

From Participatory Research to the Co-construction of Actions – Reflections on how to Reinforce Action Research for Social Inclusion

Isabel Heck

Abstract: An important part of the action research literature focuses on the participatory dimension of the research process and is much less explicit on the connection of research and action or on how researchers contribute to tangible transformations, in particular outside organizational or education settings. Drawing from seven years of experience as an action researcher within an anti-poverty organization dedicated to improving living conditions in a low-income neighborhood in Montreal (Canada), this article seeks to enhance our comprehension of how action researchers can more effectively contribute to transformational action. Our study identifies four primary functions of research within the examined model and underscores three core characteristics to strengthen the integration of knowledge production and action. These characteristics encompass expanding the role of researchers to actively participate in both the co-development and implementation of action; engaging in long-term commitments and partnerships in a given setting, preferably being even a researcher based in the setting; and fostering collaborations with universities. By elucidating these key elements, this article intends to offer insights into improving the impact of action research, ultimately advancing our ability to contribute to transformative change for more inclusive and sustainable societies.

Keywords: Action research, co-construction, reflective practice, social change, social inclusion, Montreal, Canada

De la investigación participativa a la co-construcción de acciones – Reflexiones sobre cómo reforzar la investigación acción para la inclusión social

Resumen: Una parte importante de la literatura sobre investigación-acción se centra en la dimensión participativa del proceso de investigación y es mucho menos explícita en la conexión entre la investigación y la acción o en cómo las personas investigadoras contribuyen a transformaciones tangibles, en particular fuera de los entornos organizacionales o educativos. A partir de siete años de experiencia como investigadora en la acción dentro de una organización contra la pobreza dedicada a mejorar las condiciones de vida en un vecindario de bajos ingresos en Montreal (Canadá), este artículo busca mejorar nuestra comprensión de cómo las personas investigadoras en la acción pueden contribuir de manera más efectiva a la transformación. Nuestro estudio identifica cuatro funciones principales de la investigación dentro del modelo examinado y subraya tres características centrales para fortalecer la integración de la producción de conocimiento y la acción. Estas características abarcan ampliar el papel de las personas investigadoras para que participen activamente tanto en el codesarrollo como en la implementación de acciones; participar en compromisos y asociaciones a largo plazo en un entorno determinado, preferiblemente como persona investigadora local; y fomentar cola-

boraciones con las universidades. Al dilucidar estos elementos clave, este artículo pretende ofrecer ideas para mejorar el impacto de la investigación-acción y, en última instancia, mejorar nuestra capacidad de contribuir al cambio transformador para sociedades más inclusivas y sostenibles.

Palabras clave: Investigación-acción, co-construcción, práctica reflexiva, cambio social, inclusión social, Montreal, Canadá

De la recherche participative à la coconstruction d'actions – Pistes de réflexion pour renforcer la recherche-action pour l'inclusion sociale

Résumé: Une part considérable de la littérature sur la recherche-action est axée sur la dimension participative du processus de recherche et aborde peu le lien entre la recherche et l'action ou sur la façon dont les chercheur·e·s contribuent à des transformations tangibles. Cela est particulièrement le cas pour les recherches qui se situent en dehors des contextes organisationnels ou éducatifs. Cet article vise à améliorer notre compréhension de comment les chercheur·e·s peuvent contribuer plus efficacement à l'action transformatrice, en nous appuyant sur notre expérience comme chercheuse ancrée au sein d'un organisme de lutte contre la pauvreté à Montréal (Canada). Nous identifions quatre fonctions principales de la recherche dans le modèle examiné et soulignons trois caractéristiques clef pour renforcer l'imbrication entre la production de connaissances et de l'action. Ces caractéristiques consistent à élargir le rôle des chercheur·e·s jusqu'à l'élaboration et à la mise en œuvre d'actions, à investir des engagements et des partenariats avec des acteurs terrain à long terme, pouvant aller jusqu'à un ancrage même de la recherche sur le terrain, et, finalement, à bâtir des partenariats avec les universités. En abordant ces éléments clés, cet article entend offrir des perspectives pour améliorer les retombées de la recherche-action et renforcer ainsi notre capacité à contribuer à transformations sociales vers un monde plus inclusif et durable.

Mots-clefs: Recherche-action, coconstruction, réflexivité, changement social, inclusion sociale, Montréal, Canada

1. Introduction

The goal of action research is to resolve a specific problem in a given social setting through collaborative and iterative processes between knowledge production and transformative action. Action research “ultimately exists to enhance the capacity of everyone to play a significant role in determining the conditions of their own lives” (Fricke et al., 2022:15), underscoring a commitment for empowerment, democracy and social justice. While there is a great variety of approaches in action research (Reason and Bradbury, 2015; Anadon and Savoie-Zajc, 2007), most have in common to be much more explicit on the research than the action component. There is detailed literature of how to engage communities as active participants in knowledge production through participatory methods (such as Gelineau et al., 2024; Skelton et al., 2024; Fanjoy and Bragg, 2019; Fine and Torre, 2021; Larsson and

Nordmark, 2016; Tossavainen, 2017). Often-cited key elements for success of action research are participative processes through the different steps of the research starting with the needs of the stakeholders, but also fostering trust and long-term partnerships between researchers and stakeholders. Many of these studies highlight the transformative experience and empowerment reported by people engaged in Participatory Action Research (PAR). Tailoring research processes where experiential knowledge is valued contributes to greater epistemic justice (Fricker, 2007; Godrie and Dos Santos, 2017), where different types of knowledge count, in particular those of knowledge bearers whose voices are rarely considered in decision-making. Although the attempts to not only understand, but also address complex social problems are certainly widespread, a survey of peer-reviewed articles on participatory approaches to knowledge production to create change in 2018, revealed that “[o]nly 14 of the 236 articles (6%) stated a specific action or outcome that occurred as a result of [collaborative change research, evaluation and design]” (Busch et al., 2019: 15). Some action research projects certainly have tangible outcomes beyond the research process, leading to concrete changes in organizations and territorial development (Fricke et al., 2022), while others, like ATD Fourth World, exert significant political influence (Skelton et al., 2024). However, there is not only a lack of attention to outcomes in the literature, but also to sharing knowledge on how to leverage the contribution of knowledge mobilization for concrete and tangible changes in society.

Theoretically, there is an iterative process between knowledge production, change and reflection on the process, however, many obstacles come in the way to implement these cycles in practice. Bringing about change is always a complex endeavor, and even more so while working outside organizational settings. While working on the transformation of a neighborhood and even more broadly, improving living conditions, there is not a team of directors who can approve or not the suggestions made by the employees as in organizational action research, nor teachers who can change their methods in the classroom as in educational action research. There is very little control over the environment and the actors, while working in community settings. In addition, the conditions in which community organizations operate, with limited and mostly oriented funding and often pressured to respond to urgent need of citizens, are another hurdle in working for deeper systemic change (Heck et al., 2022; Imagine Canada, 2021; Couturier and Fortin, 2021). How can we adjust our roles and processes to facilitate that the epistemic power gained in participatory research by equity-seeking groups is retained beyond the research process?

In this paper, we would like to contribute to the discussion of how we can, as action researchers, facilitate the implementation of change as a result of action research. Based on the experience of the Parole d’excluEs’ University Incubator (IUPE), a practice-oriented action-research unit, linked to an anti-poverty organization in Montreal, we have identified four functions of research that are linked to three underlying core characteristics that facilitate the implementation of change linked to a knowledge mobilization process. After a presentation of the methods used and the context of our case, we will present the four functions through concrete examples and then discuss the underlying characteristics that allow for a stronger integration of research and action. We will close with limits and perspectives on how to go further.

2. Methods

The findings of this article are largely based on the author's experience of more than seven years leading Parole d'excluEs' University Incubator and working as a community-based researcher in the eponymous nonprofit organization, from 2013 to 2021.

At Parole d'excluEs, we have, over the years, systematized the model and contributions of the University Incubator (Heck, 2017, Fontan & Heck, 2017; Pozzebon, Tello-Rozas & Heck, 2021) and engaged in many conversations on action research and community-based research on a local, national and international level, which greatly helped us to understand both the specificities of the model and the parallels with other action-research initiatives. We have carried out a large number of studies, some of which had a strong reflective component on the role of research. For instance, we have analyzed the roles and contributions of different stakeholders in the projects that emerged from Parole d'excluEs' model, to better understand how residents, practitioners and researchers participate in the different dimensions and stages of nine different projects (Heck and Socquet-Juglard, 2019). Some elements, such as the four main functions of research, have been elaborated in Heck (2017) and presented and discussed many times both with community members and academics engaged in action research. Two years after leaving the position at Parole d'excluEs, we have gained a greater distance to the experience and added the three core characteristics. A preliminary version of this article has been shared in early 2024 with several staff members, stakeholders and researchers, their comments have been integrated in the final version of the paper, some of which as quotes from a group discussion.¹

3. Genesis and Evolution of the IUPE Model

Parole d'excluEs' University Incubator was founded by Jean-Marc Fontan and Joseph-Pierre Ulysses, professors of two different universities in Montreal, to support the anti-poverty organization Parole d'excluEs. Parole d'excluEs (litt: the word of the excluded) itself was founded in 2006 in Montreal, Canada, by a collective of activists led by Patrice Rodriguez, a pioneer of civil society organizations in Montreal. Their motive was to develop innovative ways of fighting against social exclusion and poverty by encouraging people with lived experience to speak out and take action collectively, proposing thus an alternative to the dominant model of service delivery, in which people with lived experience of poverty are rarely included in decision making. Just as the feminist movement cannot be imagined without the participation of women, in Parole d'excluEs' (PE) vision, citizens with lived experience of poverty and social exclusion need to be at the forefront, and their knowledge and experience need to be heard to bring along transformations towards a more inclusive and equal society.

1 We would like to thank first and foremost Florianne Socquet-Juglard with whom the idea of this text was developed while still working at Parole d'excluEs. We also wish to thank Jean-Marc Fontan, Vincent van Schendel, Grégoire Autin, Mathilde Manon, Nomez Najac, Marie-Claude Fournier and Hoda Essassi, for their discussions, testimonials and/or comments that nurtured the analysis of this article, as well as Miren Larrea and Werner Fricke for their valuable feedback on earlier versions of the paper. All errors or omissions are solely the responsibility of the author.

The centrality of experiential knowledge starts with how PE, as an exogenous actor, identifies its priorities. When settling in a neighborhood, the organization builds its agenda on community priorities: The first step is to invite the neighborhood's residents to take part in participatory action research where they share their needs and aspirations. The research findings present a collective vision of what the community wants to transform and are validated in a citizens² assembly, to make sure that they resonate with the community. Residents are then invited to mobilize and take action to tackle the challenges identified in the study. From there, projects are codeveloped jointly with the citizens, practitioners and researchers, with the support of Parole d'excluEs, and if needed, subsequent cycles of knowledge production and action are initiated. Many initiatives have emerged from this approach, including an alternative food system, a daycare facility, collective outdoor spaces, a citizens' health space, artistic productions, and projects and direct action to fight against the digital divide (Parole d'excluEs, 2019).

Previously established in three low-income areas in Montreal, Parole d'excluEs has centered its activities in the Montreal-North neighborhood since 2017. The sector in which the organization was most invested during the period we participated in the project is the Northeastern district of Montreal-North, a sector of about 10'000 inhabitants characterized by a young and ethnically diverse population, but also by high poverty rates (Statistics Canada, 2023). The ratio of individuals without high school diplomas, and the number of single-parent families in the Northeast area of Montreal-North are also significantly higher than Montreal's figures (53% and 37% vs. 31% and 15% for Montreal, Statistics Canada, 2023). Montreal-North, and in particular its Northeastern District often make headlines in the news associated with gang-related gun violence (Vogler, 2020). The organization has a physical presence in the neighborhoods through community centres located in housing projects, which are the main space to develop collective action (Pozzebbon et al., 2021; Fontan, 2017, for a description of the PE model).

The idea of integrating researchers in the PE model was inspired by Brazilian Technological Incubator of Popular Cooperatives, which the founder of Parole d'excluEs encountered during a sabbatical period in Brazil and Argentina. However, the mission and model had to be adapted to the Montrealer context, as unlike Brazilian incubators, PE did not work with already organized collectives, but rather tried to spark citizens' engagement. Jean-Marc Fontan, co-founder of the University Incubator of Parole d'excluEs explains:

“J’ai proposé [à Patrice, le fondateur de PE] de faire un Incubateur universitaire Parole d'excluEs, de mettre sur pied une structure en appui au travail qui se faisait sur le terrain. On était en amont [de la mobilisation] mais eux [au Brésil], ils ne pouvaient pas nous aider sur comment travailler et c’est là qu’il a fallu inventer tout. Donc on est retourné à la base : à ATD Quart Monde avec le croisement des savoirs, moi avec la toute la recherche qui a été faite sur le mouvement pragmatiste aux États-Unis, pour comprendre qu’est ce qui se passait dans l’action, ce qui m’a amené aux premières expériences des University Settlements. Et là on s’est rendu compte qu’au fond on était en train de redécouvrir des choses que des gens, presque un siècle [plus tôt], avaient commencé à travailler parce qu’ils jugeaient que c’était comme ça qu’il fallait travailler. C’est un peu ça la formation, la dimension universitaire de l’IUPE, qui s’est greffée à une intuition qui était portée par un acteur.”³

2 Residents and citizens are used interchangeably in this article.

3 “I suggested [to Patrice, PE’s founder] that we set up a Parole d'excluEs university incubator, a structure to support the work being done in the field. We were ahead [of the mobilization] so they [in Brazil] couldn’t help us on how to work and that’s when we [realized we] had to invent everything. So we went back to basics: to ATD Fourth World with [their approach of] merging knowledge, myself with all the research that had been done on the pragmatist movement in the United States, to understand what was happening in action, which led me to the first experiences of the University Settlements. That’s when we realized that we were basically rediscovering things

Studying these different approaches to knowledge production within the community (Longtin, 2010; Fontan, Longtin et al., 2014, Cormier, 2012) helped to articulate the epistemological posture of the IUPE, valuing experiential, practical and academic knowledge and underscoring the importance of collaborative and engaged research with communities to support transformative action.

In the first years (2007–2013), the IUPE thus was led by sociologist Jean-Marc Fontan, a university professor with very strong expertise in community-based research. He mobilized other academics as well as students to be part of the unit. Although many of its members were very engaged in the field, the academics' other responsibilities did not allow them to be as fully present to train and oversee the students and interns and adapt the research process to the evolving needs and agendas of the community. After years of searching for funding, a grant from philanthropy led to the creation of the position of a community-based researcher, and eventually a research section, within the organization Parole d'excluEs (Fontan and Heck, 2017) in 2013. This opened up new possibilities and a more organic way to co-develop research, departing from a dynamic where PE asked for studies where results were not always translated into actions, as Fontan recalls:

“PE n'était pas [toujours] capable de prendre les résultats qu'on avait. Il y avait de l'apprentissage à faire, mais c'est comme s'ils ne savaient pas trop quoi faire avec ça. La jonction organique ne s'est réellement faite que quand toi [l'auteur de l'article] tu es arrivée.”⁴

4. Roles and Functions of Research in the IUPE Model

Having a research unit within the organization strongly contributed to shift the IUPE to a community-led unit, with the academics being in a role of support (*ibid*). This configuration is quite rare; a global survey of university-community partnerships by Hall et al. (2015) has shown that academics tend to conserve leadership in community-based research projects. The current situation is in contrast with the roots of PAR, strongly embedded in social movements and civil society organizations in the South (Hall and Tandon, 2017).

Being based in a community organization rather than a university setting means that our daily collaborators are practitioners, activists and people directly experiencing issues of poverty and exclusion. This dynamic fundamentally alters our ways of working, as our primary aim is to contribute to social transformation through knowledge production and mobilization. It shifts our research posture and practice echoing closely Fals Borda's (1996) approach of participatory action research.

Furthermore, not being bound to academic duties gives us considerable leeway to orient the design, rhythm, modes of knowledge production and dissemination, all aimed at facilitating its use by social actors striving for tangible change. Moreover, our active presence in the field beyond the studies, in places of consultation, action and reflection is a very important leverage to facilitate the appropriation of the results. On one hand, we are not facing the

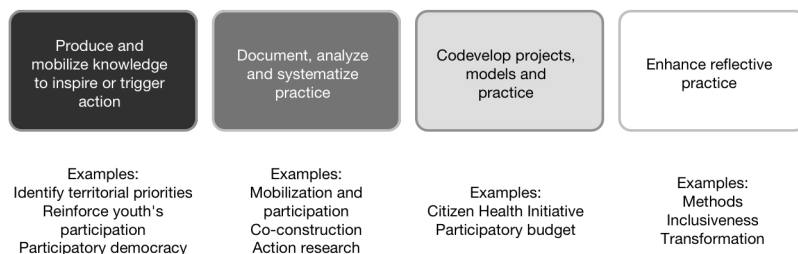
that people had started to work on, almost a century [earlier], because they felt that was the right thing to do. This is how the university dimension of IUPE developed, grafted on to an intuition that was held by an actor.”

4 “PE wasn't [always] able to take the results we had. There was learning to be done, but it's like they didn't quite know what to do with it. The organic connection didn't really happen until you [the article's author] came along.”

problems of most academics who secure funding for carrying out participatory action research, but once the participatory process of knowledge production is over, there are very limited funds left for the research team to participate in implementing the changes. On the other hand, there is little room for us to engage with scientific literature on action research, which greatly contributes to the problem of the “single case” (Gustavsen, 2003) and ignorance of other methods. To remediate this, we have forged robust connections with research centers, actively participate in conferences and collaborate on projects, thereby facilitating a more organic exchange of ideas and learning with peers.

Our first systematization of the IUPE helped to identify four main functions of research in our model (adapted from Heck, 2017 : 36):

Main functions of field-based research



4.1. Produce and Mobilize Knowledge to Inspire and Facilitate action.

The first function of research in the model of Parole d'excluEs is to produce and mobilize knowledge that inspires and facilitates action, a role that is often found in participatory action research. In every neighborhood, where the PE community centers are located, an assessment of residents' needs and aspirations is conducted while implementing the action model, aiming to pinpoint priorities for action. Further studies may be undertaken to foster a collective understanding of issues and brainstorm effective strategies for addressing them (such as René, Heck and Ledoux, 2017; Heck and Lapalme, 2017). At times, researchers were mobilized to help to set the table on emerging topics or approaches community stakeholders wanted to work on. For instance, a literature review on participatory democracy was elaborated to support the development of such approaches with local institutions (Socquet-Juglard, 2016).

To give a better idea of how knowledge is produced with citizens to orient action, let us have a closer look at one example: when the research sector was newly created at PE, our first mandate was to undertake the Study on the Needs and Aspirations of Northeast Citizens of Montreal North (Heck, René & Castonguay, 2015), a district in which PE just opened a community center. It was the first study that was co-led by non-academic researchers and therefore allowed us to have a strong presence in the neighborhood and carry out an ethnographic study during a period of six months. A team of research assistants, fluent in languages spoken by major immigrant communities, invested spaces such as parks, barber shops, etc. to engage with residents in informal settings, to understand how they experience their neighborhood and what are their aspirations for change. Ethnographic methods were completed by

collective and individual semi-directed interviews, all of which were strongly adapted to habits and interests of the residents, taking up posture where residents strongly shaped the way research was carried out, as one of the staff members remembered:

“Je parle de [notre] posture. C’est vraiment dans leur actions propres à eux que les collectes se faisaient. Et je me souviens que même les focus group aussi ont pris vraiment la tangente de comment ils étaient à l’aise pour échanger. Par exemple, avec les jeunes du quartier, il fallait vraiment créer d’autres cadres, soit se rendre dans les lieux où ils se tiennent, au coin de la rue, dans les salons de coiffure. Et on a fait également la création artistique du rap avec eux au local.”⁵

A multi-stakeholder committee composed of residents and practitioners with a thorough knowledge of the district helped us to design the research methods and followed us through the whole research process. They were involved in every aspect of the study, including data collection planning, data analysis, discussion around the research findings and dissemination. As we were then new to the neighborhood, the committee was essential to help us adapt the study, in methods and language, to the specific local context.

The research was an opportunity to hear and recognize the knowledge and experience of citizens living in poverty and social exclusion and also to engage them to act upon the issues identified. In order to gain access to this knowledge and experience, it was necessary to build trust, take part in community activities, encourage people to speak out, and listen to them. Creating moments of collective discussion about the challenges faced by the community helped some citizens to become aware of the collective nature of these issues. Understanding that, for example, the discrimination issue they are enduring is not related to them as individuals, but rather to a structural problem also experienced by other members of the community, was key in the process of conscientization.

As shared by one of the practitioners on the research committee, the methods employed in our study provided a platform to talk about topics that had rarely been directly addressed before :

“J’ai trouvé cela enthousiasmant de discuter de sujets chauds comme les préjugés et la discrimination parce qu’on n’en discute pas souvent” Compte-rendu du comité de recherche, 2 avril 2015.⁶

So far, the process, akin to numerous participatory action research projects, has catalyzed transformations through its very implementation. The amplification of people’s voices through the research process has enhanced self-esteem, spurred mobilization, and lead to a perceptible shift of how issues are perceived. Notably, our study was the first to explicitly name prejudice and discrimination based on ethnicity and territory as significant concerns, therefore fostering their recognition by local authorities.

However, what sets this model apart is the formal transition to action following the presentation of research findings. Indeed, at the citizens’ assembly, where the results were presented, participants were encouraged to form a committee that would collectively work and act upon the challenges identified in the study. Remarkably, around thirty residents raised their hands to become members of this committee, later named RaCiNE (“Rassemblement des

5 “I like to mention [our] posture. It was really through [people’s] own activities that the [data] collection was done. And I remember even the focus groups really taking the tangent of how they felt comfortable talking. For example, with the young adults in the neighborhood, we really had to create other settings, like going to the places where they chill, like street corners, barbershops. And we also did artistic rap composition with them in the community center.”

6 “I found it thrilling to discuss hot topics like prejudice and discrimination because we don’t often discuss them” Search Committee Minutes, April 2, 2015.”

Citoyens du Nord-Est”, litt.: Gathering of Northeast Citizens, also meaning Roots). RaCiNe became the collective actor from which actions were developed, supported by a practitioner from Parole d’excluEs. The challenges became the priorities to address in the neighborhood. In essence, the study thus served as a starting point for intervention in the community, pinpointing pressing issues and encourage citizens to participate actively in improving their living conditions. Below, we will explore additional contributions made by researchers beyond the confines of the study.

4.2. Document, Analyze and Systematize Practice

Parole d’excluEs positioned itself as an innovative model to fight poverty and exclusion by addressing their root causes and by co-developing action grounded in experiential, practical and academic knowledge. Consequently, a diverse array of methods and practices have been explored to address these complex issues. Research played a pivotal role in systematizing practice in order to improve and strengthen it, and eventually transfer what works to other organizations. In this regard, researchers evaluated and systematized mobilization practices, co-development strategies, and action research methods (Heck, 2017). Most of these reports remained unpublished and served for internal purposes of readjusting and strengthening methods, and documenting projects to preserve the collective memory, as one of the participants in the focus group confirmed: “Le fait que la recherche documente ça, ça facilite le fait que des pratiques, des postures, des façons de travailler puissent être transférées malgré le fait que certains individus [ne] sont plus présents.”⁷

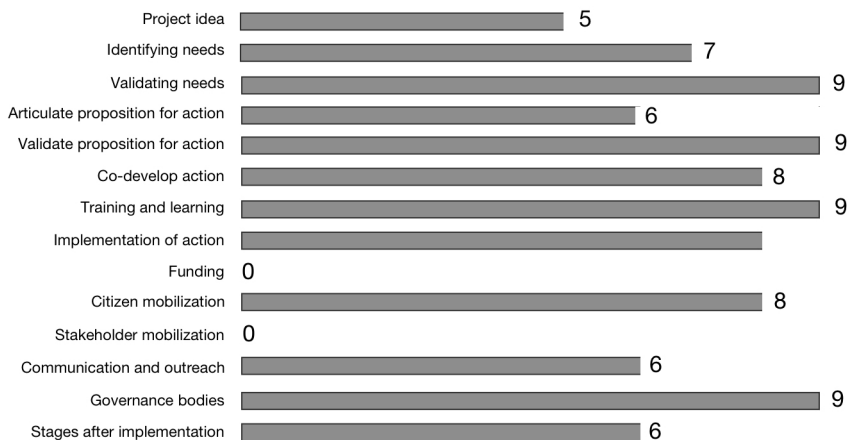
Getting a good overview of our own practice was also useful to better articulate it, be coherent with our values, and adjust our practice. For instance, as an organization promoting citizens’ participation and empowerment, we analyzed the role of citizens and other stakeholders in projects that emerged from the action model. An analysis of 9 projects and 14 points in the co-development (ranging from identification of needs, participation in decision-making bodies, implementation of action to public communication on the project) revealed that citizens, for instance, were active in 12 out of 14 dimensions. The graphic below shows that citizens were involved in validating needs and propositions for action and they took part in learning processes and decision-making governance bodies in every single project (9/9) analyzed (Heck and Soquet-Juglard, 2019:10):⁸

This confirmed that citizen’s participation is indeed in the center of the practice, while also shedding light on the fact that project ideas do not always originate from those most affected by the issues. Nonetheless, the importance and relevance of the issues addressed are consistently validated by them. Such insights have contributed to refining the practice, clarifying the dynamics of stakeholder involvement and better understanding levels of engagement required from professionals and citizens across various project types (see also Heck and Soquet, 2020).

7 “The fact that research documents it facilitates the transfer of practices, postures, and ways of working even though certain individuals are no longer present.”

8 The discussion group in early 2024 to validate the findings presented in this article with actors still present in the project revealed that citizens are now also actively involved in partnership development, as their knowledge of potential collaborators has significantly increased over the years.

Citizen's participation in project dimensions



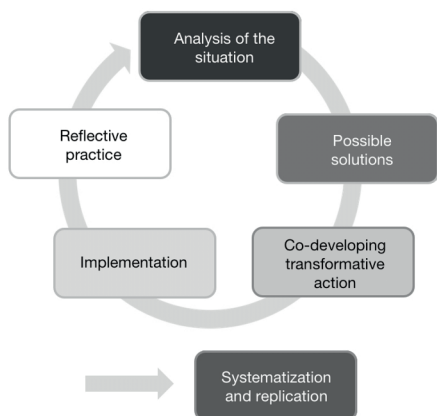
4.3. Codevelop Projects, Models and Practice

Parole d'excluEs' researchers are actively engaged not only in knowledge production and mobilization, but also in the co-development of projects, models and practice led by the organization and its partners. Throughout the years, a vast array of projects was developed, such as an alternative food system with a community garden, a cooperative, beehives and seasonal neighborhood markets (Heck and Socquet-Juglard, 2020), a community health space, an "Accorderie" through which people can exchange services on a time-based bank system, just to name a few. Depending on the resources and expertise already present in the field, the researchers assume varying roles in the cycle of change, without ever taking a leadership role in the implementation of change (see Figure below). This is how the limit is traced with practitioners in the very hybrid role of researchers in the PE model. They may take a leadership role in any other dimension (such as analyzing the situations or co-developing actions). On the other end, as there are many projects developing simultaneously, researchers might not be present at all in some of them.

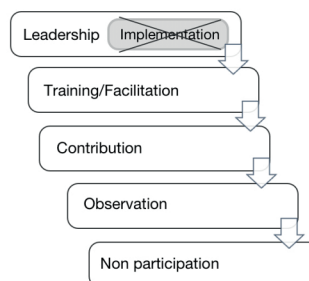
Let us look at the development of the citizens' health space, to give a concrete example of the researchers' contribution to projects.

After identifying collectively that people in the North-Est sector of Montreal-North experienced various issues in accessing health services, the community voted in a public assembly for an additional and more inclusive health service in the neighborhood. Issues included insufficient service, economic and geographic access barriers to health services, communication and comprehension issues with health practitioners and the health system in general, challenges related to waiting times, and a lack of inclusion (Heck & Lapalme, 2017). According to the participants, and as debated in the assembly, a new health service should be set up, one that would be accessible, welcoming, inclusive, and open to community engagement. To further develop the initiative, we invited participants to create a citizens' health

Cycle of change



Possible roles for researchers



committee that would look ahead at future action, alongside researchers, a union of health professionals, and representatives from Parole d'excluEs.

A co-construction process was then designed in a multi-stakeholder meeting that included representatives of the citizens health committee, Parole d'excluEs' researchers and practitioners, an academic, a few community organizations, and a representative of the Nurses' Union. Each stakeholder involved brought with them their own specific expertise: experiential (residents experiencing the challenges in the area); professional (health expertise, community organizers working in the area, and professionals with expertise in mobilization and co-construction); and academic (participatory approaches in medical practice and power balance in co-construction processes).

Parole d'excluEs led the implementation of the co-construction process. We, as Parole d'excluEs' researchers, were in charge of accompanying the citizens' committee and supporting them to expand their knowledge regarding health questions. We took up this role primarily because there were no specific resources tied to the project at that moment, such as a project manager, and our research funding modalities provided enough leeway to take up such roles. We were also safeguarding the power balance in the multi-stakeholders' meetings, and documenting the project. During this process, our role was little linked to research or knowledge production. We were facilitators in a co-development process, and used our reflexive skills to ensure as best as we could to have a good power balance, and paradoxically using our power as researchers for greater epistemic justice, as one of our colleagues described:

“Il y a une recherche de rééquilibrage des statuts en rééquilibrant la place que les savoirs ont dans le processus de co-construction. [...] C'est un peu paradoxal parce que d'un côté on veut faire du rééquilibrage entre les statuts et les savoirs à l'intérieur de notre action. Mais d'un autre côté, le pouvoir et le statut du chercheur pèsent lourd dans les relations de partenariat qu'on peut tisser. [...] Et c'est plus facile du coup de faire bouger les acteurs sur justement les aspects sur lesquels on veut les faire bouger, la participation citoyenne, la co-construction collective. [...] Donc je pense que ça c'est un élément qui est à la fois un paradoxe, c'est à dire qu'on veut sortir de ça, mais en même temps on l'instrumentalise pour la bonne cause.”⁹

9 “There is a quest to rebalance statuses by rebalancing the place that [different kinds of] knowledge have in the process of co-construction. [...] It's a bit paradoxical because on the one hand we want to rebalance status and

On some occasions, we used light knowledge mobilization processes to make sure that everyone felt well equipped to participate in decision-making. For instance, one of the issues that came up during the study was communication. Some residents didn't understand the doctors' ways to explain things or did not feel heard when raising concerns or confident enough to ask questions. One of our academic co-researchers, a specialist of participative approaches in medical practice, presented examples from around the world, of how to value experiential knowledge in medical decisions and, more generally, foster patients' participation in the health system. This opened new horizons of what is possible and inspired residents to imagine new solutions and better understand the malleability of systems.

The process of co-construction illustrated how knowledge and action are imbricated. Citizens taking part in this health initiative were able to build a collective experiential expertise through the citizens health committee, to share it in a multi-stakeholder committee on an equal footing with others, to expand their knowledge, and take collective action.

The Citizen Health Space has developed, over the years, a few collaborations with health institutions, practitioners and researchers. The activities include listening groups and workshops on nutrition, on art therapy, or any other health-related subject that citizens have expressed an interest in. These workshops and self-help groups are led either by citizens who have a specific expertise (experiential or professional), or by health practitioners who are sensitive to issues of inclusion. The Citizen Health Space initiative has become leverage to share information related to local resources and to the community's needs; to develop a collective understanding and awareness on the gap between the citizens' health needs in Montreal-North and the area's services and resources; and to co-construct new actions to reduce this gap (Ruelland, 2020). It has been crucial to respond to emerging needs during the pandemic, during which the collaboration with the local health services has strongly increased (Autin, 2020), setting up workshops and vaccination clinics. It has, however, failed to implement clinical services, which are largely institutionalized and governmental in the context of Quebec. Over the last few years, the local health services decided to implement a service center in the neighborhood, which is certainly a step forward, even if its participatory dimension does not live up to the citizen's expectations.

4.4. Enhance Reflective Practice

The last function of research that we identified in the IUPE model is to enhance reflective practice. It means offering a space to take a step back, reflect about practice, projects, posture and then reinvest the learning. Reflective practice can be enhanced through studies, as the example of the roles of the different stakeholders has shown above, but it can also be done more organically, integrated into everyday practice such as in meetings. It is a function carried out in a cross-cutting way, both formally and informally (Hilden and Tikkamäki, 2013; Hase, 2014; Fuentes Caceres, 2019). One project where the reflective component was particularly strong was the North-Eastern Development Plan (Heck, Manon et al., 2020; Heck, 2020). The

knowledge within our practice. But on the other hand, the power and status of the researcher weighs heavily in the partnerships we are able to forge. [...] This makes it easier to get the actors to move on exactly those aspects that we want them to move on: citizen participation, co-construction. [...] So I think that's an element that's paradoxical in the sense that we are trying to overcome [such dynamics], but at the same time we're using it for a good purpose."

goal of the project was to develop and implement a redevelopment plan for a highly dense and particularly disadvantaged area of the neighborhood, based on the perspectives of those who reside within it. It represented a departure from previous approaches and involved mobilizing municipal, community, and citizen stakeholders. With a keen interest in ensuring the success of the participatory dimension, researchers were integrated to document the project and provide feedback to adjust it along the way. One of our partners from the borough shares their experience with the following words:

“Dans le cadre des travaux entourant l’élaboration du Plan d’aménagement du secteur nord-est de l’arrondissement de Montréal-Nord, la présence de chercheuses de l’IUPE au comité de coordination, a favorisé et soutenu la capacité des participantes à poser un regard réflexif tout au long de la démarche d’élaboration du plan. Leur connaissance du terrain, leur présence régulière aux séances de travail ainsi que leur expertise en recherche ont permis de documenter le processus de co-construction de la démarche. Ainsi, le comité de coordination a pu adapter son approche et ses stratégies de mobilisation à chaque étape du processus. Collaborer avec les chercheuses de l’IUPE a contribué à soutenir le croisement des savoirs et à mobiliser les compétences déjà présentes au sein du comité et cela, au plus grand bénéfice de la population.”¹⁰

Our approach to reflective practice was influenced by the project’s aim to promote greater power-sharing among stakeholders and to recognize the value of experiential knowledge. A community partner involved offers her perspective on the researchers’ contribution to the development plan:

“Dans le cadre du Plan d’aménagement du Nord-Est de Montréal-Nord, la recherche nous a produit un rapport d’évaluation (bilan) du processus de cette démarche collective. Ce bilan a mis en lumière les dynamiques/ rapports de force existants entre les différents partenaires institutionnels et communautaires. Ceci nous a permis de prendre du recul pour mieux définir nos rôles et responsabilités dans le respect des missions et expertises de chacun. Les chercheurs ont également été amenés à jouer un rôle de facilitateur pour une compréhension commune des concepts en ramenant les besoins exprimés par les citoyen·ne·s au cœur des démarches.”¹¹

This quote illustrates the added value of reflective practice and how research contributes to rebalancing power, as referred to in an earlier citation.

Each of the four functions of research presented above is tightly linked to and translates into action. The examples above further show how knowledge production or mobilization and action are intertwined. What are the underlying postures and configurations to be able to fulfill these functions? We have identified three core elements, based on our experience.

10 “While working on the development of the North-Eastern Development Plan of Montreal-North, the presence of IUPE researchers on the coordinating committee encouraged and supported participants’ ability to take a reflective stance at the entire process of developing the plan. Their knowledge of the field, their regular attendance at working sessions and their research expertise helped to document the co-construction process. This enabled the coordinating committee to adapt its approach and mobilization strategies at each stage of the process. Collaborating with the IUPE researchers helped to support the merging of knowledge and mobilize the skills already present within the committee, to the greatest benefit of the population”.

11 “As part of the North-Eastern Development Plan of Montreal-North, the researchers produced an assessment report on the process of this collective initiative. This assessment shed light on the power dynamics/balances between the institutional and community stakeholders. It has enabled us to take a step back and better define our roles and responsibilities, while respecting each other’s missions and expertise. The researchers also played a role in facilitating a common understanding of the concepts and bringing the needs expressed by citizens back to the core of the process”.

5. Core characteristics

5.1. Expanding the Role of Researchers to Co-develop Knowledge and Action

The first and probably most important core characteristic to bridge the gap between research and action in our experience is to expand our role beyond leading collaborative research processes. Defining research priorities by community actors (residents or practitioners actively engaged in transformative efforts in the neighborhood), co-developing methods with different stakeholders, and discussion of research results with the community through workshops or assemblies, proved most often not to be enough to translate findings into action.

This implies a willingness to step outside our comfort zones, as researchers, and actively immerse ourselves in the action we seek to understand. It emphasizes a two-way street of collaboration by not only inviting others to participate in research but also inviting researchers to partake in the action itself.

In this way, we can gain a profound insight into the intricate dynamics of action and the hurdles it presents. Understanding the dynamics of action helps researchers to better understand the capacity of the stakeholders to transform the situations they seek to change. In particular while elaborating paths for action and recommendations, without that knowledge, they can easily come up with disconnected and unrealistic propositions that cannot be implemented, and that can provoke frustration and a feeling of disempowerment. In our work, we found it very useful to rely on the notion of “*pas proximal*” by Yann LeBossé (2016), which is to take the biggest possible step in a given situation; this allows moving from a feeling of powerlessness to being in motion and taking action.

Finally, we argue that this also brings about greater reciprocity and a more balanced distribution of power. It means participating in a process where researchers have a support role, unlike their leadership role in the research process. As shown above, depending on the context and needs, researchers take on different roles (facilitator, contributor, lead, etc.), their roles can also evolve during a project, which requires a capacity to adapt and a sensitivity to changing contexts.

The involvement in action echoes, on the one hand, Dewey’s pragmatic approach (Cormier, 2012) on learning through action as a dynamic process where individuals engage in active experiences and reflection to construct their understanding of the world. On the other, it also builds on South American traditions of engaged research and decolonial approaches, where frontiers between action and research are often blurred and the role of practitioners and those with first-hand knowledge of social exclusion is paramount (Fals Borda, 1973, 1996; Freire, 2005; Costamagna and Spinelli, 2021).

Participation in the co-development and implementation of action also requires good knowledge, strong relationship and trust with the community or partner organization. This leads us to the second core characteristic.

5.2. Long-Time Presence and Anchorage in the Community

The second core characteristic, long-term presence in the community, is further enhanced when the researcher is based within the community rather than solely at the university. This proximity facilitates meeting numerous criteria for successful participatory action research.

Through long-term presence within the community, engaging in active listening and dialogue with its members, researchers can access a diverse range of voices, allowing pressing research topics to organically emerge. Moreover, this presence fosters the development of close relationships, trust, and a comprehensive understanding of the context, thereby facilitating the design of the knowledge production process. Being embedded in the community also enables researchers to continuously adapt and refine methods and objectives in response to the rapidly evolving environment and changing priorities, ensuring that research remains relevant and action-oriented. Decentralizing research from the university necessitates a shift in perspective and posture, recognizing that knowledge production can occur within the community and not exclusively within academia, with a focus on contributing primarily to social change. This often results in agile and pragmatic research approaches, conducive to quick and effective knowledge mobilization.

Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge that direct involvement in the field and robust community engagement in the knowledge production process serve as potent mechanisms for fostering ownership of results, thereby facilitating their translation into action. Additionally, the presence of researchers beyond the confines of the study process itself offers the distinct advantage of bolstering knowledge mobilization and transfer. This extends beyond the creation of tailored communication tools for stakeholders to encompass the informal dissemination of findings during project development and implementation.

5.3. Partnering with Universities

The third core characteristic is the connection to university. Firstly, dialogue with university researchers, whether through involvement in research centers, bodies, projects or other forums, enables one to step out of our one's particular context, and understand the issues at stake in a broader societal context. It is also about nourishing reflections, building bridges and broadening perspective, and benefitting from a fresher, more distant and critical viewpoint on one's own work. Furthermore, it helps to nourish perspectives on theories, frameworks or experiences from other contexts, as we have seen in the Citizen Health Space.¹² Furthermore, collaborating with universities also means benefiting from additional resources through collaboration with academics and students, as well as access to infrastructure and facilities.

Secondly, fostering robust connections and partnership with universities is also indispensable for advancing the wider recognition of action research and expanding its practice. One crucial avenue lies in students' involvement, be it through internships, thesis supervision, research contracts and or teaching AR, recognizing that they represent the future of the field. Engaging with universities (projects, research centers, governance bodies) also helps to advocate more largely for a stronger AR practice, informed by diverse knowledge produced outside the academia. It can contribute to influence and shape practices; it is a place for advocacy to highlight and value the social impact of research and more generally knowledge production outside universities. Transforming universities cannot be achieved without at least a partial engagement from within the institution.

12 The theoretical dimension is one that has been particularly developed in the 3rd phase of the IUPE, after we have left the project, by making Nancy Fraser's theory on social justice accessible for practitioners (Gignac et al., 2024) and by producing a tool to assess and promote epistemic justice (Manon & Autin, 2023).

6. Decentralizing Action Research

In this article we have identified four main functions and three core characteristics of an action research model that is closely tied to tangible transformations beyond studies. While all the elements above stem from our experience at the Parole d'excluEs University Incubator, we believe the core characteristics also echo other experiences, as we find them separately in other experiences. The three core characteristics reflect and underscore an epistemological position where researchers are not only engaged in communities, coproducing knowledge outside the realm of universities, but also contribute to developing action. This implies decentralizing knowledge production in three ways: first, in terms of the locus of knowledge production by extending it outside universities, second, in terms of those who are credible knowledge bearers, by valuing experiential and practical knowledge as well as academic, and third, in the role of researchers who are invited to engage, beyond knowledge production, in the co-development of actions. Promoting such models asks, as referred to above, for a transformation of universities and funding agencies underscoring community engagement in much stronger ways. This decentralization recalls elements of early PAR in the South (Hall and Tandon, 2017), when action research was rooted in social movements, however, lacking the wider connections and institutional recognition that we are calling for.

For an experience such as the IUPE, despite strong international connections and its robust ties to university, the engagement within the community has the downside of being a very “inward” centered practice. It has contributed to tangible transformations at the local level, lacking however the scale to allow for a deeper transformation of living conditions that need interventions at the provincial or national level. It is only through resources invested in networking and advocacy that a wider recognition and scaling of such practices can be attained. Joining the calls of many other colleagues in the field (Bradbury et al, 2019; Larrea, 2020; Fricke et al., 2022), larger and systemic change as well as stronger network connecting diverse actors doing action research is paramount to address the complex and urgent problems our world faces.

References

- Anadon, M. & Savoie-Zajc, L. (2007). La recherche-action dans certains pays anglo-saxons et latino-américains: une forme de recherche participative. In M. Anadon (Ed.), *La recherche participative: multiples regards* (pp. 11–30). Presses de l'Université du Québec. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv18ph9tc>.
- Autin, G. (2020). Amener des soins de proximité à Montréal-Nord. La clinique pop-up, un cas de collaboration réussie. <http://www.parole-dexclues.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/20201116-Rapport-Clinique-Pop-Up.pdf>.
- Bradbury, H. (Ed.). (2015). *The SAGE handbook of action research*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Bradbury, H., Waddell, S., O'Brien, K., Apgar, M., Teehankee, B., & Fazey, I. (2019). A call to Action Research for Transformations: The times demand it. *Action Research*, 17(1), 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750319829633>.
- Busch, M.D., Jean-Baptiste, E., Person, P.F., Vaughn, L.M. (2019). Activating social change together: A qualitative synthesis of collaborative change research, evaluation and design literature. *Gateways:*

- International Journal of Community Research and Engagement, 12(2), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.5130/ijcre.v12i2.6693>.
- Canto-Farachala, P., & Larrea, M. (2022). Rethinking the communication of action research: Can we make it dialogic? *Action Research*, 20(2), 199–218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750320905896>.
- Cormier, J. (2012). La philosophie pragmatique de Dewey et Mead: quels fondements théoriques pour appuyer l'intervention universitaire sur le terrain (Report No. ET1113). Cahiers du Centre de recherche sur les innovations sociales (CRISES). <https://crises.uqam.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ET1113.pdf>.
- Costamagna, P. & Spinelli, E. (2021). Systematisation of experiences within the framework of the pedagogical approach towards territorial development: a contribution to action research from the Latin American tradition. *International Journal of Action Research*, 17(3), 199–217. <https://doi.org/10.3224/ijar.v17i3.02>.
- Couturier, E.-L. & Fortin, M. (2021). Effets de la crise sanitaire sur le milieu communautaire – Portrait de la situation pour les organismes du Québec. Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-économiques (IRIS). <https://iris-recherche.qc.ca/publications/effets-de-la-crise-sanitaire-sur-le-milieu-communautaire-portrait-de-la-situation-pour-les-organismes-du-quebec/>
- Fals Borda, O. (1973). Reflexiones sobre la aplicación del método de Estudio-Acción en Colombia. *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 35(1), 49–62. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3539564>.
- Fals Borda, O. (1996). A North-South Convergence on the Quest for Meaning. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(1), 76–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049600200111>.
- Fanjoy, M. & Bragg, B. (2019). Embracing complexity: Co-creation with retired immigrant women. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*, 12(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.5130/ijcre.v12i1.6342>.
- Fontan, J.-M. & Heck, I. (2017). Parole d'excluEs: croisement des savoirs, des pouvoirs et des pratiques au sein de l'Incubateur universitaire Parole d'excluEs. *Éducation et socialisation*, 45. <https://doi.org/10.4000/edso.2540>.
- Fine, M., & Torre, M.E. (2021). Essentials of critical participatory action research. *American Psychological Association*.
- Fontan, J.-M. (2017). D'un système d'acteurs à un écosystème d'intervention – Systématisation des connaissances sur la démarche de l'expérience et de l'organisation Parole d'exclus. Parole d'excluEs et Services aux collectivités UQAM. <https://sac.uqam.ca/le-service-aux-collectivites/activites/374-d-un-systeme-d-acteurs-a-un-ecosysteme-d-intervention-systematisation-des-connaissances-sur-la-demarche-de-l-experience-et-de-l-organisation-parole-d-exclus.html>.
- Fontan J., Longtin D. & René J-F. (2014). La recherche participative à l'aune de la mobilisation citoyenne: une innovation sociale de rupture ou de continuité?, 25(2), 125–140. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1020825ar>.
- Fuentes Caceres, J. (2019). Gérer une organisation émancipatrice. La pratique réflexive de Parole d'excluEs [Master's thesis, HEC Montréal].
- Fricke, W., Greenwood, D.J., Larrea, M. & Streck, D. (2022). On Social Productivity and Future Perspectives on Action Research. *International Journal of Action Research*, 18(1), 8–27. <https://doi.org/10.3224/ijar.v18i1.03>.
- Fricke, M. (2007). *Epistemic Injustice*. Oxford University Press.
- Gélineau, L., Dufour, E. & Bélisle, M. (2012). Quand recherche-action et pratiques AVEC se conjugent: enjeux de définition et d'équilibre des savoirs. *Recherches qualitatives*, 13, 35–54. <http://www.recherche-qualitative.qc.ca/Revue.html>.
- Gignac, C., Autin, G. & Tello-Rozas, S. (2024, 31 January). La théorie de la justice sociale de Nancy Fraser. *Blogue de l'Incubateur universitaire de Parole d'excluEs*. <https://iupe.parole-dexclus.ca/la-justice-sociale-selon-nancy-fraser/>.
- Godrie, B., & Dos Santos M. (Eds.). (2017). Injustices épistémiques, *Sociologie et Sociétés*, 49(1).

- Gustavsen, B. (2003). Action research and the problem of the single case. *Concepts and Transformation*, 8(1), 93–99.
- Hall, B., Tandon, R. & Tremblay, C. (2015). *Strengthening Community University Research Partnerships – Global Perspectives*. University of Victoria Libraries.
- Hall, B. & Tandon, R. (2017). Participatory research: Where have we been, where are we going? – A dialogue. *Research for All*, 1(2), 365–74. <https://doi.org/10.18546/RFA.01.2.12>.
- Hase, S. (2014). Reflective Practice. In D. Coghlan & M. Brydon-Miller (Eds.), *SAGE Encyclopedia of Action Research* (pp. 675–678). SAGE Publications.
- Heck, I. (2017). Du soutien à l’action à la recherche et développement. Bilan des activités du volet de recherche interne à Parole d’excluEs. Parole d’excluEs et Service aux collectivités, UQAM.
- Heck, I. & Lapalme, V. (2017). Étude sur les besoins et aspirations des citoyens de Montréal-Nord en termes de services de santé. Vers un service complémentaire de santé dans le quartier. Parole d’excluEs.
- Heck, I., J.F. René & C. Castonguay. (2015). Étude sur les besoins et aspirations des citoyens du Nord-Est de Montréal-Nord (Report No. ET1503). Cahier de recherches du CRISES. https://crises.uqam.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/CRISES_ES1503diminu%C3%A9.pdf.
- Heck, I., Manon, M. & Monier, P. (2020). Co-construire le Plan d’aménagement du Nord-Est. Du récit aux actions. Incubateur universitaire Parole d’excluEs. <https://iuep.files.wordpress.com/2020/12/heck-manon-monier-amenagement-2020.pdf>.
- Heck, I. & Socquet-Juglard, F. (2019). La co-construction à Parole d’excluEs: rôles et participation des différents acteurs [Unpublished working paper].
- Heck, I. & Socquet-Juglard, F. (2020). Dinámicas de participación ciudadana para mejorar el acceso a los alimentos. Perspectivas reflexivas sobre el ‘Sistema Alimentario para Todos’ en Montreal. *Anthropology of Food*, 15. <https://doi.org/10.4000/aof.11421>.
- Heck, I. (2020). Action Research Challenges for Urban Development: from Bilbao to Montreal-North. In M. Larrea (Ed.), *Roots and Wings of Action Research for Territorial Development* (pp. 217–220). Deusto University Press.
- Heck, I., Ruelland, I., Lefèvre, S. A. & Autin, G. (2022). Effets de la pandémie Covid-19 sur les organisations communautaires de Montréal-Nord: Constats et perspectives. *Les Cahiers du CRISES*.
- Hilden, S. & Tikkamäki, K. (2013). Reflective Practice as a Fuel for Organizational Learning. *Administrative Sciences*, 3(3), 76–95. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci3030076>.
- Imagine Canada (2021). Sector Monitor: Ongoing Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic. <https://www.imaginecanada.ca/sites/default/files/Sector-Monitor-Ongoing-Effects-COVID-19-Pandemic-EN.pdf>.
- Larrea, M. (Ed). (2020). *Roots and Wings of Action Research for Territorial Development*. Deusto University Press.
- Larsson, A.-C. & Sofia Nordmark, S. (2016). Empowering Dialogues: A Way to Democratise Knowledge Production?. In E. Gunnarsson, H.P. Hansen, B.S. Nielsen & N. Sriskandarajah (Eds.), *Action Research for Democracy. New Ideas and Perspectives from Scandinavia* (pp. 75–89). Routledge.
- Le Bossé, Y. (2016). Soutenir sans prescrire: aperçu synoptique de l’approche centrée sur le développement du pouvoir d’agir des personnes et des collectivités (DPA-PC). ARDIS.
- Longtin, D. (2010). Revue de la littérature: la recherche action participative, le croisement des savoirs et des pratiques et les incubateurs technologiques de coopératives populaires (Report No. ET1102). Cahiers du Centre de recherche sur les innovations sociales (CRISES). <https://crises.uqam.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ET1102.pdf>.
- Manon, M., Autin, G., & Parole d’excluEs. (2023, October 27). Boussole de la justice épistémique – Guide d’utilisation. Incubateur universitaire parole d’excluEs. https://iuep.parole-dexclues.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/GUIDE-DUTILISATION_2023-10-25_PROD_PRINT.pdf.

- Parole d'excluEs. (2019). Rapport annuel 2018–2019. https://parole-dexclues.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Parole-dexcluEs_Rapport-Annuel-2018–2019-min.pdf.
- Pozzebon, M., Tello-Rozas, S. & Heck, I. (2021). Nourishing the Social Innovation Debate with the “Social Technology” South American Research Tradition. *Voluntas*, 32, 663–677. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-021-00314-0>.
- René, J.-F., Heck, I. & Ledoux, J. (2017). Laboratoire de croisement des savoirs au sein de Parole d'excluEs. Parole d'excluEs et Service aux collectivités de l'UQAM.
- Ruelland, I. (2020). Pratiques collaboratives en santé de proximité à Montréal-Nord au croisement des initiatives citoyennes: rapport de recherche. Incubateur universitaire Parole d'excluEs. <https://iup.files.wordpress.com/2020/11/rapport-esc-isabelle-ruelland-2020.pdf>
- Socquet-Juglard, F. (2016). La démocratie participative: définitions, typologies, dispositifs et exemples. Parole d'excluEs.
- Skelton, D., Coyne, B., Monje Barón, B. and Blunsch Ackermann, M.-R. (2024). ‘Taking knowledge on a journey’: Creating conditions for epistemic justice. *Action Research*, 22(1), 86–103. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14767503231205235>.
- Statistiques Canada. (2023). Données du recensement de 2021. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/index-fra.cfm>.
- Tossavainen, P. (2017). Co-create with stakeholders: Action research approach in service development. *Action Research*. 15(3), 276–293. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750316641995>.
- Vogler, A. (2020). Montréal-Nord, Montréal-Noir: les discours et les récits de la stigmatisation territoriale [Master's thesis, Université de Montréal]. Papyrus: Institutional Repository. <https://doi.org/1866/24228>.

Isabel Heck (PhD, anthropology) has been involved in action research to promote social inclusion for more than 10 years. Adjunct professor at UQAM (University of Québec at Montréal, Canada) and associate member of CRISES (Centre de recherches sur les innovations sociales), she currently serves as the head of knowledge and learning in the Montrealer Collective Impact Project to reinforce the project's reflective dimension.