

## **"To Do Something About It": Research and Policy**

*Michal Krumer-Nevo<sup>1</sup> and Maya Lavie-Ajayi<sup>2</sup>*

Issues of economic and social policy are at the heart of social work. However, in the developing body of knowledge of policy practice in social work, not enough attention has been devoted thus far to the contribution of research and the involvement of researchers. This article discusses the various ways in which social work research can influence social policies, and proposes Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a research paradigm that aims to bring about social and policy change. "People in poverty participate in poverty discourse" is an example of an Israeli PAR, aimed at eliciting an oppositional discourse and forging policy change through collaboration between people living in poverty, academics, policy makers, social practitioners and social activists. Seventy-eight people who lived in poverty participated in the composition of three position papers on welfare, education and housing services. The position papers served as the foundation for a debate on the subject at an academic conference. The article describes in details the method of using PAR and concludes with a discussion about the advantages and shortcomings of PAR as a tool to impact policy and its relevance to social work research.

- 
- 1 The Israeli Center for Qualitative Research of People and Societies and Spitzer Department of Social Work, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel.
  - 2 The Israeli Center for Qualitative Research of People and Societies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, and Unit for Mental Health Epidemiology & Psychosocial Aspects of Illness, The Gertner Institute for Epidemiology and Health Policy Research, Israel.