

# Action Research & Development

*The importance of creating **Sanctuary** when we commit to do research leading to sustainable change*

Presentation in the EAGT – IAAGT Hamburg Research Conference

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# Opening Reflection...

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## What happens when....

- ▶ *Have you ever been moved to agitation or excitement.... When you find you are talking to your self – 'what is going on here? How can this be? Can we try this instead?*
- ▶ *When your curiosity and passion keeps building and shifts from being your inner questions to becoming your outer questions?*
- ▶ **What is....**
  - ▶ Naturally – if we are working in a Therapy room/classroom –it is not a long distance to move inner questions – to outer questions or experiments – as your CLIENTS or students are right there and you can experiment and explore with them (and even maybe with their families, bosses, teachers, etc.)

## ▶ But what if

- ▶ your questions are bigger?
- ▶ You are curious about other levels of system? The Field around? Curious about many perspectives?
- ▶ You feel insecure on your own /prefer to develop and drive this process with others?
- ▶ you would like to do some kind of research – that is compatible with our Gestalt Philosophy?
- ▶ You do not want to prove anything – but to do research to learn – but NOT as end – but as the means and input to driving bigger development & change process?

.....this is where i am living – **as an Action Researcher and Activist** – being true to myself – daring to be passionate and to invite others to jointly engage in large complex questions and change!

# What are the issues that have moved me – raised my Questions?

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## Sweden

- Refugees - Well Being – Integration and Human Rights
  - *How are the refugees feeling and what do they need for their own well-being & to feel more **integrated** and at home in Sweden? (From Inner to Outer Well-being) (1996-2020)*
- Aging as a Refugee – exploring well-being - Human rights & Integration from a Cross generation – culture- religion – nation – gender - sector of Society perspective
  - *What is the experience of How are Refugees aging with dignity? What do they need? How aware & sensitive is the field of stakeholders to the diversity of needs at the **cross-section** of generations – cultures – genders – nations – race – class – sexual identity – Sectors of Society ? (EI WISH - 2009-2019)*

# What are the issues drawing my attention – raising my Questions?

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Sweden

## ➤ Nano Saftety

- What kind of relationships do Nano Safety experts have who are working at all stages in the life cycle of Nano material? What is needed to to build greater trust – **to support sharing of learning/ experience in a faster ways** to make changes – in order to reduce toxicity in humans and the earth (2017-2022)

## ➤ Gestalt Therapists & Practitioners – now and in the future?

- Who are we? How do we make a living? How do Cooperate? Develop? How important is being legitimate? What supports and hinders our work and development? How do we Engage with our Society? What ideas for development do we have? (2020- current)
- If the issues of anxiety, psycho-pharma, depression & loneliness are overwhelming Swedish Society – why is Gestalt T not invited into the conversation? The Govt offer?

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# What are the issues drawing my attention – raising my Questions?

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## In Jamaica & Bhutan - Well-being –Sustainability Goals

- How is Well-Being- being defined, experienced, and integrated – individually & in the various sectors or fields of Society?
  - Sustainability Goal #3 is **Well-being** – how is this being defined and included in the development of Jamaica in policy and practice – on all levels of system across Society?
  - What can we learn from the various stakeholders approach, experience, impact with WB in Jamaica?
  - What is supporting and hindering Well-being to be **more holistic, diversity sensitive approach, policies and practices** for Well-being? (2017 to present)

- In Sweden and Jamaica and around the World – *Mobilizing stakeholders for sustainable development (the innovative University Program – 2001 to present)*

- Research to impact and development integrating stakeholder needs & relations in teaching, research – in over 100 countries around world
  - How can we support Universities to be expand their mission from Education and Research to **include relationships and Impact** with each other **and with Society - learning and development for Common Good?**
  - How can we transform our Pedagogy in the Masters in Sustainability – to be responsive to local and regional needs - for sustainability and development?

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## Take a moment to reflect to yourself....

- ▶ What can you notice about your own sensations (with clients, society) that triggers and moves you?
- ▶ How do you act on this?
- ▶ What supports and hinders you?

So when you have a deep sensitivity to your clients or community or society – and feel moved by some issues – and people’s experiences ....And your passion and curiosity move you to engage

**And you KNOW YOU CANNOT DO THIS ON YOUR OWN!!!**

And you know there is a diversity of perspectives – positions – perspectives .... That can be polarizing

That the system and field is not usually connected – distracted - not committed

Using the AR approach can support you to design a process jointly with the others who care - to lead/participate in a systematic inquiry – that will lead to learning & developing insights and knowledge - - that can impact us personally – relationally - as a community – as a country

**BUT You need to be ready** to commit – to dedicate a lot of energy to what is important to you – and to be willing to honor & energize others – across the diverse fields – to develop their own curiosity and commitment to a long term process – where learning and development process – is often **complex and requires co-creation!**

***How do we lead this?  
- Approach and methods &  
challenges***



# Intertwining – interacting – interweaving – breathing

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- **Gestalt Principles and practices**
- **Action Research Principles and approach**
- **Sanctuary Principles and practices**

Gestalt Approach	Action Research Approach – Principles	Sanctuary – Aging as a Refugee, GT in Sweden
Sensation 10	<b>What is this phenomena? What is the field?</b> Curiosity & Taking initiative – current state? What do we build on?	Curiosity, urgency, energy, getting ready – <b>m-b-f</b>
Awareness	<b>Who else cares?</b> - Identifying & gathering diversity of stakeholders in the Field (indiv meetings, focus groups) –to explore experience -Force field analysis, critical thinking, relationship mapping – <b>Generating vision &amp; RQ – personal- organisational – field</b>	Clarity, honesty,- needs, issues, ideas, FEEL SAFE, motivated & included
Mobilizing energy	<b>How can we approach, study, learn and work together?</b> <b>Jointly</b> designing the AR – all levels of system, Ethics, needs, benefits, challenges, Force field analysis, Planning, <b>contracting</b> , funding, resources, collaboration,	Relationships, Rhythm, Forms, LT Commitment <b>Trust &amp; Safety</b>
Action	<b>How will we Work in conscious, systematic &amp; ethical ways?</b> Phase 1 – Training, Jointly Conducting <b>AR process &amp; follow principles</b> Phase 2 – <b>Jointly</b> Leading Development, making improvements, securing Change and meaning, Reflecting -	Reflection, caring, consent, Force Field analysis, ethics, Working on all LOS simultaneously
Contact	<b>How can we continuously reflect, analyse, give/get feedback, make adjustments &amp; integrate – weekly, monthly, meetings–honesty–facts– reflections – Benchmarking;</b>	Feeling included – to give & receive, to reflect/learn,
Reflection & Evaluation	Phase 1 – AR Feedback & Prioritizing workshops – Analysis, results Phase 2 - Development reviews – assessments, all stakeholders,	Inclusive, diversity sensitive, in and across all LOS,
Integration & Sustainability	<b>How can we Integrate, diffuse &amp; Sustain</b> - learning, results, processes relationships, structures, policies, legislation, experiences, culture, reporting, articles, conferences,	Learning alliances, sustaining energy, platforms, culture,  2022-09-02
Closure	Final conference, Appreciation, what is next,	Celebration, rest

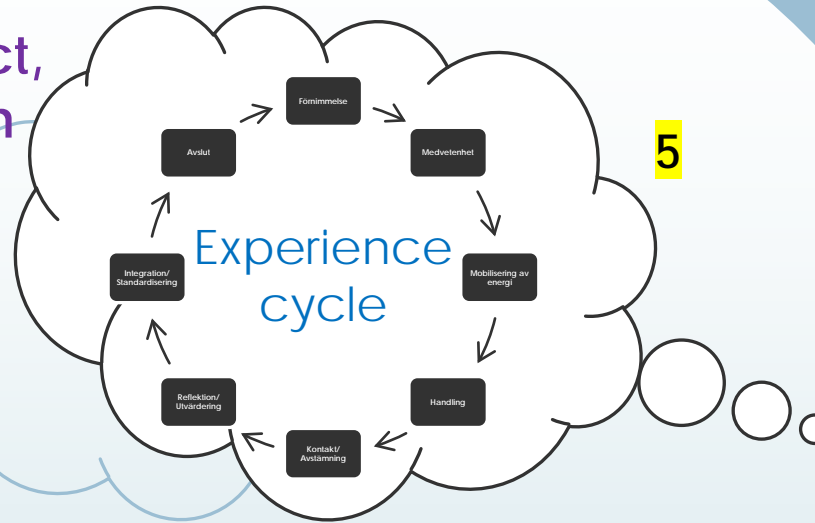
# Action research and development

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Social, process, product, organisation innovation



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## RELATIONS BASED LEARNING ALLIANCE

Construction of a Platform and Culture for common learning

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Improve the research to innovation process, relations and innovation system

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# Principles for Action Research!

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- ▶ *To feel the support and guidance for designing and conducting research that stands on a philosophy that invites and welcomes us*
- ▶ To engage with issues in our society/organisation/communities that move us
- ▶ To search for, gather and mobilize others who are affected by and effecting these issues
- ▶ to commit to working together for a long-term agreement –that has a common and separate goals and a common process:
  - ▶ That aim to jointly study, learn and discover and share our learnings together
  - ▶ And to jointly prioritize and transform learnings and insights into ideas for change – at all levels of system
  - ▶ And to jointly commit to designing and managing the change and development processes
  - ▶ And to jointly support ways to integrate these changed and that are – personal – relational – political - organisational - national - to be continuously reflected on and sustained
- ▶ AR a LT Research and Development Design and approach that integrates various methods of collecting data (qualitative and quantitative)
  - ▶ that enhances inclusion, ethics, participation, equal voice, reflection & contributes to making the diversity of needs and experiences more visible
- ▶ AR &D is relationship based – with a clear contract for a long-term commitment to working hard, experimenting, reflecting, sharing, learning and developing, innovating, co-creating – for personal and common good, resilience and sustainability!

# Principles – for creating Sanctuary at every step

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- ▶ **To invite/explore Curiosity/urgency/energy/Resistance**
  - ▶ In our various Levels of system – personally, as a group, as a wider team, organisation, network
- ▶ **To be sensitive to our Diversity –**
  - ▶ of our well-being needs and approaches to enhance inclusiveness – *persistence* - *patience* - *humbleness* across generation-cultures-gender-nation-race-sector of society -power bases - perspectives –
- ▶ **To be relationship based – I – Thou**
  - ▶ in respect, clarity, care, compassion - develop trust and sustain long term commitment, Contracting
- ▶ **To work in a Systematic way of working to enhance (COE)**
  - ▶ Experimenting and learning and growth
  - ▶ Contact with self and others - Relationships
  - ▶ Ongoing reflection, feedback and adjustments
- ▶ **To Feeling safe –**
  - ▶ to enhance Presence, honesty and energy, ethics , clarity, commitment
- ▶ **To continuously reflect, learn, share and integrate and sustain and question**  
(critical thinking) what we experience, learn and develop

## Beauty of AR &D Sanctuary

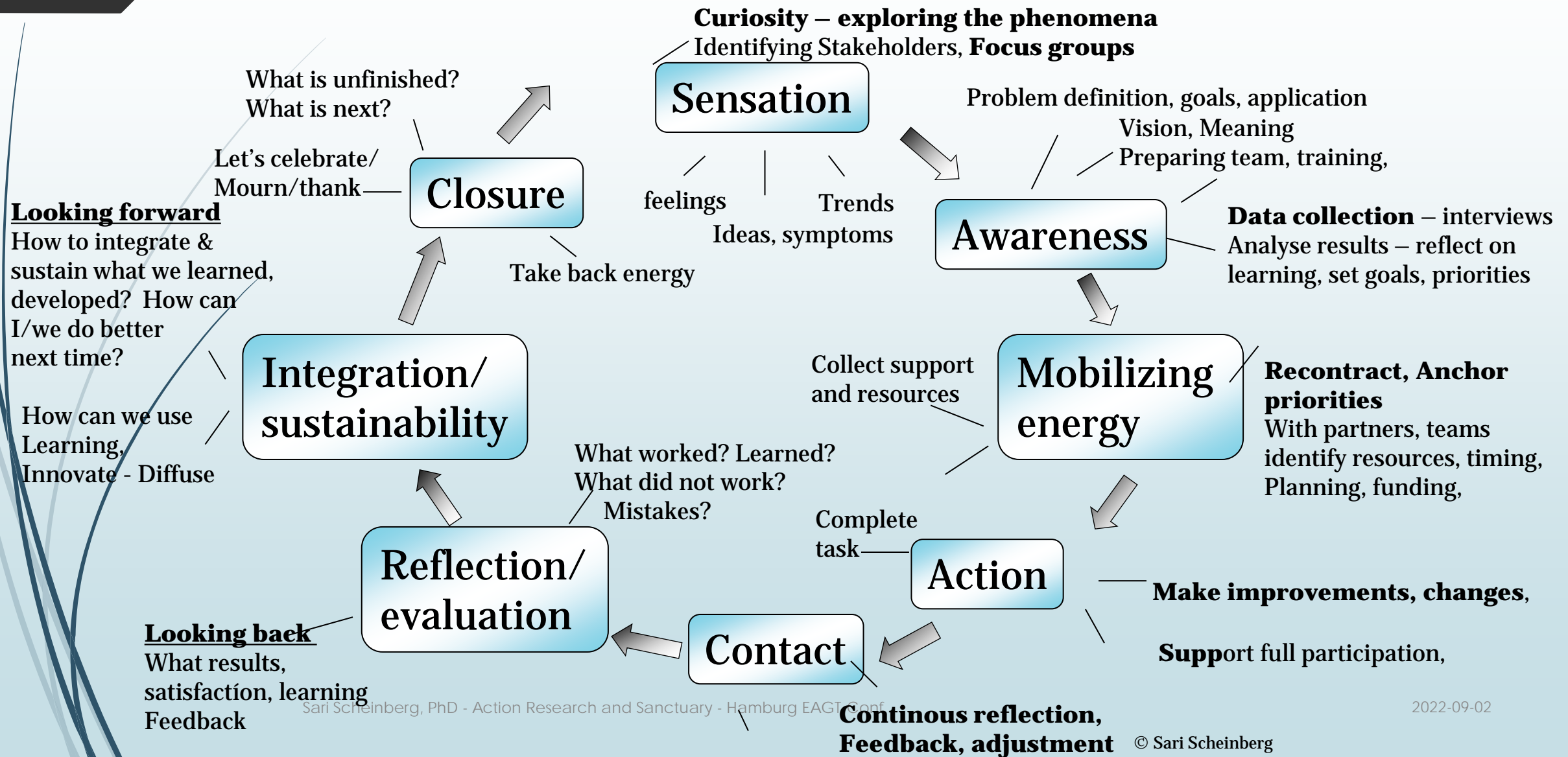
- Conducting a **conscious & ethically driven research approach** leading to reliable & trustworthy results
- Mobilizing stakeholders **to jointly commit to a Long Term AR&D process** – studying, analysing, prioritizing & making change
- Experiencing how the **energy you invest and commit** – are the first steps that create the sacred ground for **I-Thou** – that is the glue for long term commitment
- **Following the COE** to hold our rhythm – flow and contact consciousness
- **Continuous reflection** – assessment- feedback - adjustment
- Collaborating long term leads to the development of **sustainable learning alliances** – supporting a join effort to learn & make impact together
- Action research is a life style as much as a scientific approach – of 'experiment – learning'

## Challenges to creating Sanctuary

- **Taking initiative** - most people wait for others to take initiative – you have to start the process!
- Working **simultaneously at all levels of system** – otherwise change doesn't stick
- We need **diversity sensitive teams - concepts and methods and approaches** – otherwise it is not inclusive
- **Managing multiple roles** - as a researcher/facilitator/teacher – gestalt in practice
- **People are impatient & in a hurry – hard to concentrate – hard to reflect** – COE guides us
- **NO ONE is an expert** – we need to be humble, inclusive, go slow, and co-creative, **need to learn from & share with each other!!**
- **Long term commitment – is essential – but very difficult** - People need to balance their jobs, focus, politics
- **Money flow** - need to educate Funding agencies



# Meta Action Research Cycle of Experience



## Reflections from our Session?

- ▶ What is did you learn? What seems exciting from your initial impressions?
- ▶ What do you want to learn more about?
- ▶ Can this approach be useful for you – in your work?
- ▶ Any feedback for me?



Thank you so much for today!

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