

# Action research for democracy – a Scandinavian approach

Øyvind Pålshaugen

Many proponents of action research for democracy seem to presuppose that to anchor action research in democratic ideals is a sufficient base for action researchers to legitimate their democratic purposes and intentions. This article starts out from the presupposition that anchoring action research in democratic ideals is in fact idealism, and argues the case that action research for democracy has to be anchored in some democratic institution of society to have a real legitimacy base for engaging in cooperation with others on democratic development. From this point of departure, a Scandinavian approach for democracy that aims at impact on society as well as social science is presented. The article presents just selected aspects of this tradition. The presentation is based on the presumption that some of the aspects, that seem to be relevant only within a Scandinavian context, may in fact have general relevance for any other approach of action research for democracy.

**Key words:** democratic procedures, discourse democracy, democratic dialogue, dialogue conference, development organization, linguistic simulation, scientific publication, Scandinavia

## Introduction

From its very beginning, most action research in Scandinavia has in various ways been oriented towards democratisation of working life. However, at times the explicit focus on democratisation may seem to have been more or