

Editorial

In an earlier issue of the *International Journal of Action Research* [2011, 7(3) 248-261], when analysing some European traditions of action research, Werner Fricke stated that “The strongest action research tradition in Western Europe is Scandinavian, especially Norwegian and Swedish”. In this issue four articles are presented that confirm the richness of practices and the depth of theoretical reflection and discussions that can be found in this tradition. Although not planned as a special issue, there is a complementary aspect to the four articles. The first two articles deal with aspects of network building among organisations, and the last two articles are concerned with knowledge and practice in action research.

Starting with the question “*Can action research help transmit ordinary, conventional, descriptive-analytic knowledge?*” Anne Haugen Gausdal, Jarle Moss Hildrum and Bjørn Gustavsen explore the complementarity between the descriptive-analytic “knowing that” and the practical “knowing-how knowledge. In their article “Translating knowing that into knowing how: The case of trust in regional network building” they ask further: “Is action research bound to create its own domain of knowledge, more or less dissociated from the knowledge created by other branches of research, or can action research be brought to serve larger knowledge areas through providing tighter links between knowledge and its use?” Based on a study of a network of a regional group of water cleansing technology firms, trust is identified as a main condition for the functioning and growth of the network. Their conclusion is that only the embodiment of research knowledge into specific social constructions will demonstrate the potential gains of action.

In the second article, “*Facilitating innovation in networks composed of non-mandated relations*”, Svein-Tore Kristiansen explores the processes of transforming a network of non-mandated exchange relations into a cohesive

and innovative partnership based on a seven year research project of constructing and developing an inter-firm network among eight SMEs in the electronics industry in Norway. The author argues, bringing Wittgenstein to the dialogue, that to speed up processes of innovation in networks relations requires facilitation that is able to translate individuals' ideas into collective action, linking the "words in use" by different stakeholders and the worlds of practice.

Nina Bonderup Dohn, in "*On the necessity of intertwining 'knowledge in practice' in action research*" criticises the tendency to either subsume all forms of knowledge under the propositional form in actual argumentative practice, or on the contrary to distinguish them so much from one another that they might seem not to be related at all. She makes the case for a holistic unity of three knowledge aspects: personal experience (know of), practical knowing (know how) and propositional knowledge (know that) that she terms 'knowledge in practice'. For this knowledge production she then considers three paradigmatic forms of collaboration: 'division of labour', 'mutual apprenticeship', and 'co-operative inquiry'. Her argument is that 'mutual apprenticeship' meets the quality issue best.

The article by Oyvind Palshaugen, "*Action research for democracy – a Scandinavian approach*" addresses the same issue from a different perspective, allowing readers to identify different approaches to the relation of knowledge and practice in the Scandinavian tradition. The author draws on the tradition of action research in Scandinavia, which is heavily built on the intent to democratise working life. Dialogue is brought forward as a major cornerstone in this tradition, as explained in this article. This is, according to Palshaugen, why action researchers using this approach do not need to have an in-depth knowledge of the unique constellation of the local circumstances in order to help the local actors find practical solutions to their challenges and the need for local change and development. However, the researcher has the non-transferable responsibility of creating new scientific knowledge, to publicise and discuss this knowledge with the scientific community.

Marika Höhn reviewed the book by Werner Fricke and Hilde Wagner (eds.): "*Demokratisierung der Arbeit. Neuansätze für Humanisierung und Wirtschaftsdemokratie*" (The democratisation of work: New approaches to

humanisation and economic democracy) VSA Hamburg. The reviewer highlights that ‘Without democratisation of work there can be no democratisation of the economy’ is the core thesis uniting the various contributions to the book by researchers, trade unionists and practitioners in the field. Among the topics are the experience gained in initiatives to ‘humanise the workplace’, the concept of ‘Good Work’ and the strategic challenges faced by IG Metall’s ‘Better, Not Cheaper’ campaign.

At the end of the present issue there is Marianne Kristiansen’s and Jørgen Bloch-Poulsen’s “*Report from the Conference on Participation and Power, Aalborg University/Copenhagen, Denmark, 05–07.06.2013*”. This conference followed the “International Symposium on Action and Participatory Research” which took place in Porto Alegre, in 2014. This original initiative of the editors of the *International Journal of Action Research* has among its aims to promote the exchange of practices and reflection on action research in different social and political contexts. The next conference will be held in Colombia, from June 23 to 25, 2015. In the next issue we will provide more information about this conference.

Danilo R. Streck
Editor-in-chief