Foreword

South of the Canadian border and held annually at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (ICQI) has welcomed a wide variety of international academics, public scholars, community workers, practitioners, theorists, activists, and/or researchers to facilitate ways in which qualitative inquiry can reveal and challenge pressing social issues. Since its inception in 2005, ICQI has always been a space in which those engaged in action research (AR) have been able to come together and share in their struggles and successes. Many, if not all, of the AR participants are typically involved with communities whose self-identified and immediate needs are tragic testaments to the current condition far too many find themselves trying to endure. Food insecurity derived from global warming, anti-democratic practices in so-called democratic states, increasing economic disparity around the world, blatant discrimination in institutions that claim objectivity, endless and expanding wars and a stream of other social injustices that should leave any sane human being gasping for breath (and even this reaction calls into question the quality of the air we breathe from manmade pollutants) and wondering what can be done. A quick review of some of the themes of ICQI over the past fifteen years reveals that a collective interest within our research family is not really troubled with the arrangement of desks in classrooms, or whether six or eight balls should be used during recess time. Rather, they are grave and often sombre concerns over the state of the earth and its diverse inhabitants.

ICQI2005: Qualitative Inquiry in a Time of Global Uncertainty
ICQI2010: Qualitative Inquiry for a Global Community in Crisis
ICQI2016: Qualitative Inquiry in Neoliberal Times
ICQI2018: Qualitative Inquiry in Troubled Times
ICQI2020: Qualitative Inquiry in Repressive Times
From the standpoint of the ICQI participants, it is clear that the times in which we live are observed and experienced as being replete with injustice, inequity, and oppression. Yet many, like those who engage in AR, still resist and believe in the transformative possibilities of working collectively and collaboratively towards potential solutions, in spite of the scope and magnitude of these issues. In communicating with the guest editor of this special edition of the *Canadian Journal of Action Research*, Christopher Darius Stonebanks, it comes as no surprise that our Northern friends share our unease and look to an ethics of AR that must aspire to something greater than the pettiness and corruption that have gripped our politics and institutions globally. The subject of ethics and qualitative research has appeared twice in our ICQI themes (ICQI2006 and ICQI2008), and I am reminded through the articles in this special edition, that the AR process often requires the types of involvement and commitment that are not always compatible with many institutions we either work for and/or must navigate. Taking from the themes of previous ICQI gatherings, we are indeed living in neo-liberal, repressive and troubled times. I encourage the reader to consider this and examine the questions and perspectives raised in this special edition. In solidarity with the authors, we must continuously move towards an ethics of AR that preoccupies itself with resisting and countering ongoing injustices.

In Solidarity,

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