

# (Participatory) Action Research

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# Kurt Lewin (1890 – 1947)

## Representative of the Action Research

**“Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice.”**

(Lewin, 1948, S. 203.)

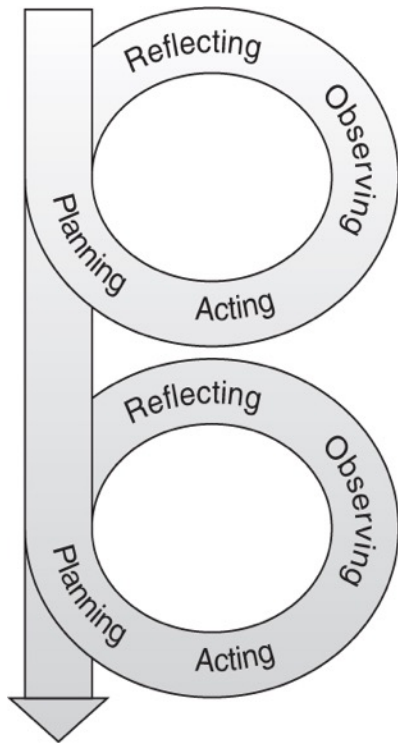
### Principles of the Action Research

- **problemsolving process:** it aims to examine and solve social and organisational issues.
- **value based:** democratic, humanistic and pluralistic.
- **context based:** behaviour needs to be evaluated in the right context (the „total situation“ or „life space“) with all relevant forces that effects it.
- **constructivism:** reality should be explained in terms that exists for a person at a given time.
- **dynamic approach:** reality is perceived as an ever-changing process of achieving equilibrium which is continuously disrupted by the field of forces.
- **process oriented:** ongoing learning process
- **cooperation / participation:** researchers, practioners & clients work closely together in an egalitarian mode with open communication and feedback.

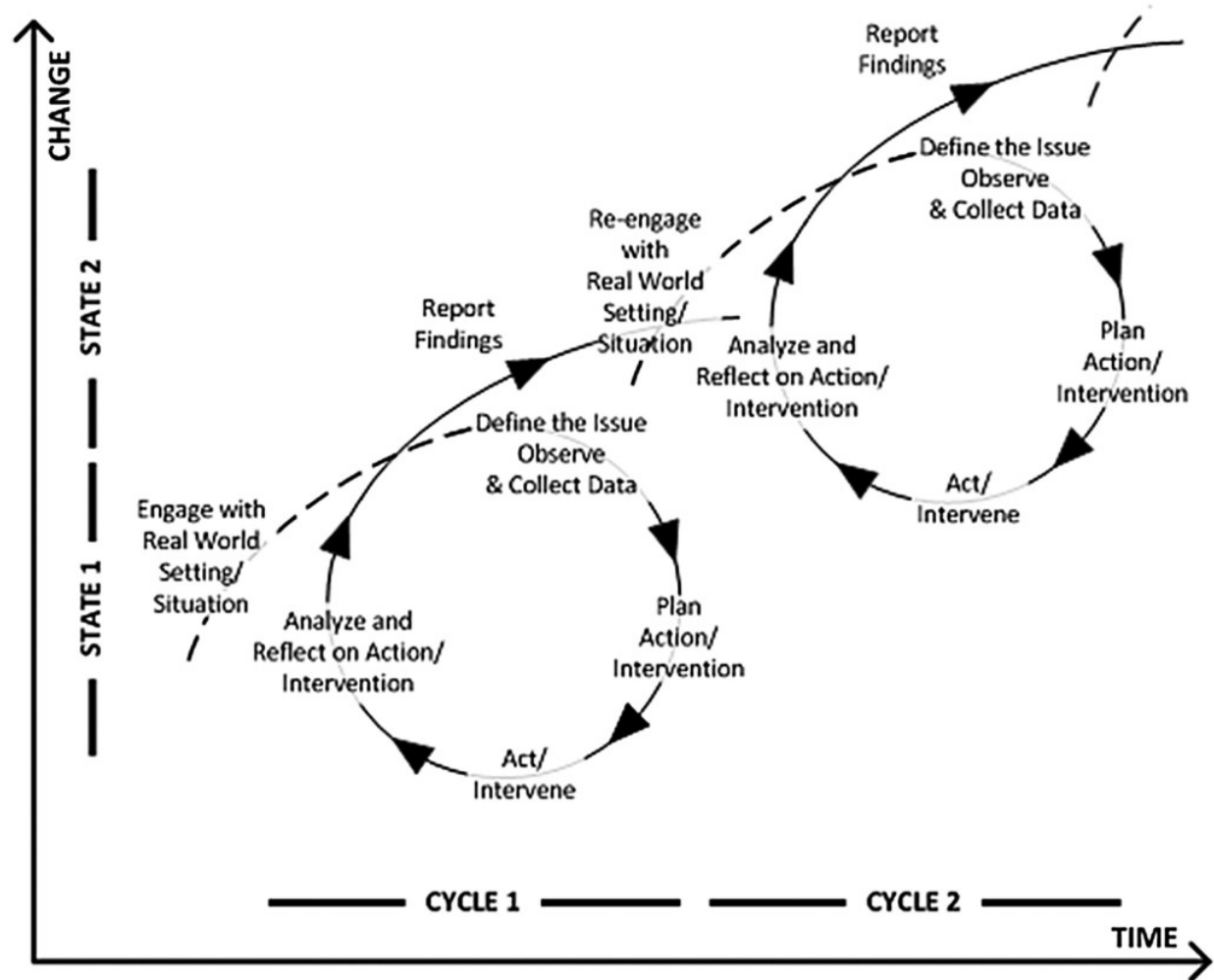
### Theorie of Change

- well established customs or social habits play a major part in preventing change
- three stages: unfreeze (to stirr people up emotianally) – move – refreeze
- community based

# Action Research Cycle



<http://sk.sagepub.com/books/organizational-ethnography/n12.xml>



Adapted by Tommelein, I. from [www.brighthub.com](http://www.brighthub.com); quoted by <http://p2sl.berkeley.edu/glossary/a/>; retrieved: 10.01.2020.

# traditional research or action research?

|                     | traditional research | action research     |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| validity            | generally valid      | context based       |
| relation to society | object of study      | research partner    |
| communication       | science > society    | science < > society |
| value attitude      | unbiased             | normative           |
| demand for design   | passiv               | active              |

**Criticism:** If the boundaries of classical science are called into question, this could encourage a tendency towards economization and mean a loss of autonomy. The resources and freedoms of scientists would be affected. Dealing with fundamental questions and adopting critical perspectives could be made more difficult and research could be reduced to a service function for social interests.

**Replication:** New forms of knowledge production and findings are becoming possible whose reception and relevance extend beyond the science system. Positive social developments can be promoted.

**Plea:** Inclusion of participatory research in the diverse canon of science. This applies in particular to research, research-based teaching and the transformation claim at universities of applied sciences.

Along the lines of Unger, 2014, S.6-9.

# The role of the action researcher

**The action researcher appears emancipatory without giving up his self-image as a researcher.**

- Researchers endeavour to experience and critically examine the common-sense constructs of those being researched and, on the other hand, those being researched learn to relate the researchers' theoretical constructs to their practice and to derive practical consequences for action from them (Heinze, 1987, p 31.).
- This is a balancing act that must be maintained for two reasons (Kramer et al. 1979, S. 31):
  - It is precisely the social role and awareness of the social researcher that (. . .) should bring with it the possibility of gaining knowledge and taking action that would not have come about without contact with the researcher.
  - A certain distance is necessary if he does not want to run the risk of losing himself in particular interests.

Quoted by Unger, 2014, p. 16-17.

Researcher, Educator, Organizer, Networker, Facilitator, Advocate, Mediator, Provocateur, Translator, Witness, Accompanist, ...

# Communities

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## Characteristics of communities:

- a sense of identification, belonging or commitment,
- a distinction against others,
- shared concerns, interests, norms and values,
- accessible interaction (time) spaces

(Hitzler et al. 2008, S. 10 and Israel et al. 2005, S. 7)

## Examples for communities:

- neighborhoods / cities
- companies
- clubs / societies
- associations
- interest groups
- like-minded people

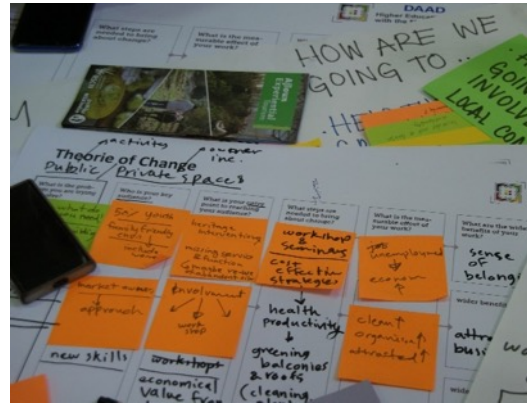
# If you want to truly change something, try to understand it.

“...a respect for people and for the knowledge and experience they bring to the research process, a belief in the ability of democratic processes to achieve positive social change, and a commitment to action”

Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, Maguire, 2003, p. 15.

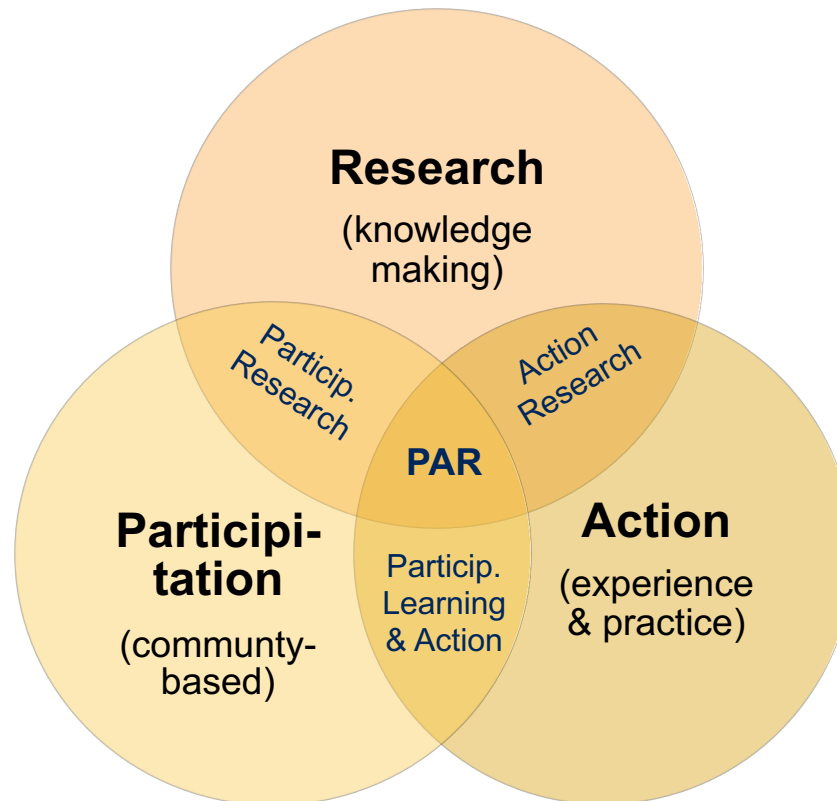


## Participatory Action Based Research and Education in Jordan, 2019



# Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Participatory action research is committed research that uses the possibilities of partnership and empirical research to critically reflect and actively influence the social, political and organizational contexts in which it is embedded. (Unger, 2014, S.3)



Chevalier/Buckles,  
2019, S. 21.



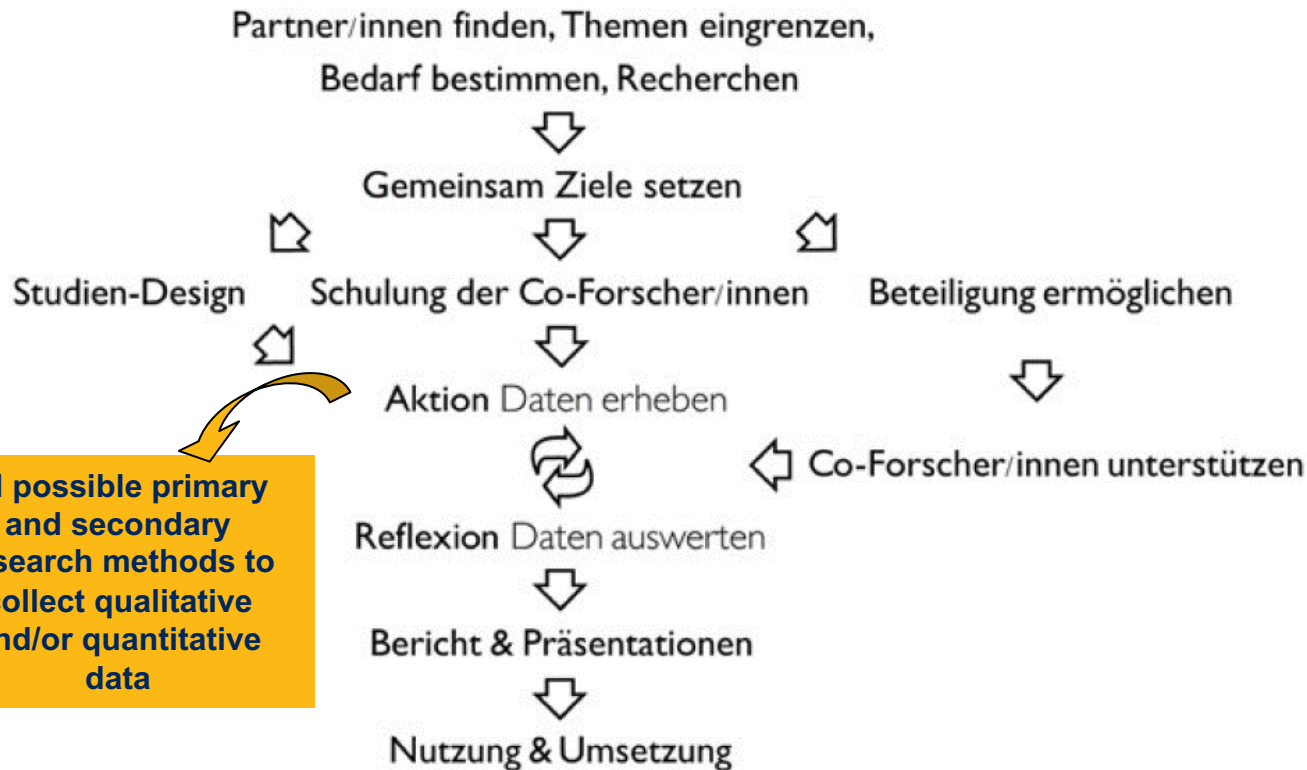
# Forms of participation

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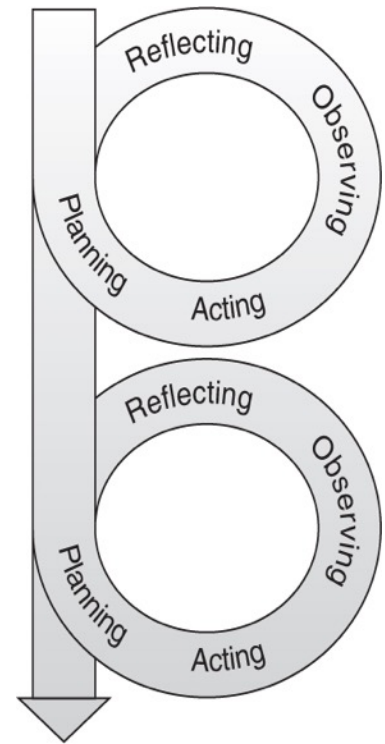
- |   |                                                                   |                                                                                                                        |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Übliche Form der Teilnahme<br>( <i>compliant participation</i> )  | Community-Mitglieder werden über die Studie aufgeklärt und geben ihr informiertes Einverständnis zur Teilnahme         |
| 2 | Gesteuerte/gezielte Beratung<br>( <i>directed consultation</i> )  | Einzelne Community-Mitglieder werden gezielt um Rat gefragt, z.B. im Rahmen von Expert/innen-Interviews                |
| 3 | Gegenseitige Beratung<br>( <i>mutual consultation</i> )           | Länger währende Zusammenarbeit von Wissenschaftler/innen mit Community-Mitgliedern, z.B. in Form eines Projektbeirates |
| 4 | Stärkende Partnerschaft<br>( <i>empowering co-investigation</i> ) | Gleichberechtigte Zusammenarbeit von Forscher/innen und Community-Partnern, z.B. in Form einer partizipativen Studie   |

Chung und Lounsbury, 2006.

# Participatory Action Research Process



all possible primary and secondary research methods to collect qualitative and/or quantitative data



<http://sk.sagepub.com/books/organizational-ethnography/n12.xml>

Unger, 2014, p. 52.

# Literature (Participatory) Action Research

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