Table 1: Action Research [For Transformations] Comparison with Others

	Action Research [for transformations]	**Applied Research**	**Conventional Research**
Purpos	To understand and improve [in support of a regenerative /sustainable world]	To improve	To understand
Basic (power) orientation	Inquiring "with" stakeholders, often empowering agency.	Consulting "for" funders.	Inquiring "about."
Researcher (decision makers)	Embedded. Problem co-definer, learning co-designer, co-implementer.	Expert who knows what good outcomes should look like and helps to move situation toward them.	External to the context. Problem definer, research designer, research implementer
Stakeholders	Problem co-definers, research co-designers, research co-implementers;	Sources of data	Subjects of the research; sources of information; samples for testing conclusions;
Evidence	Experiential, partial, emergent, dialogic, intuitive. Qualitative and quantitative. Includes stakeholders' first person experience with interpersonal reflections and dialogue.	Both qualitative and quantitative. Primarily impersonal and objective, often includes interpretive data (interviews).	Both quantitative and qualitative data. Impersonal and objective data only.
Learning process	Learning and dissemination integrated into the research process; questions about the status quo made possible; nested systems made visible. Iterative.	Inquiry modes to define stakeholder problem and then match problem to existing intervention models or new combinations thereof. Linear.	Knowledge development with researchers distant from the phenomena. Dissemination efforts passive & after the fact.
Strengths	Complex contexts where what to do "best" is a subject of discussion and negotiation; systems activity is coordinated inside political-pragmatic realities. Seeks to localize unique practices.	Expert diagnosis, aiming at contractual arrangement with defined scope of work. Seeks to deploy "best practices."	Understands simple and complicated contexts by weighting variables or forces into deterministic sets, seeks generalizability.

Weaknesses	Many positive outcomes cannot be easily summarized quantitatively. By those not familiar with action research, it can appear as lacking in concern for objectivity.	Efficiency orientation may conceive of new situations as versions of known prior ones, ignoring new knowledge creation opportunities. Delivering on a pre-determined contract can block emergent processes.	Commitment to objectivity standards of the natural sciences render it as armchair speculation, i.e., inactionable and potentially misleading.
Benefits	The work belongs to those involved. Builds problem-solving and learning competencies in groups, organizations, communities.	Returns value to those who pay.	Serves an academic community. May exploit the object of research.
Action Outcomes	Action is coordinated as a seamless part of the research design. Learning platforms, workshops, experiments, new practices, new learning, new forms of knowledge/practice, sometimes also using peer review.	Quick wins (may be short term only wins); may create stakeholder dependence, usually requires hand-over for follow up for sustainable action which may be difficult to coordinate.	Publication or communication of new information to disciplinary colleagues through peer reviewed journals.