

ANNUAL REPORT

2024/2025



Letter from the Chair

Dear ARNA members and friends,

Since our 2024 Conference, ARNA has experienced a pivotal period, marked by significant achievements and a vigorous renewed commitment to the vision of our Network. Amidst the dynamic global participatory action research landscape, with an emphasis on the Americas, ARNA is proud to share in this Annual Report the vibrant work of the Action Research Communities (ARCs), the Coordinating Leadership Team (CLT), and the successful 2025 Annual Hybrid Conference Committee (dART) – driven by the dedication of ARNA leadership and staff and the unwavering support of our membership and sponsors.

While ARNA encountered the ongoing challenge of supporting a network with such a widespread action research community, both agility and focus on technical innovations for meaningful connections allowed us to adapt effectively and emerge as a stronger network. I am incredibly grateful for the contributions of every individual who continued to make the Action Research Network of the Americas such a strong and welcoming place to thrive in the world of participatory action research.

Looking ahead to the next year, I believe ARNA can continue to be confident in strategic planning initiatives that will further enhance technological capabilities, deepen our outreach, further sustainability efforts, and continue delivering value and impact.

Please explore this report to learn more about our journey this year and the aspirations for the future.

Addressing this year's annual report brings a mix of emotions, as it is my last activity as the Chair of the ARNA Coordinating Leadership Team. Serving ARNA in this capacity has been an immense privilege and the accomplishments we have achieved together are a source of great pride.

Achievements included in this Annual Report would not have been possible without the unwavering dedication and hard work of the ARNA Coordinating Leadership Team, staff, membership, and supporters. Deep gratitude is extended to each individual for their commitment to our mission and vision.

I have full confidence in the future of ARNA. The new strategic planning, led by the incoming Chair of the ARNA Coordinating Leadership Team, Dr. Megan Bolton will undoubtedly lead our organization to continued success. Megan will chair the CLT with an abundance of passion and dedication I have had the pleasure of witnessing throughout our time served together.

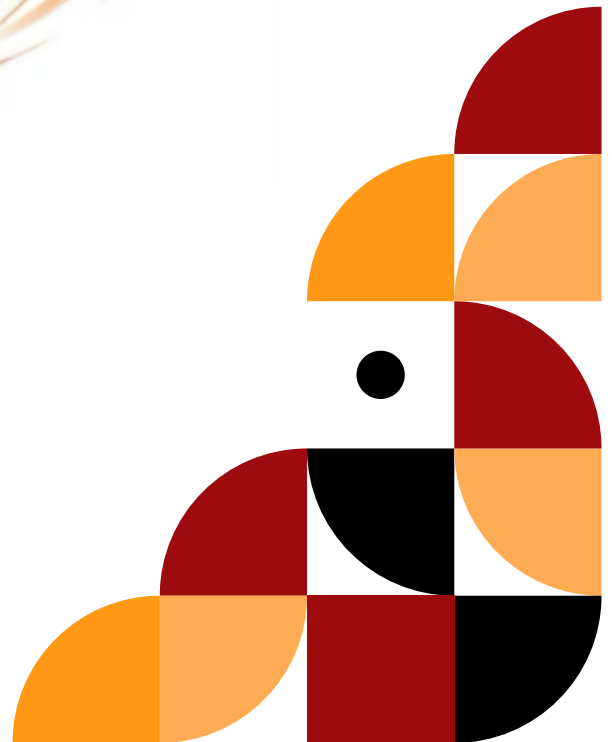
The relationships forged and the lessons learned during my time as Chair are cherished by me. Watching ARNA continue to thrive and make a positive impact on the important place participatory action research serves globally, particularly in the Americas, is anticipated by me – with great enthusiasm.

Thank you for your support, your trust, and your commitment to ARNA.

Serving has been an honor.

Candace

2025 Hybrid Annual Conference





Letter from dART Committee

Conference Co Chairs, Dr. Candace Kaye and Members of the dART Conference Committee

Introduction

As 2025 Conference Co Chair, for the Annual Report I am pleased to introduce the process and outcomes of the 2025 annual hybrid conference in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico on May 16 and 17 with the theme, An Artful Experience: The use of the arts throughout the participatory action research process.

Members of the Conference Dream Action Research Team (dART) organized and brought together action researchers from around the world within a hybrid community to share the focus of the arts as a form of communicating and making meaning throughout the participatory action research (PAR) process. In order to take action and effect change, participants contemplated this concept and considered the role that visual, lyrical, and performing arts play in creating action research questions, involving community, documenting and analyzing research findings, and/or exploring creative ways to present participatory action research findings. Throughout the presentations and events at the two day conference, participants investigated opportunities to learn and engage in the arts as elements of action with their potential of influencing individuals, communities, and policies in the future.

Please enjoy the multiplicity of voices represented in this report to showcase the conference including the poetry, music, and tapestry of our two days together.

~ candace

2025 Conference CARN Study Day, May 15

The CARN Study Day on May 15 at the ARTe VallARTa Museo began the 2025 ARNA Hybrid Conferences. The session presented by Dr. Candace Kaye was entitled Experiencing Thirdspace: Action Research in a Museum Setting in Puerto Vallarta and engaged the attendees with the process of action in the Third Space of a museum setting. The Study Day contents supported understanding of the lived environment in a community Third Space, other than the First Space of home and the Second Space of school or work. The interactive activities provided a detailed insight into the 'fleeting', 'distributed' 'multiple', 'sensory', 'emotional' and 'kinesthetic of everyday realities' with an investigative participatory action research methodology that is 'sensitive to the complex and elusive' (Law and Urry, 2003).



Dra. Allison Eraso Lester

This year, I had the joy of contributing to the ARNA Conference on the dART team. I co-led the design committee of our opening and closing ceremonies, including writing and performing the opening and closing poem that wove together the voices of participants. Throughout the conference, we invited attendees to share reflections in person through our interactive tapestry and online via Padlet and then wove those words to compose a participatory poem that honored the energy, questions, and shared commitments that emerged across our time together.

I also co-chaired the conference proposal review process with Candace, and took the lead on coordinating all Spanish-language submissions to support our multilingual community. In addition, I helped with planning and on-the-ground logistics, and coordinated a forthcoming JPRM special issue highlighting arts-based approaches to participatory action research.

Dr. Randy Ziegenfuss

I worked closely with Sava to ensure that our partners and vendors were paid in a timely and efficient manner for their goods and services. We prioritized maintaining communication and timely follow-through so that all of our financial obligations were met without delay. In addition, I maintained a detailed, running account of all conference-related expenses to ensure accurate reporting to the CLT.

Dr. Kriti Vashisht

As I submitted my application to serve as a committee member for ARNA 2025 late, I contributed to several sub-committees, including registration, proposal review, conference facilitation, and leadership team coordination. My primary role was with the Registration and Conference In-Person Logistics Committee. Our main objective was to ensure the smooth execution of a hybrid conference. This included initiating the registration process on time, designing the registration page, determining registration fees, and drafting and sending emails to attendees and presenters. Additionally, our team was responsible for coordinating the conference location, securing appropriate spaces, arranging technological support, organizing refreshments and meals, and assigning conference facilitators.

Dr. Megan Bolton

My experience in working with the dART team to organize the conference was amazing! I worked with the team to create the program based on submitted proposals, events, activities, and more. While it was a lot of work, I think the time I spent collaborating with others and on organizing the pieces, time zones, and content was well worth it.

Our priority was to make sure we were honoring the people who had taken the time to submit presentations to share their valuable work with the ARNA community. It was important to organize these presentations in addition to the artwork, collective time together, and main sessions to create a cohesive experience. While we had hiccups, the spirit of the conference came through to create a great community space.

Dr. E.J. Pavy

I served on the dART team and had the honor to help shape the opening and closing ceremonies for this year's annual hybrid conference. Being part of the conference planning team was an incredibly fulfilling journey. One thing I especially appreciated about the conference was the commitment to bringing virtual attendees and presenters as much into the physical space of the biblioteca as much as possible. The intentional efforts we made in our planning to ensure a highly engaging experience for virtual attendees came to fruition in an artful and beautiful way. Serving on the dART committee deepened my overall conference experience and has significantly shaped how I think about artful inquiry and arts-based action research.



2025 Conference Award Recipients



Award for Outstanding Youth Contribution to Action Research

This year's recipient is Emilleo Moralez, a 15-year-old high school sophomore in Arvada, Colorado. Emilleo first conducted YPAR in his 8th grade class in 2022-23, serving as a co-planner and presenter at the 2023 CARN Study Day and also a presenter at the 2023 ARNA conference. The next year, Emilleo presented during the ARNA conference about important internal transformations that occurred because of the YPAR process.

During the most recent school year, Emilleo has worked with his teacher and other YPAR scholars to co-write a chapter focusing on the connective powers of YPAR for The Palgrave Handbook on Participatory Action Research with Children. He also co-delivered an online workshop about community-based PAR to Eastern Michigan University students and faculty. At 15, Emilleo is already becoming an important YPAR expert, giving needed voice to the youth experience of PAR and disseminating that expertise in various professional venues.

Promising Action Researcher Award

Dr. Javza Batsaikhan is a faculty member at the Mongolian National University of Education (MNUE), where she has adopted action research practices for enhancing teacher effectiveness, fostering professional development, and addressing local educational challenges. She co-created the first action research course for undergraduate students in the MNUE School of Preschool Education. Action research was central to her 2021 doctoral dissertation entitled "Formal Preschool Educational Programs as a Choice of Herder Parents in Mongolia: A Qualitative Case Study of Taviul Children." Her action research efforts have continued, and she has presented in four languages on her work introducing a play-based curriculum in Mongolian pre-school education and developing action research tools in Mongolian teacher education.

ARNA Community Development Award

The Awards Committee is pleased to honor the impressive efforts of ARNA At-Large Representative to the Coordinating Leadership Team Dr. Megan Bolton, who also serves as Chair of the impressive Program Committee for the 2025 conference. Megan has become a driving force within ARNA, where she is currently leading the organization's Strategic Planning process. A passionate nonprofit professional, Megan believes in leading positive change for empowerment and social impact. Throughout her career, she has served in program and operations management in nonprofits and city government. Her expertise in Nonprofit Management with a PhD in Leadership & Change is certainly serving ARNA well, and we are so pleased to celebrate her work within the organization.



ARNA Social Justice Award

Our host for the 2025 hybrid conference exemplifies an unwavering commitment to education for all. The Biblioteca Los Mangos/Los Mangos Library Cultural Center is dedicated to hosting, expanding, and offering educational activities and cultural expressions as an essential means of learning and community development. As part of its mission to educate and foster learning and human development of the community, the library provides access to community groups and offers a wide array of educational activities. The Biblioteca's support of action research in the Puerto Vallarta community has included offering Apapacho, a participatory action approach for designing and sustaining an early literacy program for 18 to 36 month olds and their families; supporting Apapacho organizers and teachers with the opportunity to present their work at the ARNA Conference in Cartagena, Colombia; and partnering with the 2025 ARNA Conference Planning Committee to open this beautiful community space to our 2025 conference attendees.

Special Community Award

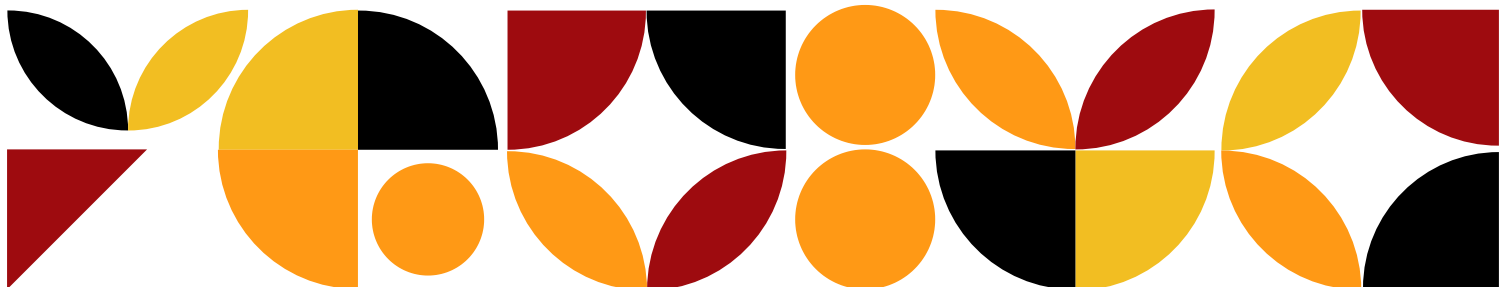
This year, the Conference Planning Committee would like to recognize the efforts of a very special local community organization that has played a role in supporting this year's conference by providing our wonderful conference lunches. Edin began in precarious conditions, with a rented house that required extensive renovations to provide the basic internal structure necessary to launch a very special project with six young people with Down syndrome, who were the first members. The project currently continues in the same facility, and 34 children and young people with Down syndrome and mental disabilities participate. Edin's mission is to educate, train, and develop physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and work skills in people with special educational needs through professional intervention that promotes social awareness and personal independence. We salute the impressive work of Edin through this year's Special Community Award.

2025 ARNA Conference Sunsetting
Candace Kaye, Ph.D.
2025 ARNA Hybrid Conference Chair



A Puerto Vallarta sunset becomes a powerful metaphor for the conclusion of our 2025 ARNA Hybrid Conference – representing an ending of this year’s conference activities, a transition to the 2026 conference, and a beginning for how the 2025 conference inspires us to move forward.

Here are some reminders of the vibrancy of our 2025 conference, inspired by the poetry of Allison Lester, the music of E.J. Pavy, and a beginning visual coding analysis of our conference tapestry. For the latter, if you would like to join me in continuing the analysis of the tapestry data weaving, please let me know.



We, Artists of the Invisible

Nosotros, Artistas de lo Invisible

Dra. Allison Eraso Lester

You gathered us here,
called to this circle of purpose—
The arts within participatory action research.

Nos reuniste aquí,

convocados a este círculo de propósito—
el arte dentro de la investigación-acción participativa.

You asked:

“How can we, as Artists of the Invisible,
use the arts to transform—
ourselves, others, and the systems we touch?”

Nos preguntaste:

“¿Cómo podemos, como Artistas de lo Invisible,

usar el arte para transformarnos, a nosotros mismos, a
otros, y a los sistemas que tocamos?”

We answer:

Respondemos:

To be Artists of the Invisible
is to begin in stillness,
where silence and gesture
shape what cannot yet be seen,
where threads of questions weave between.

Ser Artistas de lo Invisible
es comenzar en el silencio,
donde el gesto y el susurro
dan forma a lo que aún no vemos,
donde hilos de preguntas tejen entre sueños.

To be Artists of the Invisible
means to press our ears to the earth,
to listen for what stirs,

to sing the question that breaks the wall,
to sketch and paint the path to change,
to let action and art rearrange.

Ser Artistas de lo Invisible
es pegar el oído a la tierra,
escuchar lo que se mueve,
cantar la pregunta que rompe paredes,
dibujar y pintar el sendero del cambio,

dejar que la acción y el arte reacomoden los tiempos.

To be Artists of the Invisible
Is to hold courage together,
dancing boldly into the unknown,
letting the cracks show,
where light flows.

Ser Artistas de lo Invisible
es sostener el coraje en conjunto,
bailar sin miedo hacia lo desconocido,
mostrar las grietas,
por donde la luz fluye y canta.

To be Artists of the Invisible
Means to build spaces where silence speaks,

truths rise,

Like wildflowers after rain and sunrise.

Ser Artistas de lo Invisible
es construir espacios donde el silencio habla,

y la verdad brota,

como flores salvajes tras la lluvia y el alba.

We call you now:
listen, create,

bring the light, as we gather to celebrate.

Ahora te llamamos:
escucha, crea,

trae la luz, mientras nos reunimos a celebrar.

Now, take your notecard,
a small canvas of becoming.

Let ink or image rise—
from heart, from hand, from breath.

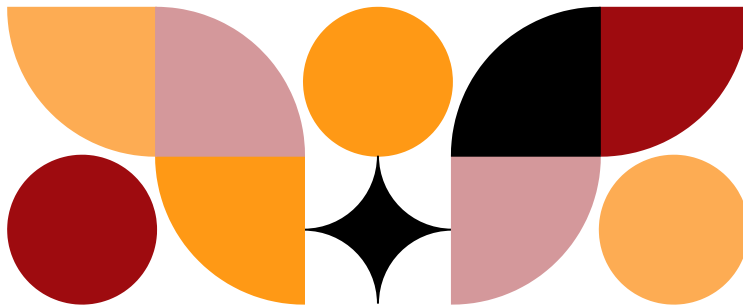
Ahora, toma tu tarjeta,
un pequeño lienzo de devenir.

Deja que la tinta o la imagen brote del corazón, de la
mano, de la respiración.

What three words or visuals
are you bringing into our shared space?

¿Qué tres palabras o imágenes
traes a nuestro espacio compartido?

Write it.
Escríbelo.
Sketch it.
Dibújalo.
Let it speak.
Déjalo hablar.



We Came With Threads in Our Hands” “Vinimos con hilos en las manos”

Dra. Allison Eraso Lester

We came with threads in our hands.
Red yarn like Oaxaca’s earth.
Bright like papel picado in the wind and the ideas in the
chat.
Sweet like the mangoes ripening under Puerto Vallarta’s
sky.
We came—
from fifteen countries,
from screens and streets,
from languages layered in memory.
Vinimos con hilos en las manos.
Hilos rojos como la tierra oaxaqueña.
Brillantes como el papel picado en el viento
y como las ideas que volaban por el chat.
Dulces como los mangos que maduran bajo el cielo de
Puerto Vallarta.
Vinimos—
de quince países,
de pantallas y calles,
de idiomas entretejidos en la memoria.
We gathered—one body, many roots.
A third space rising between the tiles of the biblioteca
and the hybridity of Zoom and in-person.
Where silence holds story.
Where questions are sacred.
Where wisdom blooms in the chat.
Nos reunimos—un cuerpo, muchas raíces.
Un tercer espacio que surge entre los mosaicos de la
biblioteca
y la hibridez del Zoom y lo presencial.
Donde el silencio guarda historias.
Donde las preguntas son sagradas.
Donde la sabiduría florece en el chat.
What is a third space? // ¿Qué es un tercer espacio?
Is it the scent of copal rising like memory through the
courtyard?

¿Es el aroma del copal, elevándose como la memoria por el
patio?
Is it the tenderness of Marcela carrying a language into
another—
not just words, but meaning, but care?
¿Es la ternura de Marcela llevando un idioma hacia otro—
no solo palabras, sino sentido, sino cuidado?
Is it the laughter of children throughout the biblioteca,
reminding us that joy is also research,
that play is a kind of knowing?
¿Es la risa de niñas y niños resonando por la biblioteca,
recordándonos que la alegría también es investigación,
que el juego también es una forma de saber?
Is it a raised hand in a Zoom square,
a voice saying, I have something to share,
and the world pausing to listen?
¿Es una mano levantada en un recuadro de Zoom,
una voz que dice, Tengo algo que compartir,
y el mundo que se detiene para escuchar?
Is it the ache of a frozen screen,
unwilling technology, broken audio,
computers with a mind of their own—
and still, we wait,
because the story is worth hearing?
¿Es la frustración de una pantalla congelada,
tecnología que no coopera, audio entrecortado,
computadoras con mente propia—
y aun así, esperamos,
porque la historia vale la pena ser escuchada?
Is it dancing with someone
you have never stood beside?
¿Es bailar con alguien
junto a quien nunca has estado?
Is it tears witnessed through pixels—
and still, somehow, held?
Cared for?
Appreciated?
Seen?

¿Es llorar
y que tus lágrimas sean testigos en forma de píxeles—
y aun así, de alguna manera, ser sostenida?

Ser cuidada.

Apreciada.

Vista.

Is it learning to love across time zones—
and realizing love was never bound by time to begin with?

¿Es aprender a amar a través de zonas horarias—
y darnos cuenta de que el amor nunca estuvo atado al
tiempo

desde el principio?

We came with threads in our hands.

We stitched what was silenced.

We listened for what was missing.

We held each other in a web of hope.

Vinimos con hilos en las manos.

Remendamos lo silenciado.

Escuchamos lo ausente.

Nos sostenemos en una red de esperanza.

We came with threads in our hands.

And we are still weaving.

We are still weaving.

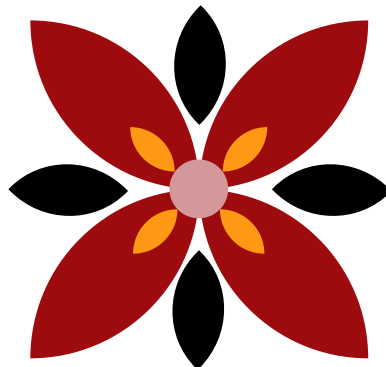
We are still weaving.

Vinimos con hilos en las manos.

Y seguimos tejiendo.

Seguimos tejiendo.

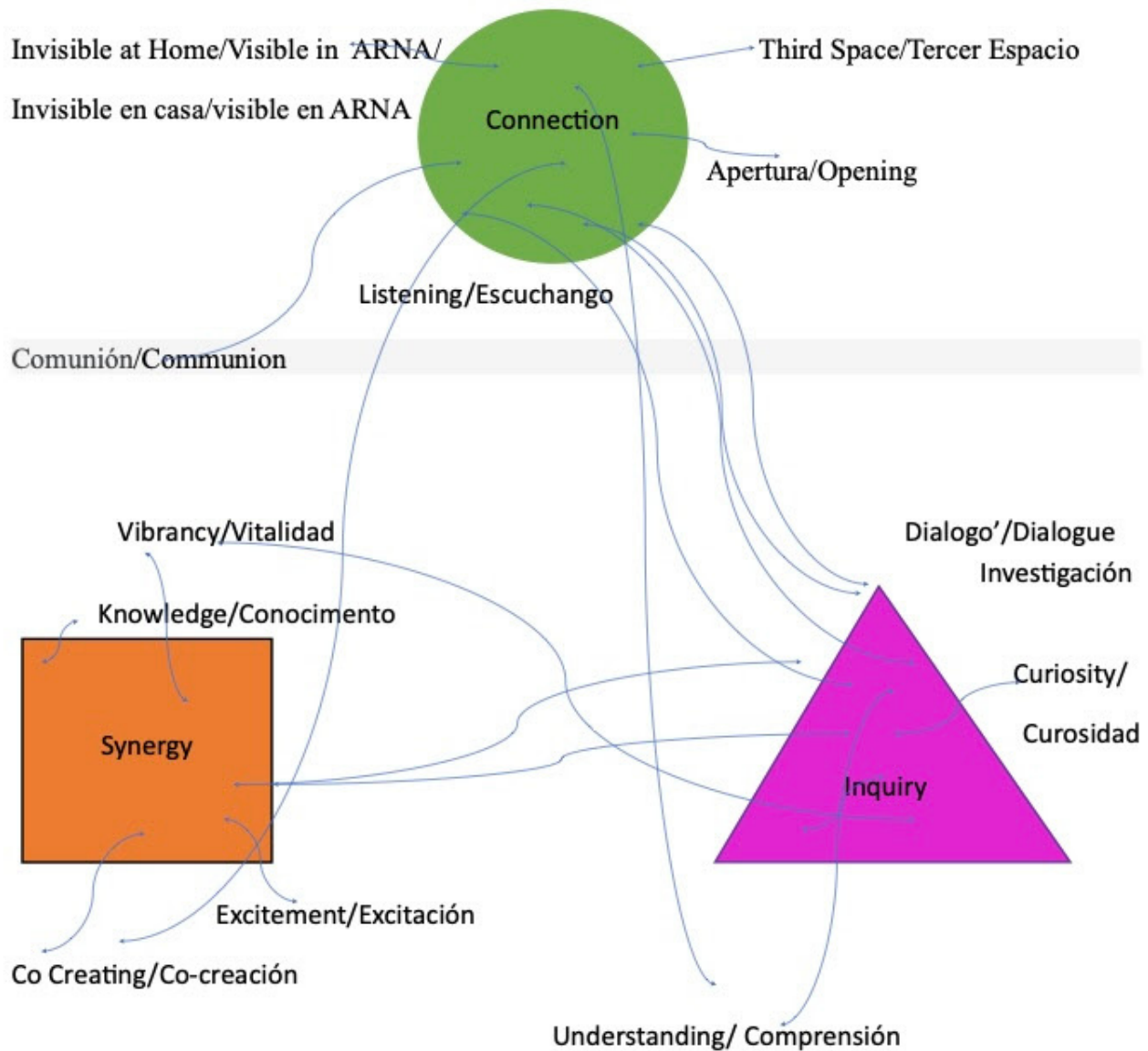
Seguimos tejiendo.





Images of the participant created tapestry.





Haiku to Begin Analysis of 2025 ARNA Hybrid Conference Tapestry Responses

Haiku comenzará el análisis de las respuestas al tapiz de la

Thematic weaving

Tres temas emergentes

Threading our tapestry

Seguimos tejiendo nuestro tapiz

Voiced, Woven, Placed with Care

Expresado, tejido, sostenido con esperanza

Conference Participant Reflections

Attending the 2025 ARNA (Action Research Network of the Americas) Conference was an energizing and deeply affirming experience. Surrounded by practitioners and scholars committed to participatory, justice-driven methodologies, I felt my own work both validated and expanded in meaningful ways. I came looking for my people and left with the decision to submit my nomination as a member-at-large.

One of the most impactful moments for me was participating in the Study Day, where participants engaged in hands-on, community-defining work within the beautiful museum setting. This experience mirrored the kind of reflexive, relational scholarship I strive to practice—work that is grounded, situated, and co-created. The conference reminded me that research is not just about producing answers, but about building solidarities across difference—learning with others, not merely about them.

Sarai Richter



The hybridity of the conference was difficult to work with. There was about an hour where we just waiting for the conference to start, and I was uncertain of how it would affect future presentations. I enjoyed it being hybrid so there was more time for me to prep virtually with high school co-researchers. The conference was very close to the end of the school year, and some high schoolers were not able to attend due to AP exams. I enjoyed the virtual aspect that I could unplug from the hustle and bustle of the conference when I was over with my sessions. However, I would have been lost and miss out on a lot of opportunities if I wasnt in contact with a conference go-er which was in person.

Celina German



For me, the Arna 2025 conference held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, had a particular essence; this being my first time participating, because it captured the sensitivity of human beings expressed in art. These emotions, when captured on the different canvases of life, represent an opportunity for action research.

It was wonderful to discover at this conference several proposals that revive hope in humanity and motivate us to continue forging proposals aimed at revealing the greatness of human beings. The conference allowed us to call upon the sense of humanity as a banner for social reconstruction. It also recognized the importance of research with sensitive purposes toward the transformation of society as a pedagogical, cultural, political, ethical, and aesthetic commitment.

Fraternally, Claudia Ximena Palacio Sánchez - Colombia



An abstract geometric composition featuring a grid of squares and circles. The primary colors are red, orange, and black, set against a white background. The shapes include solid-colored squares and circles, as well as more complex forms like a square with concentric red and white arcs, a square with diagonal black and white stripes, and a square with a red flower-like pattern. A small orange circle is positioned in the upper left area.

Dr. Suzy Thomas and Dr. Aubrey Uresti, ARC Co-Chairs

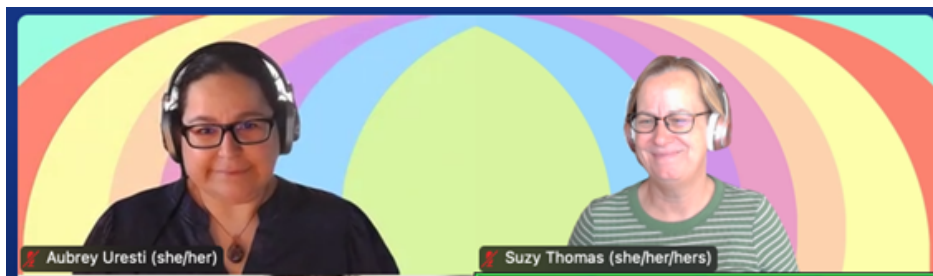
Hello ARNA! We have enjoyed our role as Co-Chairs of the Action Research Communities (ARCs) for the past seven years, and we especially valued the ongoing connections with the ARC Chairs and members. The ARCs represent subgroups within ARNA that meet together between the annual conferences to collaborate on research projects and build



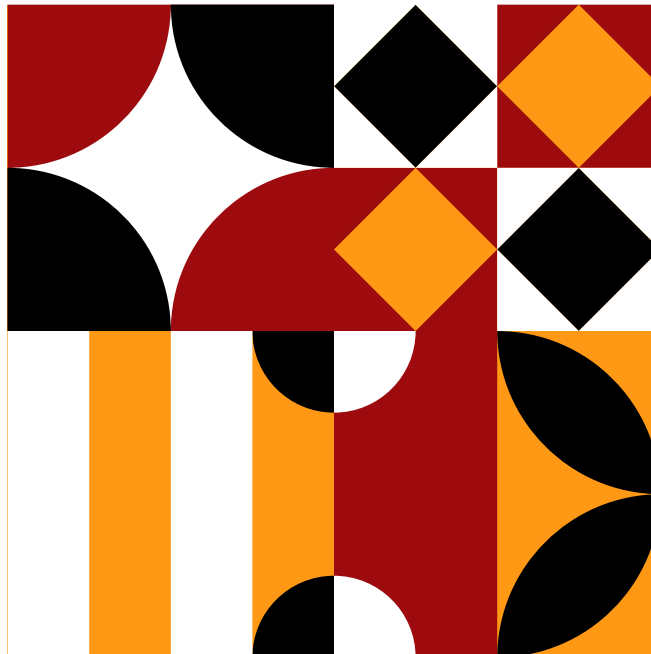
community. As ARC Co-Chairs, we have hosted and facilitated events between conferences and have engaged in community building exercises during the annual conferences. As you can see from this photo from ARNA 2025, we emphasize connection and fun in our ARNA community events. This past year, we were delighted to see so many ARC events in the months between the conferences, and so much active ARC participation at ARNA 2025. The Arts in Action ARC held an event in October, the Graduate Student and Leadership ARCs partnered to host an event in November, the Graduate Student ARC joined the STAR-C ARC for a special chat in January, the PAR/PE ARC brought Global South and North together in May, and the Leadership ARC held an additional event focused on applications of AI in May. What a productive year!

Directions for 2025-2026: We are happy to welcome Randy Ziegenfuss and Allison Lester as incoming Coordinators for the ARCs. We are certain they will enjoy this role and that you all will benefit from their enthusiastic commitment to ARNA and to the Action Research Communities.

Thank you, ARNA! -Aubrey and Suzy



We are certain you will enjoy reading the individual ARC reports that follow. And please take a look at the ARChives page of the ARNA website to learn more about the areas of focus for each of the ARCs in ARNA: <https://arnawebiste.org/arcs/>.



Leadership ARC: Mapping the Future of Action Research Collaboratively!

Chair, Randy Ziegenfuss

This year, the Leadership ARC convened two gatherings that brought participants into dialogue about ethical and emerging dimensions of action research. These sessions reflected the ARC's commitment to exploring leadership as a practice of shared inquiry, complexity, and transformation.

Ethics, Power, and Participation

In collaboration with the Graduate Student ARC, the Leadership ARC co-hosted a conversation grounded in the influential article *Action Research: Politics, Ethics, and Participation* (Williamson & Prosser, 2002). The session surfaced important questions about what it means to ethically engage in action research in institutional and community contexts.

Participants reflected on the ways power operates in research relationships, how to navigate the tensions between structure and participation, and the importance of leading from a place of humility and co-construction. The conversation underscored that leadership in action research is never neutral. It requires an ongoing negotiation of purpose, position, and ethics.

A Salon on AI in the Action Research Process

The second event, hosted as an open salon, invited participants to collectively explore the role of artificial intelligence in action research. Framed as a conversation rather than a presentation, the session encouraged attendees, regardless of their level of AI familiarity, to engage with a central provocation:

How does AI shift the way we do—and think about—action research?

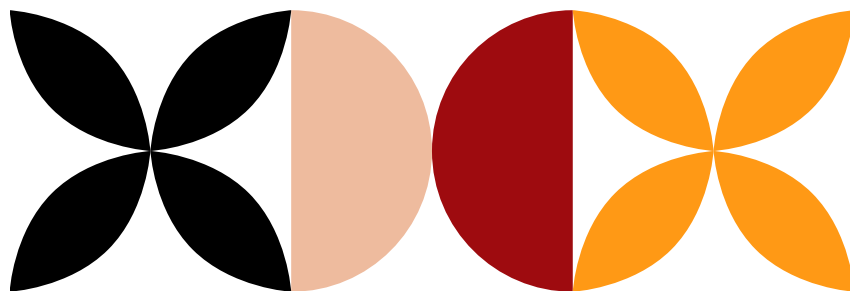
Participants shared stories, sketched possibilities, and raised critical questions in small and large groups. They discussed AI's potential to support question formulation, contextual analysis, and reflection, while also considering boundaries: Where should AI stay out of the process? How do we navigate bias, transparency, and relational integrity when AI tools enter the research space? Rather than offering definitive conclusions, the salon opened an emergent space for inquiry. It was a reminder that leadership in action research today includes navigating new and uncertain terrains, with both creativity and care.

Looking Ahead

The Leadership ARC will plans to continue hosting monthly salons throughout the year, offering opportunities for educators, researchers, and change agents to gather, think together, and explore timely themes such as:

- Making Practice Visible: Action Research as Leadership Communication
- Action Research and the Politics of Educational Innovation
- Designing for Emergence: Action Research and Human-Centered Innovation
- Sustaining the Researcher: Wellness, Burnout, and Inquiry as Practice

These gatherings are open to anyone interested in the intersections of leadership, learning, and inquiry. For more information or to express interest in future events, contact Randy Ziegenfuss, Ed.D. at ziegenfussr@moravian.edu.



Health Equity ARC – Chair: Nancy Murphy, NP, PhD

The ARNA Health Equity ARC is a resource for those who are interested in the intersection of health care/health equity and action research. The ARC's members continue to address health equity in areas of clinical practice, education, research, advocacy, publications and political work.

One of this year's highlights for the Health Equity ARC, is an important editorial, recently written by our long-standing member, Abe Oudshoorn, PhD. Abe is an Associate Professor and Associate Director (Graduate Programs) at The Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing, Western University (London, Ontario) and the Managing Editor of the International Journal on Homelessness. He also co-led the founding of the journal. His recent editorial (Vol. 5 No. 2, 2025) titled, AI and The Human Heart of Health and Social Services, is well worth reviewing. Below are some of Abe's words, which I share with his permission:

Health and social services provided in support of people experiencing homelessness are still a human task and delivered by people who are deeply committed to the work in moral, ethical, and perhaps spiritual ways. Helping those in greatest need is something myself and others often refer to work of the "heart". One of the difficult aspects for front-line workers in the age of service prioritization is using tools that remove a level of their own agency in decision-making...

As you may note from the references included in this reflection there is much more research needed on how AI is already being taken up within the homelessness serving system. While the work is being shared at conferences, it needs to be expanded and published more broadly. I hope that ongoing research in this area will ensure that human kindness continues to be the driving force behind how we make difficult decisions on who gets access to help when there is not enough help to go around (until such time as there is). (p.3)

We will soon be updating our member's Bios and they will be able to be accessed on the ARNA ARC Website.

YPAR Report – Chair, Dane Stickney

The Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) Community continued to deepen its intergenerational and international focus during the 2024-25 academic year. The accomplishments of 15-year-old ARC member Emilleo Morales highlighted the year.

Emilleo, a high-school student in Arvada, Colorado, won ARNA's 2025 award for Outstanding Youth Contribution to Action Research. In the past year, he has presented locally in Colorado, nationally in Michigan and New York, and internationally through Zoom about the power of YPAR. He is also lead author on a chapter that examines the connective power of YPAR, which will be published in The Palgrave Handbook on Participatory Action Research with Children. He is also co-author of a chapter examining the impact of YPAR evidence on public policy, which is in press with the Research & Evidence journal. Specifically, Emilleo's work details the transportation justice work he has done and the positive impacts on his efficacy and confidence that followed.

The adult members of the ARC were also busy. Members Rachel Kulick (UMASS-Dartmouth), Michelle Vaughan-McGovern (Florida Atlantic), and Dane Stickney (University of Colorado-Denver) presented virtually at the 2025 ARNA conference. That group along with Rachel Radina (Eastern Michigan) are working to turn that presentation into an article for the Journal of Participatory Research Methods.

Dave McPartlan (University of Cumbria), Ruth Jörgensdóttir Rauterberg (University of Iceland), and Stickney presented at the 2024 Collaborative Action Research Network conference in Malmo, Sweden. Konstantinos Spitanos and Stickney held an action research gathering at the University of Crete in the fall of 2024.



Sipitanos also won the award for Best Empirical Paper, Incorporating Students' Empowerment Against Disinformation in the Curricula of HEIS in EU Countries, from American Education Research Association's Media, Culture, and Learning special interest group. Stickney also served as lead author of the book Transformative Student Voice for Teachers: A Guide to Classroom Action, published by Harvard Education Press in 2025. He also contributed to the companion book Transformative Student Voice: Partnering with Young People for Equitable School Improvement.

For more information on the YPAR ARC, please reach out to Stickney, the chair, at dane.stickney@ucdenver.edu



Picture of Emilleo:



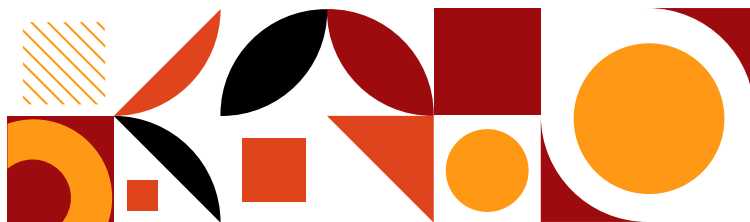
Picture of Dane and co-authors (from left: Ben Kirshner, Shelley Zion, Dane Stickney, Carlos Hipolito-Delgado)

Arts in Action ARC – Chair, E.J. Pavy

Perhaps the most notable update from our ARC is that we are now the Arts in Action (formerly Musical Learning) ARC. In an effort to broaden our reach, we took on the work of exploring what our ARC might become if we expanded beyond the former identity as the Musical Learning Community. Under our former name, while we certainly welcomed diverse arts disciplines, it was possibly less outwardly apparent based on our name. In October of 2024, we held a workshop that delved into the ways that art compels action. This laid the groundwork to reframe and reposition our ARC as the Arts in Action ARC! Our ARC also worked to support the development of the 2025 Hybrid Conference themed: An Artful Experience. The 2025 conference served as a launchpad for our rebranded ARC.

In the upcoming year, Arts in Action will be exploring ways to engage with artistic communities within member localities. We will also develop workshops and casual (virtual) gatherings for ARC members to build our interdisciplinary arts community and host representative and diverse programming. The Arts in Action ARC is a great opportunity to extend and continue the good work begun during our artful experience at the 2025 conference.

If you are interested in joining the Arts in Action ARC or would like to discuss opportunities to present a program, please contact ARC Chair, Dr. E.J. Pavy at ejpavy@gmail.com. We look forward to creating something beautiful with you and supporting your important work!



Community Development ARC – Chair, Donna Benson

Year in Review:

Over the past year, our community action research has focused on two main areas: dementia support and food security through community gardens. Additionally, we've been working on scaling and expanding our initiatives to build capacity, inspire others, and create meaningful social networks using Action Research methodology. Below is a summary of our progress and future plans, organized into three sections.

1. Dementia Support: Memory Cafés We have made significant strides in supporting individuals living with dementia and their caregivers through our Memory Café initiative. Over the past year, we've hosted approximately 10 Memory Cafés, which have helped us engage community members and learn valuable lessons about implementation and sustainability.

Key Insights:

Dedicated Coordination is Essential: One of our key findings is that successful implementation requires a dedicated vehicle, such as a coordinator and a clear initial "Straw Man" action plan.

Community Advisory Groups: Establishing key community members as an Advisory Group lowers barriers to starting and sustaining Memory Cafés. This collaborative approach creates stronger community buy-in and support.

Next Steps: We plan to attend the International Alzheimer's Meeting next year and host a booth to share our learnings and connect with global experts. While there are challenges related to funding and navigating political issues, we are committed to advancing this work on a larger scale.

2. Food Security:

Community Gardens Our Community Gardens initiative has also seen meaningful progress this year. A new coordinator has taken the lead, focusing on engaging moms, dads, and kids in gardening activities. This has created a tight-knit group with a shared commitment to food security.

Key Achievements: Leveraging materials from past years, we've built on existing resources to strengthen the program. Organized a successful Earth Day event, which provided a platform to support community members and better understand their needs for growing food.

Future Plans: Over the next year, we aim to scale the program to larger community groups and eventually establish a provincial-level gardening network. By expanding resources and creating a more inclusive network, we hope to empower communities to take greater ownership of food security initiatives.

3. Scaling and Capacity Building Scaling our initiatives is a key focus moving forward. We are using cycles of action research—Think, Plan, Do, Check—as a framework for continuous learning and improvement. This approach will guide us in expanding our reach and impact.

3. Goals for Scaling:

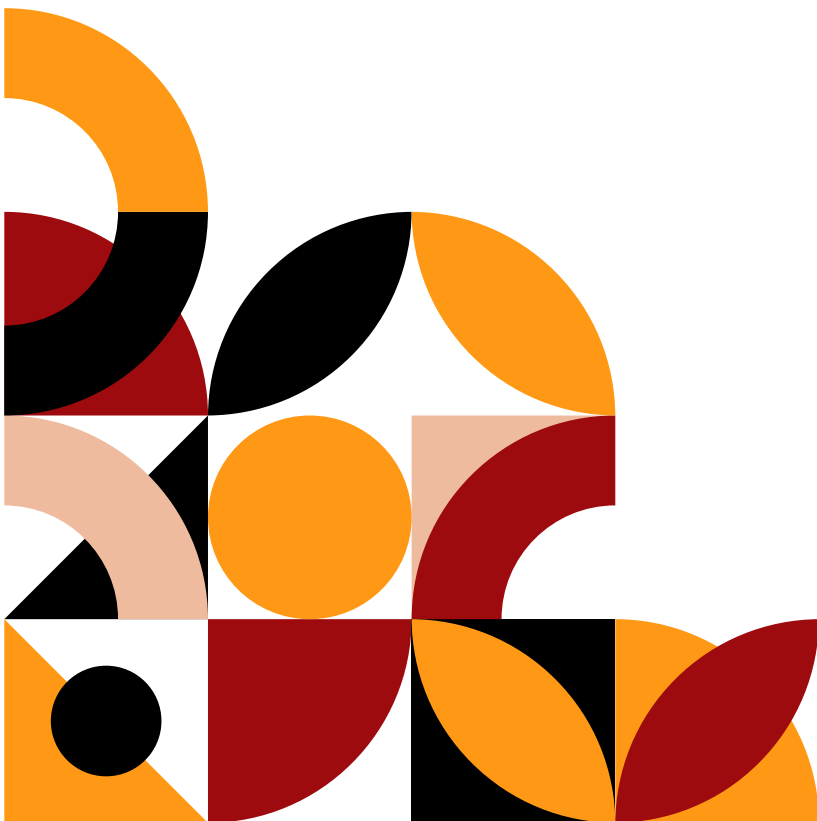
Expand the Power of Inspiration: Share stories and successes from our programs to inspire other communities and organizations.

Create Social Networks: Build connections across communities and regions to facilitate the exchange of ideas, resources, and support.

Build Capacity: Strengthen our programs by investing in Action Research training, resources, and leadership development. By focusing on these areas, we aim to foster a culture of shared learning and collaboration, ensuring that both our dementia and food security initiatives continue to grow and thrive for the good of all involved sectors of society.

School Counseling ARC – Transition in Leadership

Scott Merkel has been a steadfast leader for the School Counseling ARC since 2018, encouraging the involvement of school counselors in action research and collaborating with Drs. Suzy Thomas and Aubrey Uresti in their roles as school counselor educators and ARC Co-Chairs. In the last several years, Scott's work has led to collaborations with the YPAR ARC, and he will be transitioning out of his role as the School Counseling ARC Chair to expand his work with the YPAR ARC. Thank you, Scott, for your many years of service in this role in ARNA. Dr. Aubrey Uresti has agreed to assume the role of School Counseling ARC Chair, and Dr. Suzy Thomas will remain a member of this ARC as well. So stay tuned for ongoing collaborations with the School Counseling ARC and other ARCs in ARNA!



Early Childhood Education ARC—Chair, Mina Kim, Ph.D. (San Francisco State University)

Overview

Last year, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Action Research Community (ARC) launched a collaboration project around the ECE teachers' wellbeing. It made an excellent seminar presentation at the annual ARNA conference in 2024. Given the success of this collaborative project, all community members would like to continue our work to provide a more detailed examination of teachers' well-being in three different countries (South Africa, Ireland, and San Francisco in the US). For the project topics, we keep the teacher's well-being as the umbrella theme for the collaborative project, but each one can extend it to their social context to meet the needs of the field in each country. More description will be addressed in the conference section below.

For the last five years, the graduate program in ECE at San Francisco State University

has been hosting smaller-scale action research workshops/presentations on teachers of young children (Birth to 3rd grade). It has continued in San Francisco and the Bay Area in December 2024.

1. Annual ARNA conference 2025

As addressed above, seven ECE teacher educators/scholars appreciated the collaborative project we've been working on and decided to have another presentation session at the conference to continue our conversations for 2025. At the debriefing meeting for the 2024 conference presentation, everyone noted the lack of conversation time after the presentation, given that we had only 90 minutes in total and were rushing to complete each presentation within this time limit. Due to geographical issues and time differences, finding a suitable time to discuss after our regular meeting has always been challenging. Therefore, we decided to maximize the meeting opportunities at the conference in 2025.

Each scholar submitted an individual presentation session before the ARC-ECE symposium session, so all of us can have plenty of time to make a presentation on our project first. In addition, we had an ARC-ECE panel session to continue our discussion. This year, our project theme focused on teachers' well-being, with a particular emphasis on arts-based approaches to support ECE teachers' well-being through action research.

Here is the list of the ARC-ECE members who have been involved in the collaborative project:

- Drs. Lesley Wood, Marinda Neethling, Mariette Koen, Stef Esterhuizen from North-West University in South Africa
- Drs. Meera Oke and Josephine Bleach from the Early Learning Initiative at the National College of Ireland, Ireland
- Dr. Mina Kim from San Francisco State University in California, USA

Plans in 2025-2026:

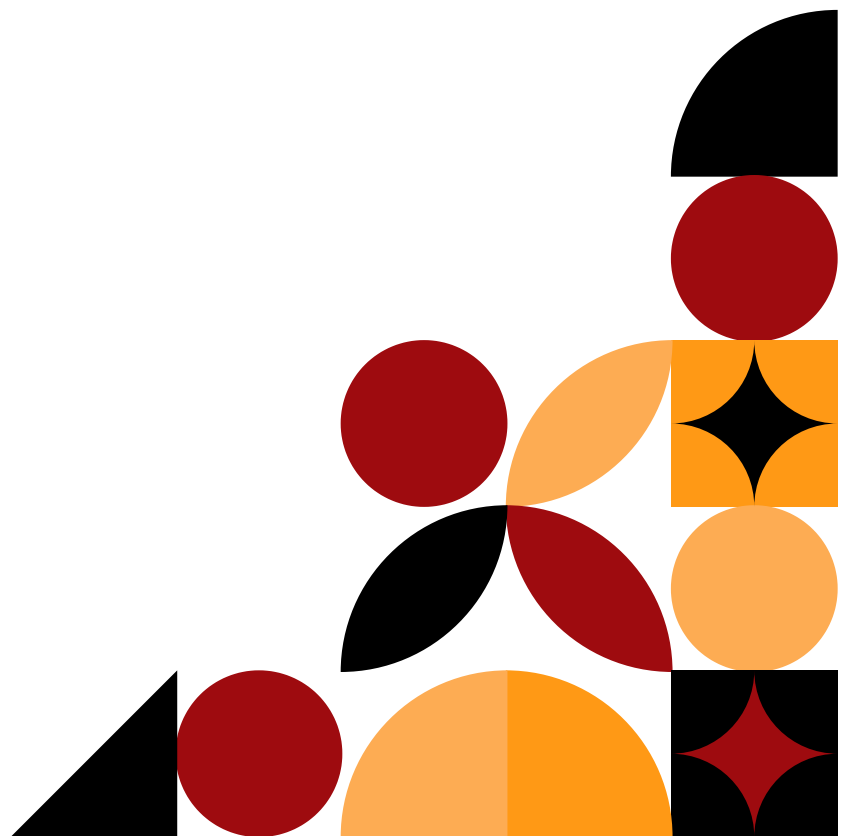
After the conference for this year, our team had a short debriefing session. To move forward with this collaborative project, we have decided to find a way to publish our work. The modality of this publication has not been decided, and it will be discussed in the upcoming meeting in the fall of 2025. From last year's action plan, we are still considering inviting practitioners to incorporate their views (PAR-participative action research) to create healthy ECEC settings. Each member explores problem-solving strategies with practitioners' participation in the study, focusing on rewards (reflected in remuneration), recognition, and the positive societal value of ECEC practitioners and the profession (moving beyond the image of a babysitter), depending on their projects.

We will continue having regular meetings to see how we will participate and contribute to the ARC-ECE for the following year's conference in 2026.

2. Annual SFSU Early Childhood Action Research Community Meeting:

San Francisco State University (SFSU) hosted the 11th annual EC Action Research meeting on December 9th, 2024. The meeting's agenda included presentations by teachers on their action research and a discussion on the new teaching credential, the PK-3 ECE Specialist Instruction Credential, which significantly impacts California's education and care system and its teachers. This credential will require preschool teachers to demonstrate training in teaching reading and writing (literacy).

The Early Childhood Action Research team at SF State initiated a small-scale action research project to interview preschool teachers, aiming to understand their concerns and reassess the qualifications for Transitional Kindergarten (TK) teachers in light of the field's shift toward TK in public schools. More data and findings will be shared at this year's meeting.



International ARC—Chair, Candace Kaye

ARNA continues to move beyond the Americas in scope, presence and connection as indicated in membership and yearly conference program presentations. For example,

- in Mongolia there is a passionate commitment to action research as evidenced by university student clubs, coursework, research and publications – plus an ongoing presence of accepted presentations at the yearly ARNA conferences.
- ARNA maintains an ongoing connection to the Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN) in the United Kingdom. CARN continues to support the Study Day of the yearly ARNA conference.
- in South Africa, there is a strong support of ARNA within a community-based research entity, playing a leading role in promoting action research in the region through publications, postgraduate supervision, capacity building and presentations at ARNA conferences.
- our network also continues to be inspired by colleagues and other groups in Asia, Africa, and Europe who are members of ARNA and keep us updated on the participatory action research projects.

The International ARC connects to the multi-vocality of ARNA mission statement, “exploring the diversity of perspectives among ARNA members regarding applications of action research and participatory research in relationship to the challenging socio-political and geo-political issues of our times”.

Therefore, the International ARC defines their community within ARNA as a place where international cultural complexities can directly interface with action research principles for discussion. The ARC is able to initiate symposiums, workshops, conversations that open ARNA to important global connections that have become even more apparent after the years of pandemic induced isolation.

One of the outcomes of the thinking within the International ARC community is that there is now a specific examination of Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK) in ARNA. Dr. Donald Pepion, one of the members of the International ARC community wrote, "Paulo Freire in the 1980s awakened us in Blackfeet Community College (a U.S. tribal college) when he wrote about the oppressed instituting change from within. In other words, communities and people through dialogue can identify or name their problem or situation and identify ways to bring about change. Thus, as Native Americans we could use our own knowledge, culture, and language to improve our quality of life after centuries of failed genocide by migrant Europeans. When Piikani (Blackfeet) spiritual leader George Kicking Woman stated "... our ways are different" ..., "

I experienced an epiphany of our worldview being averse to the dominating society. In trying to do research to investigate our language and culture after failed generations of genocidal actions including imprisoning children in boarding and mission schools, I found the literature and history of Native Americans biased, untrue, and non-existent. Through education, research and publication, my vision and purpose are to raise the consciousness of all people about Native Americans with a goal of improving their quality of life".

An additional major accomplishment this year was the presence of an abundance of international participants in our 2025 ARNA Annual Hybrid Conference. We had 10 accepted participatory action research study presentations from outside the Americas, which directly supports the ARCs goal of global active participation in ARNA.

For the coming year, we will continue to enthusiastically support global participation in ARNA. The entire ARC membership is grateful for the support of the 2025 Conference Committee in both the supportive reviews of their proposals and for working with the different world time zones to make it easier for attendance at the hybrid conference.

Graduate Student ARC—Chair, Rachel Sherman

In November 2024, the Graduate Student ARC held a virtual event called "Fall into Research" to discuss challenges and opportunities when it comes to conducting action research as a graduate student. Eight students attended, representing a range of programs and research interests. The conversation highlighted common barriers such as limited access to research sites, time constraints, and the need for more mentorship and peer support. Participants expressed a strong desire for continued connection and collaboration. While our group remains small, we are actively looking to grow and welcome new members. We are also actively seeking partnership opportunities with institutions that offer action research programs at the graduate level. Plans for next year include additional meetings, peer feedback sessions, and shared resource development.

If you are interested in joining our graduate student ARC, please contact Rachel Sherman at ras622@lehigh.edu.



Participatory Action Research and Popular Education ARC—Co-Chairs, Catalina Tang Yan and Daniel Bonilla

“GATHERING OF KNOWLEDGES AND SOLIDARITY ON PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND POPULAR EDUCATION”

On Wednesday April 23, 2025, 45 students, scholars, practitioners, and educators from the global south met virtually to share reflections, knowledges, and experiences on how to enact and embody Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Popular Education (Pop Ed) principles in struggle with those most impacted by structural violence during contentious times locally and globally. This space was facilitated by ARNA PAR and Popped ARC co-chairs, Catalina Tang Yan and Daniel Bonilla.

ARNA Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Popular Education Action Research Community (ARC) seeks to create spaces to engage scholars, practitioners, and educators in conversations, exchange resources, and build community around PAR and PopEd.

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE PAR and POPED ARC PLANNING GROUP?

If you're interested in joining, please email ctang3@lesley.edu.



Supporting the Teaching of Action Research (STAR) and the Power of Collaborative Community Action Research ARC—Chair, Margaret Riel

We are the STAR-Community



Supporting the Teaching of Action Research Community (STAR-C) is one of the ARNA Action Research Communities. STAR-C is led by professors of action research from six countries. Over the last eight years, these educators have met monthly to discuss strategies, issues, and resources to support the teaching of action research. In the spirit of action research, the community continues to evolve.

Collectively, the STAR Community posed the central guiding question—What resources would best support the teaching of action research, and how might they be shared? This central guiding question is the foundation for what became five cycles of change occurring over eight years.

- Cycle 1: The Learning Circle and Website Construction (2017–2025). We began with Learning Circles, a structure that helped us collectively to create the STAR website. We selected a set of topics that we agreed were essential in teaching action research. Each community member selected one of the topics and organized a learning circle to share written ideas related to that topic. Our website continues to evolve with the addition of chats and newsletters.
- Cycle 2: Dual Language and Social Media (2018–2025). We centered on developing the Spanish translation of the STAR-C website. Clotilde Lomeli Agruel took the lead on the initial effort and continues to serve as our primary translator with some help from other members. We also forged a closer partnership with the Action Research Tutorials (ART) and the Social Publishers Foundation (SPF). We joined the Action Research Tutorials Facebook Group to gain access to a larger community of professors of action research.
- Cycle 3: Extended Reach–Blog and Newsletter (2019–2024) As the website translation was taking place, we worked to extend our reach to involve more people. The STAR-C Newsletter and the STAR Blog were introduced in 2019 as two central means of outreach. The STAR-C Newsletter was proposed to provide a more in-depth look at important Action Research themes and to provide an opportunity for authors outside of STAR-C to become involved by sharing their perspectives and work. The newsletter is published 2 times a year in English and Spanish, featuring articles and sharing news about resources, upcoming conferences, and

- events. Currently, the Spring 2025 edition of STAR-C Newsletter, entitled “Action Research Reflecting on the Past and Looking Towards the Future”, features three articles that explore the role of the research community in a global context, share experiences of integrating reflexivity via action research into counseling coursework, and reflect on action research over a five decade window of time.
 - Sowing the Future in Times of Uncertainty: Reflections for the Research Community by Pedro Navareño
 - Reflexivity as Hope by Katheryne T. Leigh-Osroosh
 - A History and Evolution of Action Research in Academia: A 50-Year Chronicle of Key Political Challenges Across Decades (1974–2025) by Teri Marcos

We created the STAR Blog to provide a hub for the discussions of the Newsletter articles and for other topical issues. Unfortunately, we are not seeing much interaction. Our choice of a blog platform might hinder interaction, as submitting a reply is not straightforward. We are exploring moving the blog idea to a Linked-In format.

- Cycle 4: The STAR-C Chats – Our Own Process of Professional Development (2020–2025). In 2020, we changed the name of the group from STAR ARC to STAR-C, by trimming the double AR. With the name change, we redesigned the website's banner. We also added one more interactive component– STAR-C Chats. The idea for STAR-C Chats emerged from Learning Circle conversations as a means to foster more dynamic interaction with the broader AR community and to further promote participation in the STAR-C website, tutorials, newsletter, and blog. We now alternate monthly meetings between STAR-C Learning Circles and STAR-C Chats, focusing on topics central to teaching action research. We enjoy having people, both from within and outside of our group, challenge us with ideas. Most recently, Pedro Navarro shared content from his recently published book about reenvisioning education.

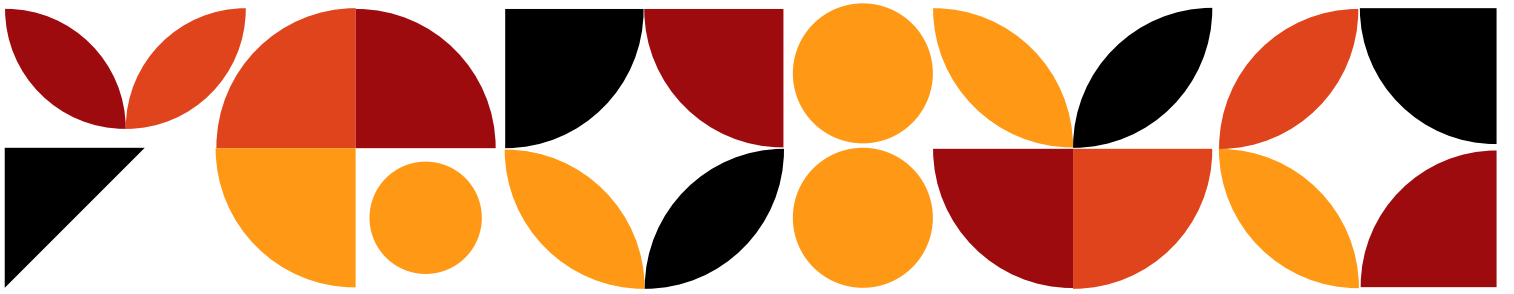
- Cycle 5: Extending Our Reach (2021-2025). The STAR-Community has participated in every ARNA conference since its inception in 2017. For the first virtual ARNA conference in 2021, we made a video of the STAR-C activities.

STAR-C of Action Research Network of the Americas

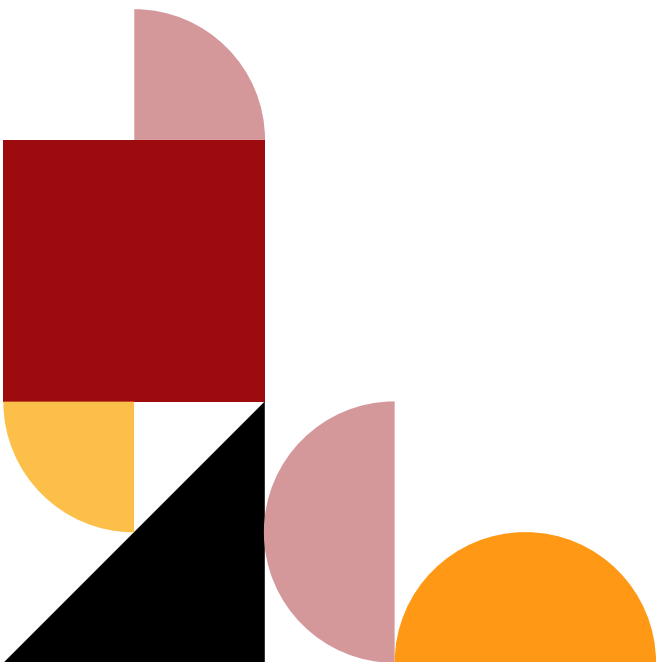
This helped us share our history with others in video format, which was especially useful for online sessions. This year at the ARNA conference, we hosted a discussion on hope and advocacy in these difficult years. Here are some of the questions we discussed.

- What steps can each of us take to align our values with our social environments in a world that is shifting in directions that challenge our basic beliefs?
- What are ways to support the teaching of action research as a means for promoting advocacy and hope?
- How might action research support schools/education based on the principles of well-being, positive coexistence, professional learning communities, hope, experiential learning cycles, and formative evaluation and feedback?
- How might teachers of action research help students/action researchers navigate anti-intellectualism in today's political administration?

We are open to new members joining at any time. We are always interested in developing new ideas to support the STAR-Community in helping those who prepare new action researchers.



Collaborations



ARNA & JPRM Special Issue: Arts-Based Approaches to Participatory Action Research

This year, ARNA partnered with the Journal of Participatory Research Methods (JPRM) to co-edit a special issue spotlighting arts-based approaches to participatory action research. Rooted in ARNA's commitment to creativity, justice, and community-engaged scholarship, the issue brings together practitioner-researchers across contexts who are using visual arts, performance, poetry, and storytelling to surface unheard voices, challenge dominant narratives, and imagine liberatory futures. With contributors from across the Americas and beyond, this special issue represents a vibrant intersection of theory and practice, honoring the embodied, relational, and transformative dimensions of action research.

The special issue is set to launch in conjunction with the 2026 ARNA Conference and will serve as a celebration of the bold, creative, and critical inquiry happening across our network. We extend heartfelt thank you to everyone who submitted proposals and contributed their vision, time, and care to this collective effort.



Collaborative Action Research Network

The Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN) was founded in 1976 in the UK. Since that time it has grown to become an international network drawing its members from educational, health, social care, commercial, and public services settings.

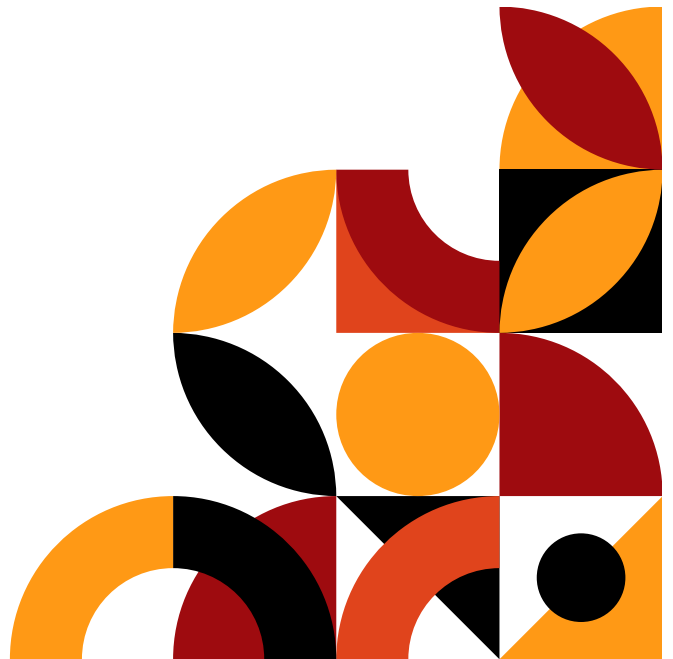
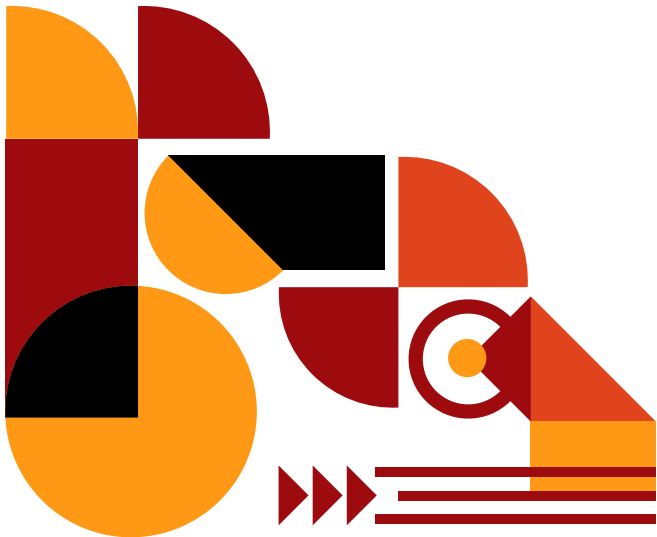
CARN continues to encourage and support action research projects (personal, local, national and international), accessible accounts of action research projects, and contributions to the theory and methodology of action research.

Since the beginning of ARNA in 2012, CARN has had an important alliance with ARNA. A representative from CARN serves within the Coordinating Leadership Team of ARNA and also provides liaison for the CARN Study Day at the yearly conference of ARNA.





Coordinating Leadership Team Reports



ARNA Treasurer's Report

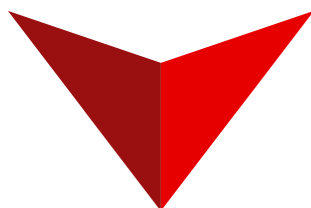
FY 2024 - 2025

ARNA continued to demonstrate financial resilience and organizational adaptability throughout the 2024-2025 fiscal year. With effective stewardship of resources, the organization successfully supported its mission through a slate of activities, including the 2025 Annual Conference in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, ongoing digital infrastructure, and outreach initiatives.

The financial operations of the year reflect a balance between strategic investment and fiscal prudence. ARNA entered the 2024-2025 year with a healthy beginning balance and maintained consistent oversight of expenditures. Monthly reconciliations from September through July indicate a pattern of spending aligned with the organization's values—supporting accessibility (e.g., language interpretation services), member engagement (e.g., Zoom and website services), and scholarly exchange (e.g., conference-related expenses).

Total revenues for the year—including conference registrations, sponsorships, and membership dues—fell short of overall expenditures, leading to a modest year-end deficit of approximately \$2,400. Although monthly revenue and expense patterns varied with conference timing and service payments, ARNA closed the fiscal year with a healthy cash reserve of just over \$20,000, positioning the organization to meet upcoming commitments while re-examining opportunities to grow income streams.

With a continued focus on transparency, sustainability, and impact, ARNA remains well-positioned to support its members and advance action research globally. The organization enters the 2025-2026 fiscal year financially stable and energized to build on this foundation.



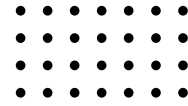
ARNA Treasurer's Report

FY 2024 - 2025

Month	Beginning Balance (\$)	Revenue (\$)	Expenditures (\$)	Ending Balance (\$)
Sept 2024	\$22,501.07	\$0.00	\$516.43	\$21,984.64
Oct 2024	\$21,984.64	\$0.00	\$912.73	\$21,071.91
Nov 2024	\$21,071.91	\$0.00	\$1,528.03	\$19,543.88
Dec 2024	\$19,543.88	\$0.00	\$1,187.31	\$18,356.57
Jan 2025	\$18,356.57	\$1,070.05	\$1,471.13	\$17,955.49
Feb 2025	\$17,955.49	\$1,200.00	\$1,032.06	\$18,123.43
Mar 2025	\$18,123.43	\$750.00	\$1,672.16	\$17,201.27
Apr 2025	\$17,201.27	\$375.00	\$549.71	\$17,026.56
May 2025	\$17,026.56	\$13,084.94	\$9,459.84	\$20,651.66
Jun 2025	\$20,651.66	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$20,651.66
Jul 2025	\$20,651.66	\$0.00	\$563.91	\$20,087.75

Membership

2024-2025



The Action Research Network of the Americas continues to serve as a vital hub for practitioners and educators committed to advancing participatory action research methodologies across the Americas and around the globe. With 119 current members, ARNA brings together action researchers and educators to help develop and share the practices of doing and supporting action research. The organization maintains an active membership directory that demonstrates the network's reach, facilitating connections between researchers, community organizers, educators, and social change advocates who utilize action research approaches in their work. Current membership spans diverse sectors including higher education, community development, healthcare, social services, and grassroots organizations, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of action research applications.

The network's membership engagement extends beyond individual participation to include institutional collaborations and international partnerships with related organizations such as the Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN). ARNA is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to uniting practitioner/action researchers worldwide and maintains active communication through social media platforms and regular conferences. The organization's upcoming conference planning and ongoing spotlight presentation opportunities demonstrate continued member involvement and professional development focus. ARNA's membership structure supports both emerging and established action researchers, providing pathways for knowledge sharing, methodological development, and collaborative project development that strengthens the broader action research community throughout the Americas.

Strategic Plan 2020-2025



We are proud to celebrate the significant strides ARNA has made over the past several years in advancing our mission to strengthen action and participatory research across the Americas and beyond. Through the dedication of our members and the power of collaborative inquiry, we have successfully fostered meaningful connections in communities, between practitioners and students, and in meaningful investigations, even continuing our work through the COVID-19 pandemic in hosting our annual conference.

Our virtual conference innovations have broken down geographical barriers, enabling greater participation from diverse voices across the globe. These accomplishments have solidified ARNA's position as a respected leader in promoting action research methodologies that honor cultural diversity and support sustainable democratic societies, creating a strong foundation upon which we can build our future strategic direction. While we want to celebrate our successes in the past, we also acknowledge that some of our strategic planning goals were not met. . For example, our efforts to realign annual conference structures and develop increased capacity for internal institutional leadership through enhancing our ARCs and to provide substantive mentorship opportunities have continued to show promise but still require continued focus and further refinement.

Recognizing the evolving landscape of action research and participatory methodologies, we are now embarking on a comprehensive new strategic planning process that will build on our organization's original mission for collective inquiry, reflection, and action to generate knowledge and create practical change within specific social contexts. Our commitment remains for a process of continual improvement and sustainable transformation. Focusing on our mission, our dedication to strengthening the position of action and participatory research in communities around the globe remains unwavering, and a new strategic direction represents an opportunity to deepen our impact and enhance our role.



ARNA
Coordinating Leadership Team
2025 - 2026



Celina German, Graduate at Large

Celina German (she/they) is a second-year doctoral student in the Learning, Literacies, and Technology program at Arizona State University. At Kenyon College, she completed her undergraduate degree in History with specializations in Women's and Gender Studies and African Diaspora Studies. With her M.Ed. in Secondary Education, German taught 11th-grade English Literature in Phoenix's West Valley (Avondale, AZ) and co-led her school site's Black Student Union. As a teacher researcher, German explores how district funding, teacher preparation programs, and community partnerships intersect in promoting racial identity development in after-school programs. Utilizing Youth Participatory Action Research methodology, she focuses on how young people of color co-construct critical consciousness and racial self-efficacy with educators. After graduating, she hopes to become a professor of education. Apart from her scholarly activities, she loves visiting National Parks, making pottery, and training for supersprint triathlons.



Erin Bush, Membership Chair



Dr. Erin Bush (she/her) is an assistant professor at Florida State University. She is a certified speech-language pathologist who studies and teaches about neurogenic communication disorders that people may have after a brain injury, stroke, or the onset of a neurological disorder. In studying and working with those with brain injury, her interests expanded to broader social justice pursuits. Erin is interested in studying & using alternative research methodologies to understand the health disparities of marginalized groups. She is particularly passionate about community-based participatory research, qualitative methodologies, and alternative ways to disseminate research findings. She aims to generate ethical, meaningful, and culturally-responsive research that enhances and enriches people's communication and life participation.



Lesley Wood, Member at Large

Lesley Wood, D Ed, is the ETDP SETA Research Chair for ECD in the Faculty of Education at North-West University, South Africa. Lesley is committed to helping educational stakeholders address the social disadvantages they face within contexts of poverty. She is a National Research Foundation rated researcher whose interests lie in researching participatory ways to facilitate psycho-social wellbeing within various educational communities. She has been inducted into the Academy of Science South Africa (ASSAf) and the international Academy of Community Engaged Scholarship (ACES). Over 40 postgraduate students have received their degrees under her supervision. She has published over 100 articles, chapters and books, and received several national and international grants for her projects.

Maranda Ward, Member at Large

Dr. Maranda C. Ward is an Associate Professor and Director of Equity in the Department of Clinical Research and Leadership in the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences. In this role, she designs, evaluates, and teaches health equity curriculum for student and faculty learners. Her teaching excellence was recognized in 2021 with the highest teaching honor at GW- the Morton A. Bender Teaching award. She is a member of the Academy of Distinguished Teaching as well as among the multi-disciplinary faculty within GW's Trustworthy AI efforts.

Dr. Ward is an expert in advancing anti-racism efforts within health professions education and in designing curricula to enable students and faculty to competently promote health and racial equity in practice. Her research focuses on diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and antiracism educational interventions as well as community-focused studies on HIV, Black women's health, and youth identity.

Maranda earned her Doctorate in Education from GW, her Master's in Public Health from Tulane University, and her Bachelor's degrees in Sociology and Anthropology from Spelman College. She enjoys learning from youth, traveling, and brunch.



Allison Lester, ARC Co-Chair

Dr. Allison JoAnn Lester is an Assistant Teaching Professor at Arizona State University. She specializes in action research, community-based projects, and transformative educational practices. With over a decade of experience in urban education and leadership, Dr. Lester is dedicated to fostering critical thinking and social impact through education. Her research focuses on bridging university-school-community partnerships and utilizing action research to drive social change. Dr. Lester has led several impactful projects, including Digital Playscape, a community-based STEM/STEAM education initiative using AI, AR, and VR to create immersive learning experiences; TRASHION, a youth participatory action research (YPAR) project promoting sustainability and creativity among LatinX teens through fashion design and live-action role play; and The Garage, a community space co-created by youth to address local needs using YPAR methodology. She also directed Cincinnati's Teen Think Tank, a paid YPAR internship program empowering young people in Cincinnati to lead projects on identity, mental health, and social justice.



Megan Bolton, Chair

Dr. Megan Bolton is a passionate nonprofit professional, driving positive change for empowerment and social impact.

Throughout her career, she has served in program and operations management in nonprofits and city government.

Dr. Bolton is a Program Manager at National Experienced Workforce Solutions, focused on workforce development with the federal government for adults aged 55 and older.

She holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology of Communications, a master's degree in Theological Studies, a master's degree in Public Affairs: Nonprofit Management, and a PhD in Leadership & Change. She is a native of Michigan and, in her spare time, enjoys reading, concerts, and the outdoors in all seasons.





Candace Kaye, Immediate Past Chair



Dr. Candace Kaye continues as an Affiliated Graduate Professor of Early Childhood Education at New Mexico State University and a Visiting Scholar at Mongolian National University of Education. She lives for most of the year in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. She has served ARNA in several capacities in leadership roles. Currently, she is the Immediate Past Chair of the ARNA Coordinating Leadership Team. In 2020, 2023 and 2025 she co-chaired the ARNA annual conference. Dr. Candace Kaye continues as an Affiliated Graduate Professor of Early Childhood Education at New Mexico State University and a Visiting Scholar at Mongolian National University of Education. She lives for most of the year in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. She has served ARNA in several capacities in leadership roles. Currently, she is the Immediate Past Chair of the ARNA Coordinating Leadership Team. In 2020, 2023 and 2025 she co-chaired the ARNA annual conference. She also continues to be involved in the ARNA Action Research Communities (ARC) – first initiating the Early Childhood ARC with Dr. Mina Kim and then in 2023 beginning the International ARC. Her action research studies are in the countryside of Mongolia and in programs of early art and literacy education for preschools and kindergartens in Puerto Vallarta.

She writes and presents her ongoing investigations about the community centered process of developing such programs. Her current research interest also includes the cultural interpretation of action research theory and practice. Her most current presentations and publications concerning action research include: Kaye, C. and Batsikhan, J. (November, 2025). A Collaboration for Developing Problem Solving Skills for Teachers: Celebrating the Action Research Process in Mongolia at Under Shared Blue Skies Conference: Mongolia and the North American West. Denver, Colorado; Kaye, C. (2023). Global Perspectives on Art Museums as Third Spaces for Inquiry-Based Support in Core Curriculum. In *Third-Space Exploration in Education* (pp. 195-220). IGI Global; Kaye, C. (2022). Visual ethnography as a research methodology: Enhancing the depth of scholarship. In *Methodological Innovations in Research and Academic Writing* (pp. 18-40). IGI Global Scientific Publishing; Kaye, C., Dorjotov, N., Batmunkh, L., & Badrakh, J. (2021). Strategies for democratic reform in education: developing an action research community in Mongolia. *Educational Action Research*, 29(4), 656-673.



Sarai Richter, Graduate At Large

Sarai Richter is a Ph.D. student in Sociology at Arizona State University whose work bridges social justice, participatory action research, and transnational feminist solidarity. Their research engages themes of migration, human rights, community-based practice, and Southeast Asian studies, with a focus on arts-based methods and post-qualitative inquiry. Sarai's teaching experience spans multiple contexts, including serving as a traditional garden educator on the Navajo Nation, teaching elementary art in Phoenix public schools, and instructing adult learners in GED, ESOL, and citizenship courses, as well as university-level sociology. They also served internationally as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Cambodia.



Gabrielle Astier, 2026 Conference Chair

Professor in the Architecture and Urbanism undergraduate program and Coordinator of the Internationalization Office at Centro Universitário UNINTA (Sobral-CE). Previously coordinated the Architecture and Urbanism program at Faculdade Luciano Feijão and the Curricularization of Extension. Leads the Research Group on Vernacular Architecture and has taught at Fundação Ieducare and Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas.

Holds a Ph.D. in Urbanism from PUC-Campinas, with a research internship at Universidad de Antioquia (Colombia). Completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Geography at UVA and coordinated the UrbColab research group (NuPACT/CNPq). Was a research fellow at FIOCRUZ in the Urban Health Observatory project. Holds a Master's in Urbanism (FAPESP-funded) and a degree in Architecture and Urbanism from PUC-Campinas. Expertise: low-impact environmental architecture and collaborative urbanism. Member of Br Cidades (Br Ceará chapter), ABEA, and Rede Terra Brasil (2024).



Randy Ziegenfuss, Treasurer & ARC Co-Chair

Dr. Randy Ziegenfuss is Professor of Practice and Director of the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) Program in Transformational Leadership at Moravian University. He is deeply committed to reshaping K-12 and higher education systems from traditional, school-centered models to learner-centered environments that are responsive to the demands of a dynamic, technology-driven world. His research emphasizes the transformational leadership practices necessary for driving systemic change, with a particular focus on strategic foresight and understanding the educational needs of Generation Z and Generation Alpha.

Since 2018, Randy has served as the Leadership ARC Co-Chair for ARNA. Prior to his current role at Moravian, Randy retired as superintendent of the Salisbury Township School District (PA) in 2021, after a career in public education. He holds degrees from Moravian University, Teachers College at Columbia University, and The University of Pennsylvania. Beyond his professional pursuits, Randy is engaged in a side project called The Human School and enjoys frequent visits to New York City to immerse himself in its vibrant arts culture.



E.J. Pavy, Sponsorship Chair

Dr. E.J. Pavy is a leader for organizational change management and training at Campbellsville University. He has a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Organizational Development as well as degrees in vocal music education and choral conducting. Dr. Pavy serves ARNA as the Sponsorship Chair on the Coordinating Leadership Team as well as the chair for the Musical Learning ARC.

An arts-based action researcher, he explores expression of the arts to create meaning and drive social and organizational change. Dr. Pavy is the recipient of ARNA's 2024 Promising Action Research Award, Campbellsville University's 2022 John E. Chowning Staff Award for Diversity, and a dissertation award for Community Engaged Research from the University of Louisville.



2026 Hybrid Annual Conference

Registration Information Coming Soon!

