

ABSTRACT

Title: Practically. Action Research in Theory and Practice – In the wake of LOM
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The aim of this thesis is to investigate if, how, and in which way research, where researchers and practitioners in joint action take part in development processes, both contribute theoretical knowledge to academic society and practical knowledge to working life.

The empirical part of the study analyses the content of eight academic theses, based on dialogue oriented projects related to a national action research programme (LOM 1985-1990) written by action researchers who participated in this programme. The interpretation of these key texts is based on theory of knowledge, feministic theory, a historical overview of the action research tradition as well as on the author's own practical and theoretical experience of action research from the LOM programme. The main themes in focus are: the context of the projects; the role of the researcher; methodology and processes; research questions; practical and theoretical results; as well as the gender dimension in development processes.

The study shows three types of result as the outcome of action research processes:

(1) Results that contribute to production of theories and to accumulated academic knowledge (*theoretical results*);

(2) Development of theoretical knowledge and practical competence related to the organisation as an effect of the dialogue-based interaction between researcher and practitioner (*practical knowledge development*);

(3) Concrete, practical results from the development process in form of interventions addressed to the referred organisation (*practical intervention*).

The study also shows a discrepancy between the theory of democratic dialogue and its practice in processes where a gender perspective is missing.

In order to meet the political demands on universities to work closer with actors in their surroundings, the study finally points out ways for action research to develop its role in social science further in order to fulfil the need for a holistic, reflexive and responsible research where tacit and practical knowledge are brought into the field of academic knowledge.

Keywords: *Action research, Conference, Development, Dialogue, Gender, Learning, Participation, Process, Responsibility.*