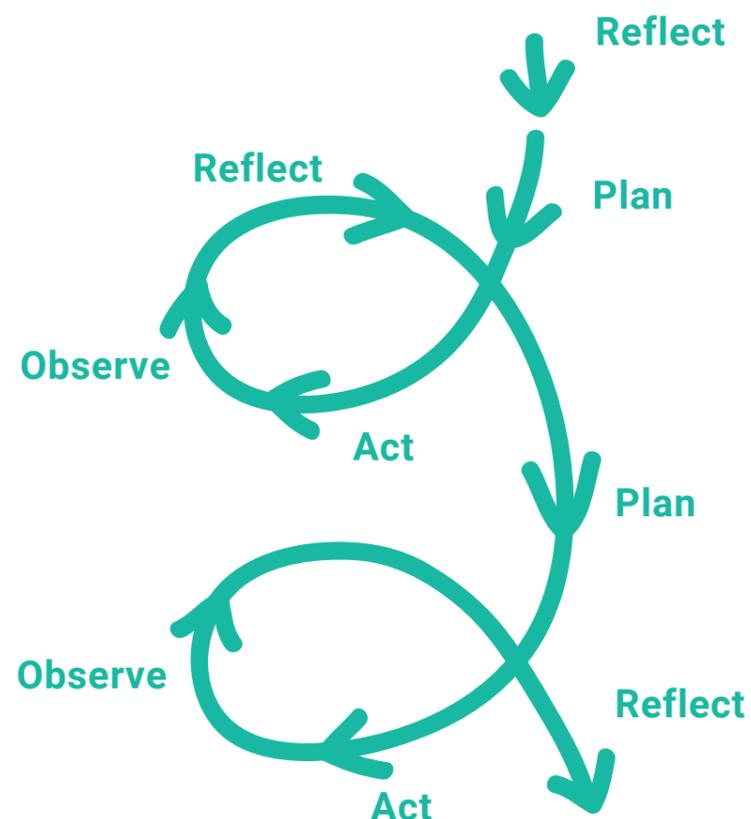


What is Action Research?

“There is no ‘short answer’ to the question ‘What is action research?’ But let us say as a working definition that action research is a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.” (Handbook of Action Research, Peter Reason & Hilary Bradbury)

A primary purpose of Action Research is to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives. Through this practical knowledge, a wider purpose of Action Research is to contribute to

- the increased economic, political, psychological, or spiritual well-being of human beings and communities, and
- a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the wider ecology of the planet of which we are an intrinsic part.



Typical Action Research Questions

What? (What do we see?) / **So what?** (what sense can we make of emerging data)? / **Now what?** (What are our options & resources?)

Need/Purpose: What was the need/problem/idea that required action? What was defined as the purpose?

People: Who played an important role? Who helped and who obstructed?

Challenges: What are the challenges that were encountered? How were they dealt with? Who helped to overcome them?

Emergence/Impact: What is emerging that is new? What difference did the action taken create? What impact resulted?

Personal Learning: What was my personal learning? What new capacities have I gained? Where is my curiosity leading me now?

Next Steps: Based on what we are learning, what are the next actions we need to plan? What is the purpose of taking these actions? Who will ensure they are taken? What in particular do we hope to learn and gain from this?