

A Powerful Relationship: The Interdependence of Action Research and Social Justice Work

Manu Sharma

Volume 25, Number 1, 2025

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1117174ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33524/cjar.v25i1.763>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Canadian Association of Action Research in Education

ISSN

1925-7147 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Sharma, M. (2025). A Powerful Relationship: The Interdependence of Action Research and Social Justice Work. *The Canadian Journal of Action Research*, 25(1), 1–2. <https://doi.org/10.33524/cjar.v25i1.763>

A POWERFUL RELATIONSHIP: THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF ACTION RESEARCH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE WORK

An Editorial

Manu Sharma

Thompson Rivers University

In an age where political and global leaders are making decisions that impact our communities on a very personal level (such as access to produce, water, land, life, education, and healthcare), it is important to take time to think about the need for community to be in conversation with one another in order to address conflicts that are often based in political agendas, political tensions, and political ideologies. We are in a time in which we see tariff wars, immigration policies becoming exclusionary, and land-based wars happening across the globe connected with people we love. As a result we see poverty, bloodshed, and suffering. Many of us, as individual human beings are experiencing feelings of pain, fear, and sadness, and thus, we must acknowledge these feelings and experiences as a community with a voice for collective humanity.

As a social justice educator who believes in and knows the power action research has to bring together community and to be the voice of its own values as human beings, we must come together and talk with one another in brave spaces that allow us to come up with a shared path that is filled with hope, compassion, and that ultimately allows us to move forward together as a community. These brave spaces can be supporting our local farmers, grassroots organizations, and novel initiatives that help us come together in this time of division, polarity, and constant tension.

Action research provides a venue for community initiated, community led, and community created solutions to the problems that we all face. The beauty of action research lies in the strength of people taking the power back from the top-down narrative occurring across our globe at this time. Action research allows us to place trust in our community spaces, to think collaboratively, and try different creative solutions informed by multiple perspectives and lived experiences. This research allows us to challenge our own biases, both conscious and unconscious, as well as challenges our preconceived structures of power and hierarchy. Finally, it brings the community into the conversation and gives power to the people to improve the micro level of their daily lives with hope to impact the macro level when this is done in numbers that cannot be overlooked.

May the partnership between social justice work and action research always be interdependent and pave new pathways forward in which we as human beings work together and see each other through the lens of our shared humanity while trying to address global tensions, and the political strife that harms us all in so many ways.

It is with the backdrop of the power of action research to amplify the voice of community and our shared vision of humanity that I have the honor of commending the authors in this issue for drawing our attention the strength of action research in recognizing the interdependent relationship between social justice work and action research.

In the first article, **Susan Jagger and the Eco Research Organization** highlight the importance of reaching out into community to include students and acknowledging the role and power of our student community. Second, **Gembo Tshering, Tashi Dendup, Rinchen Tshewang, and Tandin Pelijor** recognize the importance of inclusion via different and diverse learning styles among students in relationship to the dynamic nature of instructional activities. In a similar vein, **Barbara Brown and Soroush Sabbaghan** look at building more inclusive research practices that help empower students as they learn about research skills using generative AI.

In the fourth article, **Antoinette Gagné, Amir Kalan, Nayibe Rosado-Mendinueta, Sreemali Herath and Yecid Ortega** challenge hierarchies in research and knowledge mobilization efforts, while **Lyle Hamm, Krysta Kinney, Zeinab Razavi, Shari Smith-Ellis, Andrea Garner, Tina Cole, and Katharine Hartnett** draw our attention to the power dynamics experienced by Vice-Principals, particularly the moral distress that is heavily placed on them when they are not able to adequately address issues due to systemic inequity. Last, **Len Chan** helps us become self-reflective practitioners by thinking through our own unconscious bias when considering assessment practices. Each of the six articles in this issue offers insight into the interdependent partnership between social justice work and action research by examining the values of community, inclusion, hierarchy, power dynamics, and unconscious bias. ■