

Editorial

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Action research can be facilitated and carried out in many different ways and in collaboration with various target groups and stakeholders in diverse contexts. As an approach to research, learning and change, action research appeals to academics and practitioners in several countries. This is also reflected in this edition of IJAR, where we bring fresh contributions from Chile, the Basque Country in Spain, the USA, Switzerland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Denmark.

This issue of IJAR contains five articles and a book review. Two of the articles are written in honour and memory of two significant personalities within the field of action research, who unfortunately have left us: William Rockwell (Bill) Torbert and Richard Ennals. Both have, over several decades, each in their own way, inspired the field of action research and contributed to the dialogues and development of the action research community. Through these two articles we wish to honour their memory and show them our recognition and respect.

The first article is a tribute to Bill Torbert (William Rockwell Torbert) written by Carol Gorelick, Danny van Montfort, Freek Sanders, Tobias Fehr-Bosshard, Lone Hersted and David Coghlan. It carries the title: “William R. Torbert’s Legacy in Transforming Doctoral Education Through Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry: An Intergenerational Tribute”. The group of authors represent three generations and five different nationalities who are all inspired by Bill Torbert’s ideas and thoughts related to action research. Bill Torbert was born on the 8th of February in 1944 and died on the 21th of October in 2025 - 81 years old. He is known for his work in action inquiry and leadership development. For many years he worked as a graduate Dean of the Carroll School of Management at Boston College. In addition to his work as a Dean and work with research and teaching, Bill Torbert was also director of their doctoral program in organizational transformation and founded an international community, Action Inquiry Fellowship dedicated to “action inquiry,” the study of self-transformation in the process of understanding the world. He was also the co-founder and Director Emeritus of the international consultancy company, Global Leadership Associates (GLA). He authored and co-authored numerous academic articles and developed Collaborative Developmental Action Inquiry (CDAI), which is an approach that integrates first, second, and third-person perspectives to transform individuals, organizations, and social science. This article honors the legacy of Bill Torbert inspired by his collaborative project: a three-year initiative to reimagine doctoral education through CDAI. In our article we write from six different perspectives about our inspiration from Bill Torbert, which culminated in a common PDW honoring Bill Torbert at The Annual Meeting of Academy of Management in Copenhagen, July 2025, after he had passed away.

The second article is in honor and memory of Richard Ennals written by Hans Christian Garmann Johnsen from Norway who has been working with Richard Ennals for more than

twenty years. It has the title: “Richard Ennals: An Itinerant Scholar Who Found His Home in Action Research”. Richard Ennals was born on the 16th of September in 1951 and passed away on the 10th of December 2024, 73 years old. Among other things he was a co-editor of the *International Journal of Action Research* and a recognized social scientist and activist. He was also an editor and contributor to the *European Journal of Workplace Innovation*, where he contributed to the discourse on workplace innovation and its potential for healthier and better working lives. He was interested in learning, education and workplace innovation through action research, and his work often emphasised the importance of dialogue and collaboration for the co-creation of learning and social change. Richard Ennals had a varied and internationally oriented working life. Among other things he worked as a Professor at Kingston Business School (UK), and he did research in collaboration with the National Institute for Working Life and Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden and the Work Research Institute and Centre for Senior Policy in Norway and also worked with the European Commission. In 1997, he was co-founder of the UK Work Organisation Network. Since 2013 he was Emeritus Professor at Kingston University and in addition he had part-time Professorial posts in Norway at the University of Agder and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. The article written by Hans Christian Garmann offers a tribute to Richard Ennals and gives the reader valuable insights about his life and work.

The third article is written by Amparo González Jara from Chile. The title is: “Strengthening Communication and Participation among Women Smallholder Farmers: A Participatory Research Project in Yumbel, Chile”. This article is based on a participatory research project among Women Smallholder Farmers in Chile and examines the need to improve communication between women smallholder farmers and local authorities. “Women smallholder farmers” refers to producers engaged in family-based smallholder agriculture, characterised by limited land size, local-scale production, and partial dependence on state support programmes. The article sheds light on their limited participation in local institutional decision-making spaces related to agricultural policies that directly affect their lives and working conditions. Through the project, by use of a participatory research methodology, the women became actively engaged in identifying problems, co-creating knowledge, and finding solutions. Not only did the project strengthen the communication between the female farmers and the institutions, but it also promoted their involvement in concrete decision-making spaces in local community councils and development committees. In this way, the project scaffolded the women in becoming able to undertake roles as representatives within community leadership. The article shows how participatory research can address epistemic injustices that have historically silenced rural women and contribute to more inclusive agricultural policies. The project confirms that participatory research is not only a methodological tool for research, but that it can also strengthen participants’ agency and enhance their capacity to influence decision-making in local policy-making processes related to agricultural development. It contributes with insights that could also be relevant and inspiring for participatory action researchers in other rural contexts.

The fourth article has the title “Rethinking Complexity and Facilitation in Action Research for Territorial Development: Insights from the Etorikizuna Eraikiz Think Tank in the Basque Country.” It is written by Mikel Gaztañaga Cinto, who is a researcher at Orkestra–Basque Institute of Competitiveness in the Basque Country in Spain. His article is about Action Research for Territorial Development (ARTD). ARTD is about engaging territorial actors such as policymakers, business representatives, and civil society organizations as active

participants in dialogical and co-generative processes. The primary aim is to address and find solutions to territorial challenges by integrating multiple perspectives, different ways of knowing and thinking into governance processes. The article focuses on the challenges of building shared understandings and co-generating knowledge among actors who operate from different and fragmented epistemic, ontological, and communicative frameworks. The article draws on a three-year action research process within the *Etorkizuna Eraikiz Think Tank* in the Basque Country. The author investigates how learnings from the process can contribute to refining the ARTD's approach to complexity. The insights from the project will be used to strengthen and improve the capacity of ARTD to engage with fragmented territorial realities and may also inspire other actors who are interested in territorial development.

The fifth article carries the title "Participatory and Empowering Community Dialogue Spaces: Exploring Local Meanings of Life Quality in a Danish Community-Health Partnership". It is authored by Nicolas Tristan Munk, Kristian Larsen, Tom Møller and Trine Schifter Larsen, all located in Denmark. This article draws on a community-health project titled Welfare and Relations (WeARe). The project is based on a partnership between two hospital institutions and a social housing organisation. The article examines how Dialogue Conferences can contribute to locally grounded understandings of quality of life among older residents. It demonstrates and explains how life quality can be enhanced as a relational, situated accomplishment through dialogical interaction. The authors draw on methodological inspiration from Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), relational-dialogical action research, and participatory action research in a socio-material and performative perspective. In their article, they explore how tensions and divergent viewpoints and orientations can become productive within community-health projects through the co-creation of new insights across differing epistemic agendas. The article explains how Dialogue Conferences as participatory, dialogical spaces can foster community-based quality of life by enabling participants to articulate, negotiate, and enact what matters to them within their socio-material context. It also shows how hospital institutions and communities can work together through dialogically based inquiries and support locally defined well-being rather than relying on expert-driven service provision or standardised tools for measurement.

Finally, we present a review of the book: *A Call to Action Research: Confronting the social and environmental sustainability crises*. The book is written by Davydd Greenwood, Johan Ravn, and Koen Bartels and was published in December 2025. The review is written by Lone Hersted and carries the title: "Strengthening the social fabric: Action research for commoning, solidarity, mutual learning and sustainable change". The book is a call to confront the global, social and ecological crises that we are experiencing, through action research and related inquiries. It points out that we cannot follow business as usual and argues for action research as a useful approach to address and confront societal and environmental challenges. The book is not only aimed at academics but at anyone who is interested in action research and who might be interested in applying action research to the creation of a more sustainable society and environment, including politicians, civil servants, business people, students, educators, activists, citizens and others, who wish to take an active stance for societal change.

Before closing this editorial, as editor-in-chief of IJAR, I wish to thank all the authors and the blind peer reviewers who have spent their precious time contributing to this issue. The papers in this issue show a big variety and diversity within the field of action research but also show how much we have in common in relation to fundamental values and a fundamental

interest in creating a more just and sustainable world. I hope that the readers will find the articles interesting and feel inspired to continue the dialogue on action research in our journal and in our action research community.