Participatory Action Research - Feminist Trailblazers and Good Troublemakers

Season 2 Episode 2 Host **Patricia Maguire** with Guests Dr. Mary Brydon-Miller and Dr. Miriam Raider-Roth. Nurturing Relational Action Research Enclaves

https://www.parfemtrailblazers.net/season-2-episode-2-with-dr-mary-brydon-miller-and-dr-miriam-raider-roth-nurturing-relational-ac/

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[00:00:00] P**atricia Maguire:** Welcome to Participatory Action Research, Feminist Trailblazers and Good Troublemakers. I'm your host, Patricia Maguire. Through conversations with feminist trailblazers such as today's guests, we aim to promote an action research that's deeply informed by intersectional feminisms and connected to PAR's radical roots. Otherwise, what's the point of supposed transformational knowledge creation? Today I'm talking with Dr. Mary Brydon-Miller and Dr. Miriam Raider-Roth about their successes and challenges bringing feminist values and ways of being to PAR and practitioner inquiry. And before I do introductions, let me welcome our guests. Mary, welcome.

Mary Brydon-Miller: Thank you, it's good to be here.

Patricia Maguire: And Miriam, good to have you here.

Miriam Raider-Roth: It's great to be here. Thank you.

Patricia Maguire: (1:01) I'm going to highlight just a few of their accomplishments so we can get to conversing. Dr. Miriam Raider-Roth is a professor of Educational Studies and Educational and Community Action Research in the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services at the University of Cincinnati. She's a Director of the University of Cincinnati Action Research Center, which we're going to talk about today. She also directs the Mandel Teacher Educator Institute, which is a two-year intensive professional development program for educational leaders in Jewish educational organizations. Dr. Raider-Roth's research focuses on the relational context of classroom life and the ways in which classroom relationships shape student learning and teacher practice. Her exploration of relational approaches to teaching and research is grounded in a feminist perspective. She has examined teachers' relationships with boys and teachers' understanding of their role as transmitters of culture. She teaches courses in practitioner action research, feminist qualitative methodology, and the relational context of teaching and learning. And Dr. Raider-Roth was a former elementary and high school teacher, so her practitioner inquiry comes from a teacher-as researcher-orientation.

(02:30) Dr. Mary Brydon-Miller is a professor in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Louisville. As a participatory action researcher, she works in school, community, and organizational settings. With David Coghlan, she's the editor of the 2014 *Sage Encyclopedia of Action Research*. And her most recent book is with Sarah Banks, *Ethics in Participatory Research for Health and Social Well-being: Cases and Commentaries*. Indeed, Mary's particularly well known for her trailblazing work in the ethics of participatory action research.

And in the interest of full disclosure, I'm thrilled to admit that Mary and I have been friends and colleagues back to the early 1980s when we were both introduced to participatory action research at the University of Massachusetts. Mary, Alice McIntyre and I co-edited *Traveling Companions: Feminism, Teaching and Action Research*. And while Mary has many, many publications, chapters, presentations, I just want to mention one other book - that's the 1993 book that she co-edited with Peter Park, Budd Hall, and Ted Jackson, which is *Voices of Change - Participatory Research in the United States and Canada*. Because I think that book helped put on the map that participatory action research was also taking place in the Global North, not only in the Global South. Her work focuses on climate change education and the development of international partnerships related to climate activism and environmental justice. And she recently completed a Fulbright research fellowship at the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia. And she serves as extraordinary professor at Northwest University in South Africa. Extraordinary indeed.

Mary Brydon-Miller: Ha ha!

Patricia Maguire: (04:25) So to begin with, let's go big picture, kind of background. And I'd like to have each of you talk about how did you come to connect feminisms, with an 's,' because I know you come at feminisms from varying perspectives. So how did you connect feminisms with participatory research or practitioner research? Tell us about your journeys.

Miriam Raider-Roth: (04:48) I began my work as a practitioner researcher from my early days of my teacher education life at the Bank Street College in New York, a progressive graduate school of education where a cornerstone from the beginning of Bank Street's history was teacher research. They didn't call it that. It just was part of what we did. So I understood that part of teaching was being a researcher. And that carried over into my first teaching positions and then into my doctoral work. And in my doctoral work, I studied with Carol Gilligan and began to understand and see the linkages between the hard questions that I confronted as a teacher and what it meant to be listening with an attuned ear to the voices of children from a relational perspective. And I learned that the relational perspective was deeply embedded in feminist thought, in feminist history, in feminist

research and in feminist trailblazing in academia. That's the origins for me kind of in my learning journey.

Patricia Maguire: (06:00) Mary, how about you?

Mary Brydon-Miller: (06:03) Well, I think I'm going to echo what I have heard many people on this podcast say, Pat, which is that a lot of it had to do with you. You know, you mentioned *Voices of Change* and you have a chapter in that book that talks about your work. And obviously, you know, we got together with Alice and did *Traveling Companions*. That brought together a whole group of people who were thinking about this. So I really kind of mark it to sort of our relationship in many ways, kind of keeping me on the straight and narrow when it came to feminist theory.

Patricia Maguire: (06:35) I want to dive in a little bit to the Action Research Center. Feminist Jill Morowski said that one of the greatest contributions of feminist scientists is to change the near environment. That is, the places and spaces where science is generated. And I want to talk about then, the Action Research Center as a place where social science is generated. Miriam, you're the current director. Mary, I think you might've been the founding director. And, Mary, you've said that you and Miriam tried to build feminist relational perspectives into the structures of the Action Research Center. So, Miriam, what if you start off and tell us a little bit about the current work of the Action Research Center, and then let's get into some of the ways that you might have tried to use the relational aspects of feminism to build the structure of the center.

Miriam Raider-Roth: (07:29) And I think it's important actually to hear the origin story though, Pat, first. I think what I do here, what I'm doing now really builds on the foundation that Mary launched.

Patricia Maguire: (07:42) Okay, all right, Mary, back to you.

Mary Brydon-Miller: (07:44) So I came to UC in 2000, and there wasn't any kind of space for action research particularly. Although I did get hired to teach action research, which was the first time I'd ever seen a job ad that actually asked for what I wanted to do. So that was very gratifying. And it felt like a space where there was possibility for things to happen. So I got an email that said that there were people doing action research just over at the medical school that I should get to know. And what I realized is that for many of us, there was sort of one or two people in spaces sort of spread across the university who were trying to work in a different way, but feeling isolated and that they didn't have support. And that it was kind of a matter of getting our heads up over the parapets as a way I've described it to sort of be able to see the landscape around us and bring people together so that we could

support one another and create a space in which we could do participatory action research and feel a sense of community and relationship.

(08:48) I mean I think you're right, Pat, that relationship is going to be sort of the consistent theme through what Miriam and I have done over the years together. You know, we sort of started out doing that, but I think much of the growth and development and, you know, sort of bringing in doctoral programs in educational community-based action research, which is as far as I know, one of the few programs where students can actually get a degree in community and action research.

Miriam Raider-Roth: (09:15) In 2024, we're going to enter our 20th anniversary year, and I feel great gratitude to Mary for building the Action Research Center and that I inherited an amazing community. In the summer of 2020, when we were in the depths of the COVID lockdown, we thought we have to do something to connect with our communities. And I was particularly concerned about our students. So this question was, how do we support people at a distance? And we had had a time where we were doing monthly meetings and we decided to bring back our monthly meetings and we called them *Feed Your Mind*, and they were gonna be on Zoom. And we also made the decision that we wanted to decenter white voices and bring forward the voices of action researchers of color and action researchers who are traditionally sidelined in the academy. And so that we made that commitment and we have done that for the past three years. I feel proud of that because 20, 25 people routinely would come for these lunches, as a result of those meetings, they would become research collaborators.

Mary Brydon-Miller: (10:26) You know, I was listening to your interview, Pat, with Davydd Greenwood, who is certainly, you know one of my inspirations. And you remember when Davydd and you and I did the *Why Action Research (2003)* article for the *Action Research Journal*. But one of the things he talked about was CPARN, the Cornell Participatory Action Research Network that he founded, that was for many years, and you reminded me of just how long lived that center was; how successful they were in bringing people together and creating a space. Then he talked in your interview with him about space and about the fact that CPARN was successful in part because it didn't cost the university any time or, you know, space or money.

(11:11) And I think the same thing is sort of true of us. I mean, we are successful in part because we're not especially demanding of the university in terms of resources. It's the people that really make it and the space that we've created. And one of the things that Miriam and I have talked a lot about is sort of building on the work of our friend, Victor Friedman, who talks about the idea of enclaves. And this is something I think about very explicitly when I think about our Action Research Center. It's a space within a larger

organization or institution where you can create your own set of rules. And I feel like one of the things we've really been very mindful about with the Action Research Center was trying to create a space within a very traditional, hierarchical, very siloed institution, where we establish a different set of expectations for how we relate to one another. And I think the *Feed Your Mind* meetings really exemplify that.

And the idea about enclaves is that, you know, they can either exist on their own and kind of try to fly underneath the radar and just get on with getting on, or they can try to create larger change within organizations and institutions, in which case they open themselves up to vulnerability.

(12:30) But you're not going to create systemic change if you don't take that on. So I think part of what we've really tried to do is to create opportunities for other ways of thinking about doctoral training. Other ways of bringing community people into the university, bringing us out into the community that really go against that. And Davydd was talking about sort of the demise of CPARN. And part of the reason he said, was that people with different ideas about factions of action research started attacking one another. And I think one of the things that the Action Research Center has been really successful in doing is creating a very open, welcoming, space for different forms of action research to be valued. So I am hopeful that whatever fate we end up encountering it won't be the same, that we will continue to sort of be caring and respectful and supportive of one another, sort of across traditions of action research. I think we've really done a good job of exemplifying that.

Miriam Raider-Roth: (13:28) The context in which we sit here at the University of Cincinnati is that we are deeply connected to the research methods unit in the School of Education where we have quantitative, qualitative, action researchers. We started out with our doctoral program in 2012 and purposely named it Educational Community-Based Action Research to convey that we were doing multiple forms of action research.

(14:01) You know what's interesting now is when people come to the ARC and asking us for help, it's asking us for help and wanting to do research in their spaces at UC. Last year I worked with a faculty study group who were trying to bring social justice pedagogies into their classrooms and then they wanted to study it and so they asked for some help around how do we study this kind of pedagogy that we brought to our classroom. Another request just came in saying we're impressed by how the ARC has built community in conducting research. Can you help us think that through? So, that I think is emblematic of how we're seen.

Mary Brydon-Miller: (14:51) And now you all are connected with our colleagues in South Africa and Namibia, you know, because they're trying to do some kind of self- study and you all are helping them to understand that. So I think that idea of enclaves being able to reach beyond their own boundaries to create change is really typified in those opportunities and those relationships that you're establishing.

Patricia Maguire: (15:12) Talk a little bit more about your somewhat recent effort to decenter white voices. What I know, about particularly the Action Research Doctoral Program at University of Cincinnati, is that you've been very connected and been a space for many educational leaders of color to be in your doctoral program. And I think you've been very connected to the communities in Cincinnati where there is a long history of racial injustice and racial inequity. So tell us some about your efforts, both to make sure that you have a very diverse masters - doctoral group. And even given that, how you felt it was necessary to decenter white voices in the work that you're doing.

Miriam Raider-Roth:

(16:10) So Pat, it's interesting that you raised this. I've been sitting in meetings this week and last week around the implications of the Supreme Court decision affirmative action. And it is chilling down the bone, let me just say, about the impact that will have on admissions. And I won't go into that, but I just want to set the stage for the context of what that means in terms of academic programs and how we maintain that commitment to really bringing in diverse students from all across different identities.

(16:55) You know, some of this began for me in really working hard...I am part of a study group here. We call ourselves the Cincinnati Critical Friends Study Group. We've all been studying how we bring culturally sustaining pedagogies into our practice in higher ed. And we all did self-studies as a part of that. And as I did my own research, that it took digging to find multiple representation, multiple voices that were not only the white voices in action research literature. That was an effort. And I felt that we really needed to do a better job creating more space and backing off so that we can hear the voices of color more strongly.

(17:43) And it actually began...we had a community meeting in a neighborhood I live in, which is an integrated community in terms of black, white, and multiple ethnicities in my neighborhood in the city. And I heard a brilliant scholar from UC in the School of Social Work, Dana Harley, talk about a photovoice project that she had done in my neighborhood that I knew nothing about. And I thought, this is exactly how siloed we are. And so she was our first and she spoke about her work she'd done. And then we just started making phone calls and asking around and asking people who, you know, whose work we admired and we also included marginalized voices from the queer community in these Feed Your Mind

sessions so that we could hear about the work that was happening that we may not be readily accessible to. As a white cisgender woman I wanted my ears and eyes to be open hugely and I wanted that for my students and I wanted to hear from our students of the research that they wanted to hear represented.

Patricia Maguire: (19:00) And I suppose then ironically it would be fair to critique, here we are three white women, you know, discussing yourselves as trailblazing feminists. And I know you have many colleagues and students and there's another program for us to be more mindful of.

Mary-Brydon-Miller: (19:22) I left UC about seven years ago and only because I was offered a job at the University of Louisville which is where I actually live. I didn't want to stop working, I did want to stop commuting. But the program that we have here, I teach primarily in our Educational Leadership program which is a CPED program. So it's part of the Carnegie Project for the Educational Doctorate, which is really focused on allowing educational leaders to do their doctoral study around a problem of practice in their own settings. And so, we have really moved toward trying to encourage, really focusing primarily on an action research model for our students in that program.

(20:00) And I would say that if not a majority, certainly, you know, an equal number of our students are students of color. And our school district here in Jefferson County is largely minority. You know, we have a history of attempts at school desegregation that have most recently, you may have seen in the news, sort of exploded in a busing crisis that was just of insane proportions at the start of the school year. You know, I feel really privileged to be able to support this group of educational leaders who go back into our school systems and we now have a statewide program. So we have students, not just from the city of Louisville, but across the state in parts of rural Appalachian Kentucky and Western Kentucky. All of whom are really trying to create change in their own communities. So, you know, in some ways, I feel like I kind of have brought some of the aspects of our action research center work to University of Louisville.

Patricia Maguire: (20:58) Let's talk about participatory research and ethics. Mary, I think that going all the way back to your work in, oh gosh, as early as the 1980s, your community accessibility project. And Miriam, I know that you've been influenced in participatory research ethics by Nel Nodding's' Ethics of Care and the work of the Wellesley Centers for Women. So Mary, tell us some about how you got interested to go really deeply into the ethics of participatory action research.

Mary Brydon-Miller (21:35) You know, I was reading over the chapter that was in *Traveling Companions* that I did about *The Terrifying Truth*. I mean, the terrifying truth in that chapter

is that we have an obligation to do what we can to act… to improve the world around us. And I've worked in various kinds of spaces to try to do that. Specific focus on ethics came out of frustration with the way in which research ethics is understood within the academy, which I think is wholly inadequate to addressing the ethical challenges that we have as action researchers. And I think we can be complacent by thinking that we're trying to do good in the world, but I always tell my students, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. And we need to be extraordinarily attentive to the possibility of doing harm in… in trying to do good as action researchers. And existing ethical review processes simply do not engage that at all.

(22:40) So, you know, I have sat on the University of Cincinnati's IRB, Institutional Review Board. I served for many years on the faculty of the Teaching Research Ethics Program at Indiana University, to really try to understand how to create a way in which action researchers and participatory action researchers can fully engage with the ethical challenges of doing this work.

(23:00) And, you know, for the students at Cincinnati and my students here, we use this process called Structured Ethical Reflection that really forces students and hopefully their community partners to really think about what values underpin the work that they're doing and how are those values then enacted throughout a research process. I just had my students do this and they're very funny. They always come back and say, that took a lot longer than I thought. I said, yeah, I know. But it also raised some really interesting questions for them about sort of providing them with touchstones to really monitor how they're embodying the values that they say are important to them in every aspect of their research practice.

Patricia Maguire: (23:48) Miriam, I think you've said that your work has been influenced by Nel Noddings' Ethics of Care and the work of, say, Jean Baker Miller and Carol Gilligan and others at the Wellesley Centers for Women. What connections can you make between that and practitioner inquiry ethics?

Miriam Raider-Roth: (24:08) So I would say the major influence really has been in the ethical work that I saw come out of Carol Gilligan's work and the work that was at Harvard at the time, the Center of Research on Girls.

When I met Mary and that Mary created *Structured Ethical Reflection* and I remember the first workshop that Mary gave as it was an action research center lunch and you had us try it out. You were…we were a bit of your guinea pigs I think in that early in those early phases. And I thought, that exercise, which I have adapted in both participatory spaces, but also in practitioner spaces when people are trying to study their own spaces and really thinking

about the ethical challenges that they will confront for sure. But one of the things that's so clear about the *Structured Ethical Reflectio*n process is the deep commitment to values. It's your values that are at the, that are like the foundational bricks of the commitments then that you make.

(25:23) Decisions you make are deeply connected to the values that you and your community hold. And that for me is an essential relational idea that we connect, we build, the threads of connection through our shared values or our values that are not shared that we have to wrestle over, how will we manage not having those shared values? It's like the connective tissue of especially professional relationships, right, is that where are we with our values? And so to be able to articulate that, be forced to articulate it, and come to terms with it, is like an essential relational move in the research process. So I think that's how I build that connection.

Patricia Maguire: (26:17) And I want to let our listeners know that we'll make sure - we have a companion website called parfemtrailblazers.net and we put up the transcript, additional information about the guest, citations and we'll make sure in that to put up some citations about the structured ethical reflection. So if you want to learn more about that, you can find some resources there.

(26:46) This is by no means exclusive to feminist informed practice. Each of you, I think, incorporate some very creative, experiential, arts-based methods in your practitioner inquiry or your PAR. Miriam, I know you've been known to use painting as a method of reflection and practitioner inquiry. I read a piece of yours where in teaching an action research course, you came home after every class and painted a picture. And Mary, you're quite well known for integrating arts-based methods in your research and presentations. So can each of you give us one of your favorite examples of an art-based method that you have incorporated or used in your practitioner or participatory research.

Mary Brydon-Miller: (27:30) So can I share, not something that I have done, but one of my recent student's work, E.J. Pavy, who just finished up his PhD with us. And E.J. was working at a very conservative Christian university here in Kentucky. E.J. is himself very devout Christian, but felt that LGBTQ+ students at that university, and they were there, were not being welcomed in the way that he thought was in line with his Christian values of loving others. And he decided to do something about it. So he brought together a group of LGBTQ plus students at this university, it was a small group. And they decided together what they wanted to do to bring, you know, with the whole idea of bringing voices, but he meant this literally. What they decided to do is that he would do extensive interviews with each of them.

And then based on those interviews, and he also has a background in musical composition and choral music, he created a piece of music that in five movements, each movement is an expression of the voice of one of the five participants in his group. And at his dissertation, Defense or Dissertation Celebration, and we should talk about the idea of dissertation celebrations, Miriam, because that's important as well. At his dissertation celebration, he... had a recording of this piece of choral music that is now used at his university in order to raise consciousness about the experience of LGBTQ students there and trying to build more of a sense of genuine not just welcoming, but embracing of those students within that community. And it was just.

(29:07) And then he's got a whole chapter in there about how he used sort of notions about musical composition in thinking about how he was doing this, which I learned a lot from. But it is just, it is a beautiful piece of arts-based action research. Music has not been as centered in arts-based action research as the visual arts or as theater. So I think it's just...and it's an extraordinarily beautiful piece of work. So E.J. Pavy, everybody should read his dissertation.

Miriam Raider-Roth: (29:34) So I can say that I've been deeply influenced by my students who are artists. Mary and I co-advised a wonderful artist, her name is Sarah Hellmann. She has now a... not-for-profit organization in Cincinnati called Art for All People. And in her dissertation, she brought to us paintings that she had done with African American female students in Cincinnati Public Schools. Her methodology with the students was to create art together. And she sat with me and Mary and she said, how do I analyze now this work? And both Mary and I looked at each other and said, I think you need to paint. And so she devised a methodology of analysis through her own art making. And then her dissertation celebration, rather than the traditional defense, was an art exhibit, where everyone could come to see the art both that the students had created and that then she and her responsive paintings and ask people coming to then draw. And that had a huge influence on me in trying to understand alternative ways of representing knowledge and alternative ways of constructing that local knowledge. I'm a very wordy person. And so to see the knowledge creation process come out of a totally other pathway of the brain was just so inspiring.

(31:08) And so that article, Pat, that you referenced of mine was influenced by another student, a woman named Mary Dulworth Gibson. She for 30 days did a two-inch by two-inch canvas of her painting and brought that to class as part of her final project. I was blown away by the emotion and the texture of what her exploration looked like. And then one more student, Allison Lester, in her participatory dissertation, she has found- poetry, she has watercolor paintings to represent some of the findings. And again, I think it just

breaks open this idea that knowledge construction only happens in one side of our brain, but that it is, and in engaging the community, we have these, again, these connective tissue of the arts to bring people into a conversation that goes to a different level.

Patricia Maguire: (32:10) I think that also connects with a very feminist perspective on multiple ways of knowing, multiple voices, valuing various approaches to have...to in a sense, collect data. That data and evidence that give us information about situations are more than just the written word.

Mary Brydon-Miller: (32:34) I wanted to respond to that and then I want to go back to another point, Pat. And that is, you remember before we did the book *Traveling Companions,* we had a conference. And part of what we did at that conference was to ask each of the people who participated to bring a piece of cloth that represented who they were and what they were bringing. And we did that, you know, very specifically to try to challenge sort of the way in which academic conferences generally happen, which is very sort of power-based, very one-upsmanship kind of grounded. And we really wanted to open up a conversations. And I mean, my sense of that, those conversations about those pieces of cloth was that the women who presented them talked about women in their own lives. You know, it opened up stories from them about their own mothers and their grandmothers and their own traditions. And they came from so many different cultural backgrounds. Then you remember my mom created a quilt out of all of those that you carried off to New Zealand.

- To see Traveling Companion Quilt https://www.patriciamaguire.net/pdfs/Maguire,%20Brydon-Miller,%20McIntyre%20-%20Traveling%20Companions%20Quilt%20and%20Stories.pdf

Patricia Maguire: I took it to New Zealand!

Mary Brydon-Miller: (33:33) Yes, so you know that quilt has been very well traveled. It lives here now with me, but I think that you know that's another art form that we use to really try to unsettle sort of business as usual.

The other thing I want to just come back to in terms of Sarah Hellmann's dissertation celebration, that was the first time that we used that idea. And it gets back to what we were talking about enclaves and using the space of the Action Research Center to challenge business as usual. Because, of course, you know, the idea of a dissertation defense, what horrible language is that? You know, that it's somehow this is going to be a combat and that you have to somehow defend your ideas rather than a group of people who care about you deeply gathering to celebrate the wonderful, extraordinary work that you've done together.

That's what that moment should be for our students. And I think, you know, we have really tried to then continue with that language in the work that our students there, and now here, do as well. But it's just like one little way of trying to kind of push back.

Patricia Maguire: (34:35) I want to go back to the notion, Mary, of the cloth that we had people bring and the quilt because one of the other things that that experience did, is it created some controversy around was using fabric, somehow a very stereotypical way for women to present themselves. And then having to push back and reclaim, okay, yes, it's fabric and it's fabric art, but why do we have to run from some of the things in the feminist gendered world that, why run from those things? But it opened up some fabulous conversation about was that stereotypically feminine.

If I could just say one other thing about the notion of dissertation celebrations, my colleague, Dr. Julie Horwitz and I, for 10 years at the Western New Mexico University-Gallup Center, where we had introduced teacher action research. And this was really Julie's idea, was we created a portfolio celebration. So with the...right before graduation, we had the students who were graduating and presenting their action research projects. That's what we did. We had a night that was almost like a science fair, you know, where people had their work, their families came, we catered food. But again, it was another way to celebrate knowledge creation in all its diverse forms.

Miriam Raider-Roth: (36:12) Interesting you say that, Pat. One of our signature events that we've been doing now, it's we're 11 years in, since our doctoral program was created, is we have an annual showcase. It is a place where we ask students who have been working on action research during the year to showcase their work. So we have posters, we have Sarah Hellmann now teaches our arts-based action research class, we have paintings, and it's interesting to think about that celebration of work as an action research ethos. It's important.

Patricia Maguire: (36:50) That brings me to the next topic that I want to weave in here. As you've talked about the Action Research Center and the ethos and community that you've created at these two different universities, I know it's really daunting for people listening who aren't in a space where action research, practitioner research, might be supported, understood, encouraged. I hear a lot from graduate students subsequent to these programs about what do I do out there if I'm, you know, like I'm not in a program like that. I'm not at a place that has this kind of support. So I would like to have each of you, what is some, I guess encouraging words that you can give to beginning, early career, aspiring action researchers who might not be in a supportive space like the Action Research Center.

Mary Brydon-Miller: (37:53) I'd say reach out to people. I think for the most part action researchers are wonderful, kind, thoughtful, warm. I mean, one of the things that came out of that article, *Why Action Research?,* right, is we like each other. You know, we're basically nice people. It's what keeps a lot of us doing it is that we have really deep friendships. And I think most of us want to create spaces for others. So, you know, I just have been in touch with a wonderful woman in China who I think feels like she doesn't have a huge community there. And I've introduced her to Miriam and our friend Steve. So I would say just take that step of reaching out to someone whose work has really influenced you and find those people because there are people at your, I mean, that's what we found at Cincinnati. And that's what I have found here, is that there are people in your institutions, you just haven't found them yet. So, you know, make yourself known. Create time and space like Miriam does with Feed Your Mind and people will come. It's kind of like Field of Dreams.

Miriam Raider-Roth: (38:53) Band together is my advice. Find the people. Join the Action Research Center LISTSERV. We'll put that, we'll give that resource to you for the website. Because our goal is to bridge between UC and the community and afar. And we have a Facebook page, we can help connect you with people. Maybe we know somebody. I routinely get emails from Mary that is connecting me with somebody she knows. That role of being a connector, I think, is part of the work of when you're more senior in the world of action research, part of, I think, our responsibility, like an ethical responsibility, is to help people find each other because it can be lonely and it can feel very vulnerable to be doing work if it's a... if it's not a widely accepted methodology in your institution. And so to know that there's a field, there's a real field out there, and there are a lot of people doing this work can be empowering and can provide, you know, concrete support, not just not just it feels good, which is important, but also some concrete support.

Patricia Maguire: (39:43) So if you're out there listening, email us. Is there anything else that you want to talk about that brings together feminisms and participatory or practitioner research that we haven't gotten to? Anything else as you were perhaps preparing and thinking through what you wanted to talk about today that we really haven't commented on?

Mary Brydon-Miller: (40:05) I wanted to bring up some of the work that I've been doing with Alfredo Ortiz-Aragón around roles and realms of action research. And this also connects to something that Davydd was talking about, about his most recent sort of addition of his action research book around, and his new co-authors have sort of led him to feel that sustainability is the core issue that we need to be addressing. And I certainly... you know, my shift toward working on climate change education is very much in line with that same sentiment of that this is the most pressing existential problem facing the planet, not just

humans, but it will, and it is impacting women and girls more severely in the Global South. You know, you look at things like, you know, water and access to water resources. I mean, just women's education is interfered with because of these issues. It's just for me at the intersection of so many things that I care so deeply about.

(41:05) And what we've been writing about is this idea of realms of action research. There's a realm of traditional research, but there are also realms of relationship building, which is I think where the feminisms come in. Our first and ongoing challenge is to build and maintain relationships. And that nothing else we do is going to have an impact if we're not grounded in those relationships. So, I just finished work on a chapter about green-lighting the university, the idea of trying to force universities to take on a larger role in terms of addressing sustainability.

(41:36) And one of the things that Alfredo and I talked about was sort of, there's a realm of advocacy and activism and allyship, there's a realm of emergent design... But that realm of advocacy and activism can't be effective if we haven't first built relationships. And I think what we saw through the pandemic, where scholars tried to become public figures, when you think about Anthony Fauci and trying to sort of take the knowledge that we were generating through the academy into the world in a critical moment. And we failed in that because we hadn't built relationships of trust. And so I think really thinking about relationships of trust as being our first and ongoing responsibility, if we are scholars who want to make a difference in the world is something that's very much grounded in feminist kinds of theories and practices.

Miriam Raider-Roth: (42:25) Some of the essential themes about relationality that come up in my work, and since coming here and finding the Action Research Center and the amazing people I have met, and then the influence of Mary and Lisa Vaughn and Dana Harley and other strong participatory research, it's taken my work from this place of a practitioner action researcher who also practiced feminist research methodologies, such as the Listening Guide that was designed by Carol Gilligan and colleagues at the Harvard Project on Women. But then in the work of the Wellesley College Women, the work of Maureen Walker, who came out with a book a couple of years ago when it went about race and relationships. And it's called, *When Getting Along Is Not Enough*. And it's an incredibly powerful read about the way that relational work can make change in the world. And that it's not, you know, the thing that drives me crazy is when people talk about the relational work as the soft skills. Because we all know that relational work is the hardest thing that a person can do. And so that intentional work of learning to listen and learning to speak from a place of heart and mind and soul, that's so deeply feminist. So it was so much a part of my feminist training as a researcher, was really learning to listen. And I was struck, we have

an article that will come out in *Educational Action Research*, that was looking at how participatory action research can be a powerful form of professional learning for educational leaders. And they were using Future Creating Workshops in their schools, which is a form of action research, a participatory form of action research. And the themes that we found, that came out when they talked about what it meant to lead these kinds of projects back in their own schools, were things like learning to listen and the complexity of participatory facilitation and that it challenged their sense of identity of who they were as leaders. We saw in that deep analysis that it was all about relationship to themselves, relationship to others, relationship to the context of their school. And so participatory work has that relational ethos to change the world so intermarried and so enmeshed with one another.

Patricia Maguire: (45:18) All right, I think on that note, I'm going to wrap this up. I want to thank the two of you for sharing this small slice of your life's work with our listeners. And then I want to thank our listeners for coming back to us for Season Two. Or if you're just catching up with PAR-FEM, welcome.

You can help expand our audience by sharing the episode link with your colleagues and your networks. A transcript of today's podcast and additional information about our guests, Dr. Brydon-Miller and Dr. Raider-Roth is going to be posted on our companion website, parfemtrailblazers.net

That's it, folks, for Season Two, Episode Two of Participatory Action Research, Feminist Trailblazers and Good Trouble Makers.

Please join us again November 1st with guests Dr. Carolette Norwood and Dr. Thembi Carr. They'll be discussing their Black Feminist Community-Based Participatory Action Research Project for Reproductive Justice involving women of color in Cincinnati.

As civil rights icon John Lewis urged us, go make some good trouble of your own.

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