

## Exploring (safe) spaces to communicate and connect<sup>1</sup>

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### **Danilo and Miren:**

Thanks, Patricia, for this interview in International Journal of Action Research (IJAR). You have now been editor of this journal for some time, and it is exciting for us to have the opportunity to get to know you better and get to know your perspective on action research and, more specifically, IJAR.

As an introduction to the interview, could share your trajectory with the reader?

### **Patricia:**

Thank you, Danilo and Miren, for inviting me to do this interview. Yes of course, I can share some things about my trajectory that connect to how I approach action research. I was born in Mexico City in 1964, in a middle-class family with progressive values. My parents shared a profound love of our country, our traditions and culture and were also very open to the world around them. My father travelled frequently within Latin America through his job and used to keep his left-over bills and coins in a little black chest. I loved to play with them, imagining other countries and their ways. My mother is half Lebanese, and although I did not meet my grandfather because he died when she was young, his culture was present through the stories she shared about him, and in her sweet tooth! My mother and my father were great readers and actively encouraged their children to find pleasure in reading and to be aware of and understand world developments and how they affected our country. Among my fondest memories are our late and long family breakfasts on Sundays, sipping coffee and sharing the newspapers sprawled on the table. Slipping into this routine with them every time I went back to visit was always very soothing. The last time I experienced it was in 2019, a year before my father passed away.

When I was in primary school we moved to Darien Connecticut because my father was offered a position in the New York City office of the place he worked in. It was the 1970's and we were the only Mexican family there. I did not speak English, but I learned fast, as children do. My mother tells the story of how the blonde little girl next door, and I, spent the first months playing together in the attic without saying a word. I have fond memories of our time as a family there, where I played in the snow for the first time, heard about the Vietnam war and read Charlie Brown comics. Back in Mexico my parents were careful that we did not lose the new language we had learned (as they had been careful that we did not lose Spanish while living in Darien), and since I loved reading, they bought books in English for me on every occasion, opening a whole new world of literature for me. I later became part of the International Pen Pal Association and established written correspondence by post, with young

1 The title of my interview is inspired in a book of autobiographical essays by Mexican writer Olivia Teroba, titled *Un lugar seguro*, published in 2021 Editorial Las Afueras, Barcelona.