

Humanitarian Action: Climate Change and Displacements

# Construction of knowledge in Humanitarian Action: Pedagogical Issues

Lisbon 25-26 October, 2021

- 9.30 10.15 Participatory Action Research in Social Interventions and Transfer to Teaching
- 10.15 11.15 Group work
- 11.15 11.35 Coffee Break
- 11.35 13.00 Plenary
- 13.00 15.00 Lunch break
- 15.00 17.00 The Greek experience of Action Research shared by Greek students

The pedagogical approach in designing graduate courses in the area of humanitarian action, aiming to develop:

- ✓ Students' research capacity
- ✓ Students' ability for social intervention

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## Linking theory to action

Design is not limited to the subject matter comprising the specific course (knowledge output, theories, concepts, cognitive gains); it is directly related to the way knowledge is linked to:

- the social context within which knowledge is embedded and which students have to be able to read and unpack
- social action, enabling thus students to intervene

#### Methodological approach

- The methodological approach draws from Participatory Action Research
- It includes theoretical concepts and methodological tools (in research techniques, in taking action, and in methods of analysis), allowing for the:
- ✓ analysis of needs and understanding the field of intervention;
- ✓ definition of the goals informing the design and delivery of specific interventions;
- ✓ analysis of action and engagement in reflective practices

- Humanitarian Action addresses key problems engaging people and communities, with the potentiality of creating positive change at a small or bigger scale. It aims at empowering individuals and social groups.
- Critical pedagogy (Paulo Freire, 1921-1997) contributes to educational transformation, equally aiming at empowering learners, liberating them from the culture of silence and obscurity of ignorance.



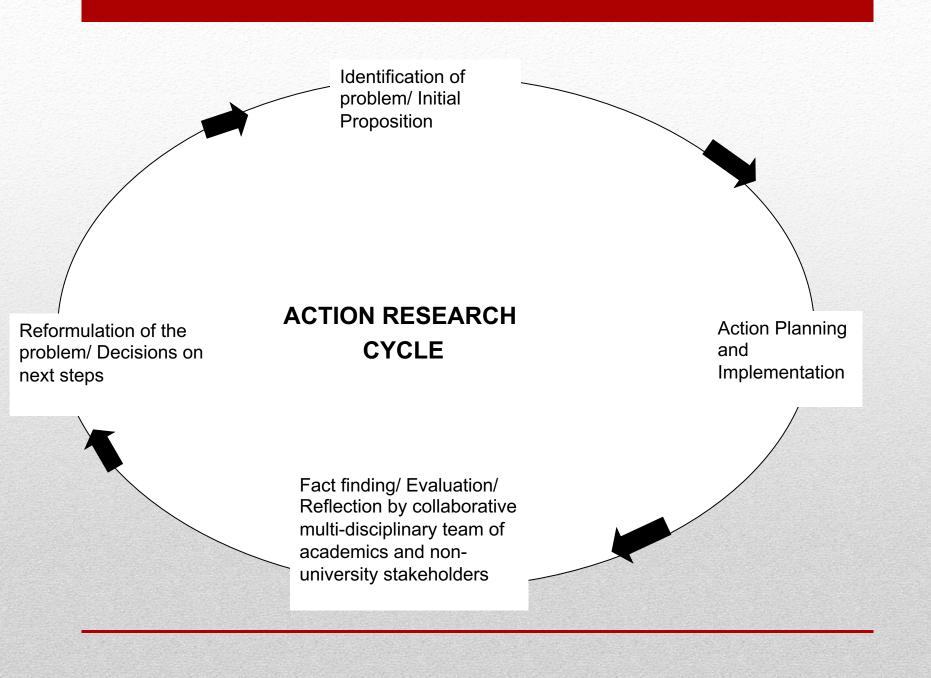
Both are political acts in the sense of a shared commitment to democratic change

### **Both Humanitarian Action and Learning concepts:**

- start from the needs and the problem of the recipient and not from the solution,
- are based on linking ideas/theory to practice or vice versa,
- promote critical thinking and develop critical awareness that help people improve their lives and take responsibility for them,
- attempt to transform oppressed people and prevent them from being objects of aid/or of education, into subjects of their self-governance and emancipation,
- aim at constructing a more just and equitable society,
- both benefit from an Action-Research approach

#### **Action research**

- A methodology for intervention, development and change within groups and communities
- > Challenges traditional social science
- Moves beyond accumulation of knowledge created from outside experts to a dynamic inquiry with active theory building.
- Knowledge through action and for action
- Research informed by social action and leading to social action (Kurt Lewin, 1946).
- The process as important as the outcome



- Participative communities of inquiry where change is achieved with others instead for others
- Communities of inquiry and action addressing issues that are significant for those who participate as coresearchers/co-learners.
- Active participation in the change process
- Shared learning and shared process

Disconnection between higher education and the 'public good'

Action Research provides knowledge generation, capable of producing 'public goods' through:

- ✓ concrete and practical problem solving
- ✓ shaping deeper reflection processes
- √ transdisciplinarity
- ✓ knowledge produced in the context of application much of which is external to the university itself
- ✓ broad stakeholder participation in research-based discourses
- ✓ teaching as apprenticeship to problem-oriented AR teams
- ✓ bringing about more liberated, solidary, fair and sustainable social situations