pandemic. The study recommends that the instructor should develop a strategic framework to develop e-learning during Covid-19 pandemic taking into consideration the opportunities and challenges provided by virtual teaching. Teachers as well as researchers concerned with action research will benefit from Layla AlSager’s experience.

Zainoriza Zainun and Mohd Syafiq Aiman Mat Noor, in “The implementation of a bakery sales project during the Covid-19 pandemic to improve the employability of Semai indigenous students”, describe and analyse an action research process by running a bakery sales project with Semai indigenous students, in Malaysia. The authors attempt to address the following research question: How can the practitioner enhance her practice as a special education teacher of Specific Vocational Skills (Bread Making), to improve the employability of Semai indigenous students through a bakery sales project? The analysis makes clear the difficulty of teaching vocational skills during the pandemic of Covid-19, when teaching went online. It was particularly difficult for the practitioner to assess the level of employability gained by the students. At the same time the authors identify possibilities that may help to redesign teaching procedures after the pandemic.

In this issue of the *International Journal of Action Research* we are also glad to announce the continuation of the journal with a new editor-in-chief. Miren Larrea, who co-edited this issue, will take on the position as editor-in-chief in January 2022.

Danilo Streck

Miren Larrea