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In 1994 I did not know what action research was all about. I was an engineer cum project manager working away in Singapore when I decided to enroll in a PhD program conducted by University of South Australia. We were told that we had to use action research. We attended a session by a famous professor of action research from Australia - about 25 managers in Singapore - and came away very puzzled. Most of us were positivists brought up with a scientific background.

Out of curiosity I started reading further and came across 'action learning' that I seemed to understand better as I was working in a Japanese company which was promoting 'quality control circles' using the plan-do-check-act cycle. I could see some similarities between AL and QCC's. I also understood that AL was started by a Professor of Physics in the UK and being a Physics graduate I thought it should not be that bad after all. I also liked the formula for action learning  $L=P+Q$ .

Then I started to learn more about action research and its origins and this started making me more comfortable. I had left my home country, India, almost twenty years ago and had landed in Singapore after a couple of years in Iran. My childhood heroes were Gandhi and Nehru whose democratic principles I admired a lot. In my journey out of my roots I had forgotten why I admired them so much. I had forgotten about those principles chasing 'gold' in a materialistic world. Reading Lewin's papers and hearing about some of the AR stories kindled our the free spirit that I had when I was younger although I was much poorer. I started feeling more comfortable about action research.

That is when I met Professor Alan Davies who was nominated as my doctoral supervisor who asked Bob Dick to be our 'methodology' supervisor. Bob's first clear explanation of 'action research' bought us over - four of us who completed our PhD's under their supervision using action research in Singapore. I had also used action learning successfully in my company to develop younger managers and solve a critical problem related to the survival of an operation I was heading as a Director of the company.

My emancipatory spirit had been awakened and I started feeling restless after I finished my doctorate. My world had changed and I was looking at it from different eyes. Then my organisation appointed a new chief executive who had profit as his most important motive. This changed many things for us in a Japanese company proud of its technical and customer service tradition. I started thinking about leaving an organisation where I had worked for nearly half my professional life and which I had seen grow from a staff strength of 25 to 600. After some serious thinking I decided to give up my job and start working on my own. I became a consultant but the Asia crisis made it difficult to survive. My family had then moved to Australia as we had decided to come back to Australia where I had managed a project some years ago.

The four of us who did our PhD's under Alan Davies and Bob Dick decided to run an action research based PhD Program with Southern Cross University based on our own successful experience. In this connection I visited Australia and was offered a teaching position at Southern Cross University partly because they were also interested in action research thanks to Ortrun Zuber Skerritt, Alan Davies and Bob Dick. But soon after I joined the University some of the people who employed me and were keen on action research left the University. I had given up hope when a scientist in the University who was also our ProVice Chancellor of Research Peter Baverstock saw me struggling to promote action research and decided to throw his weight behind our efforts. He even funded a book that we published about action research.

Southern Cross Institute of Action Research was born out of his encouragement given by Professor Baverstock and we were able to demonstrate our capability to the world outside. We then worked on promoting the idea that action research could be an area of our research strength in the University and after some struggle we were able to convince the rest of the University. We then set up what we call the 'virtual' college of action research to encourage more students to take up action research as a research methodology. Since then other schools in the University (besides the management school) like environmental science, tourism, school of indigenous studies have taken up action research methodology. The number of doctoral students in our school has also tripled. Our next move is to hold an action research workshop and conference in our campus in 2003. We hope to have a research colloquium every year. We have also started publishing monographs on action research.

My action research spirit has survived nearly a decade and I look forward to the next decade learning more about it through my actions and my research. My area of interest now is the relationship between knowledge management and action research.

Thanks for giving me an opportunity to reflect on my 'action research' life.