Action Research and Organisational Development: Case Study Sharing

Action research is an approach that can help shape methodological practices used to promote organizational change and development. Reason & McArdle (n.d.) stated that *Action research is a practice for the systematic development of knowing and knowledge, but based in a rather different form from traditional academic research*. Action research and OD are closely related to each other. Reason & McArdle describe their relationship as “cousins”, and they define Action Research and OD broadly in the following statements:

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*a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview…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.* (Reason & Bradbury, 2001a:1 cf (Reason & McArdle))

Due to the failure, or limited success, of many other approaches, processes and technologies designed to improve work performance and to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, research has focused increasingly on the socio-psychological factors of work processes, or rather the human factors (Organisational Development 2012). Most if not all think tank organisations need to undertake OD, as a means of strengthening their work and achieving their short and longer-term goals. In order to explore the potential of action research as an OD approach, and also to help build their capacity in research quality, five think tanks from the Think Tank Initiative cohort came together to implement an action research project on Organizational Capacity Building (OCB). Located in Latin America, South Asia and Africa, these five institutes chose to work on specific areas within their organizations in order to improve their overall organisational performance which is in progress.

This panel is intended to bring together representatives of research institutions, NGOs and INGOs from South Asia and around the world which may have plenty of success and lessons to share from their own experiences and case studies of organisational change and development. The following questions, along with others raised by participants, are expected to be discussed in the panel:

- What OD issues are faced by think tanks?
- What action research and OD processes are best suited for think tanks?
- How to buy-in staff in the newly introduced OD processes to ensure participation and democracy?
- How to ensure knowledge management during and after the OD process?
- How to mainstream the OD processes implemented in the organisations?
Hence this panel welcomes the organisations and institutions to share their case studies on the given thematic area.

**References**


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