From working with theatre to action research for more regenerative ways of living and organizing: Interview with Lone Hersted

Lone Hersted, Danilo R. Streck, Miren Larrea

Danilo and Miren:
Thanks, Lone, for this interview in International Journal of Action Research (IJAR). Considering you have recently joined us as an editor of IJAR, it is exciting for us to have the opportunity to get to know you better and share that with the readers of IJAR.

As an introduction to the interview, could you give the reader a perspective of your trajectory?

Lone:
Thanks Danilo and Miren for inviting me to this interview! You asked about my trajectory… Well, to make a long story short… I was born in Denmark in 1969 where I grew up. At the age of 16 I went to Peru as an exchange student and did theatre with a local theatre group. As a young woman in my early twenties, I was educated as an actress at an experimental theatre school and afterwards I studied dramaturgy for five years at Aarhus University (in Denmark) where I took a Master’s degree in theatre studies. I worked with experimental theatre for around ten years in Denmark, Norway, Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador, and for a short period I was also involved with actors from Poland from whom I’ve learned a lot. My work has always been driven by curiosity, a strong social commitment, and the urge to experiment with new approaches and new ways of expression. I’ve never been interested in just reproducing the old tradition. For a period, I also worked with interactive digital media in relation to performance theatre and installation art. That was several years before the use of digital media in the art world became more widespread.

After becoming a mother to a lovely son, I started working as a consultant in the field of organizational development informed by systemic, narrative and social constructionist ideas and practices. In particular, I worked with team development based on dialogue and creative approaches to learning and collaboration, including the use of roleplaying. I also worked for a period at Aarhus Municipality as a family therapist with refugee families from many different countries.

In 2016 I submitted my PhD dissertation on relational leading and dialogical processes at Aalborg University. The American professor in social psychology, Kenneth Gergen, was my PhD supervisor. My PhD project was carried out within the frame of action research combining roleplaying with reflexive dialogues and reflecting team in small groups of leaders and employees. The aim was to enhance relational and dialogical competences among leaders and...