

## Legacy and future perspectives of action research

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This is a sad editorial to write as Olav Eikeland, one of the members of our team of editors, died recently. These weeks we have tried to honour our colleague and moreover, to explore ways to share his work and make his legacy accessible. That is why this editorial is followed not only by an obituary, written by Hans Christian Garmann Johnsen and Richard Ennals, but also by an article that Olav Eikeland published in *International Journal of Action Research (IJAR)* in 2007, entitled “Why should mainstream social researchers be interested in AR”. Davydd Greenwood writes an introduction to this article, which he describes as “an invitation, not to remember Olav and move on, but to engage or re-engage with his comprehensive critique of careless commonplaces often found in writing and practice in action research”.

In this context the editors of *IJAR* have reflected on how a generation that inspired and supported the initiation and development of the journal is no longer part of this endeavour. This is happening all around the world, and a special mention was made about the legacy of Carlos Rodrigues Brandão in Latin America. He wanted to change the world to make it a more beautiful and dignified place and, together with Orlando Fals Borda and Paulo Freire, he inspired and promoted an approach to research that not only leaves scientific neutrality behind, but positions research with those whose knowledge-power is not recognised as legitimate, valid or relevant.

There is thus a generational change happening in action research in general and in *IJAR* too. We are challenged to take care of the legacy of those who developed action research before us, while giving the floor to young generations that will bring new perspectives and adapt action research to the challenges of the future. That is why, in this issue we interview a young action researcher who participated in the *IJAR* 2020 event while he was a PhD student and now, after finishing his PhD, publishes his results in the journal. Leon Staines is an example of how journals can be more than a means to publishing and can become communities where we can learn and evolve together.

The first original article of this issue connects with the reflection on the role of different generations in action research. Isabella Paoletti, Elisabet Cedersund and Kostantin Economou, in their paper “Moral awareness and different orders of relevance in participatory research with older people and professionals” address the involvement of older people in action research. The paper is interesting not only because we can learn about older people and their specific circumstances in action research processes, but also because the authors reflect about their own role and transformation, addressing how their moral awareness developed through the process. The article presents cases from Sweden, Italy and Portugal.

The second article complements the previous by focusing on youth as participants in action research. In this paper entitled “Engaging youth in the local environment. Promoting sustainability action competence in Danish high school teaching through citizen social sci-

ence” the authors Cathrine M. S. Winther and Michael Søgaaard Jørgensen share their experience with high school student. The article is included in the thematic series on action research and citizen social science, based on the YouCount project. For an introduction to this series, I recommend reading the Guest Editorial by Patricia Canto and Reidun Norvoll in the previous issue of this journal. This paper specifically addresses, through rich graphic material, the experiences with a sustainability actionable approach in a Danish high school, and how it influenced young people’s understanding of the local environment.

The third original article is written by Alexandra David, Judith Terstriep and Silke Steinberg and entitled “Action Research: A Participatory Approach to Improve Measures of Labour Market Integration of Refugees”. It illustrates the contribution of action research to co-creating measures for the labour market integration of refugees. The action research process it shares took place in Germany, shortly after the so-called European “refugee crises” during 2015–2017. The authors conclude that action research is valuable for collaboratively developing measures to integrate refugees into the labour market, as it recognises refugees as active participants who take ownership and responsibility for improving their own circumstances. However, it also poses challenging questions like: as scholars, are we pushing certain views and actions because we think it is good for the refugees, or because the refugees think it is of importance for them?

Finally, in the fourth article entitled “Participatory Action Research for Urban Connectivity: Bridging Inequality in Metropolitan Monterrey” we see again a case where the community and the action researcher mutually transform. Leon Staines, whose interview is also part of this issue, has worked in the context of urban planning and has used action research to transform these processes by moving from government and expert-led methods to dialogic and inclusive ones. However, his main lessons learnt do not exclusively address the relevance of methods and instruments in the process. He shares his own transformation process by showing us how he evolved from having an extractive stance, towards a co-generative way that helped him to position himself *in place* and not just *looking at the place*.

With the book review of this issue, we go back to the idea of honouring the legacy of authors that have inspired us. We do so with a review by Telmo Adams of a book published by Alfonso Torres Carrillo where he writes about Orlando Fals Borda, Paulo Freire and Hugo Zemelman.

I hope that readers will enjoy our effort to connect past and future, young and old, community and self.