

Special issue of the International Journal of Action Research (IJAR)

Issue Editors: Patricia Canto-Farachala and Malida Mookken

Enhancing the reach and scope of action research

Action research presents a promising yet largely untapped approach to generating meaningful solutions involving community members, practitioners, and researchers.

In the wake of pressing environmental challenges exacerbating long-standing social issues and affecting all living beings on the planet, there are increased expectations of research to achieve positive change, and contribute to addressing said challenges. These correspond to core objectives and qualities of action research - to support desired change through actionable knowledge - making it especially relevant. Yet, action research remains largely on the margins and its full potential is untapped; how can we enhance its reach and scope to contribute to systemic change?

In the [2024 IJAR Symposium](#), we heard that as a community of researchers we need to connect more with other researchers, practitioners, activists, who may not necessarily call themselves action researchers or explicitly refer to action research, but with whom we share core principles, values, and intent. This call is an invitation to colleagues to share their learnings from research projects contributing to positive change, characterised, for example, by ecological responsibility, ethics of care, improved well-being, and the promotion of democracy, epistemic justice, social justice, and the common good with actors in local communities, governments, businesses, social movements and civil society. We are interested in particular insights about their processes, what they consider as enabling or constraining their work, and how they manage these.

We encourage co-authored papers with collaborators/participants that highlight how different knowledge perspectives and shared understanding can complement and deepen our outlook, analyses, and impact. Among others, we are interested in experiences of bridging theory and practice, promoting democratic dialogue and citizen engagement, and cogenerated knowledge and action. How can approaches such as (but not limited to) participatory research, action research, action research for territorial development, systemic action research, community-led, community-based, community-engaged research, indigenous research, and activist research help to work through conflicts, enhance collaboration and participation, and contribute to addressing our interconnected environmental and social challenges? How can we scale out our transformative work? What kind of changes are necessary or happening already in our organisations such as think tanks, research centres, universities, and NGOs? Let us learn from each other and build on what unites us in doing transformative work.

In this call, we are reaching out to prospective authors for a special issue on topics highlighted in the IJAR Symposium:

- research in and with communities; research in residence; decentralising research
- scaling out rather than scaling up; proliferation, connectivity, connecting "microworlds" and collaborating across projects; going beyond the single case discussion
- democratising knowledge and knowing

- epistemic disobedience and delinking
- different forms of expression in conducting and communicating research (i.e. using artistic forms)
- breaking the emotion- reason dichotomy in our inquiries, writings, and overall practice
- changing behaviours, cultures, and practice in organisations and institutions, e.g. in universities
- action research training and education
- inner and outer transformation (the interplay between first-person and second/third person-perspectives)

We welcome contributions that challenge/stimulate us to rethink and reimagine how we engage in research and the systems that we are part of, bringing forth: fresh ideas, innovative approaches, and new conceptual understanding. We are open to considering experimental forms of writing and papers that integrate first-person perspectives alongside second and/or third-person perspectives.

We look forward to your submissions.

Timeline

Submission of abstract and full article: 30 June 2025

Review process: June - September 2025

Authors submit revised/final versions: November - December 2025

Expected publication: February 2026

Abstract length: max. 100 words

Full article length: max. 6000–8000 words (all included, except the abstract)

Link to IJAR guidelines: <https://budrich-journals.de/index.php/ijar/pages/view/einreichungen>

Please send all communication, submission of abstracts, drafts and articles to both of the issue editors: pcanto@orquestra.deusto.es; m.mooken2@gmail.com.