



CARN-ALARA 2019

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**Imagine Tomorrow: Practitioner  
Learning for the Future**

17-19 October 2019 | Split, Croatia

**Book of  
Abstracts**

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JOSIP JURAJ STROSSMAYER UNIVERSITY OF OSIJEK  
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**



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## **Challenges of introducing action research as a form of teacher professional development in Croatia**

**Branko Bognar**, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia

In opting for work at school, my desire was to contribute making substantial changes, first of all, in my educational practice and then in the practice of other teachers. To obtain this I organized various professional development projects in which I tried to help teachers in taking over the role of action researcher. Despite significant changes teachers - action researchers achieved, this fruitful approach is still rare in Croatian schools. The reason for this can be found in the fact that action research is not "a 'natural' process for teachers" (Johnston, 1994). It requires competencies that cannot be developed in passing but through systematic and deliberate practice. It is possible to start with this already in primary school, as we have shown in one of our studies (Bognar & Zovko, 2008). However, this requires highly motivated and well prepared teachers - action researchers. Unfortunately, there are still few such teachers in our schools. Because of this, I found it important to begin educating them in preservice teacher education, which I have been doing for over 15 years. Many future teachers have successfully completed my Methodology classes in which they conducted their first action research projects. However, for most of them it was the first and last such experience. Some of them could not continue to pursue action research because they did not get a job in the profession. Those who were more fortunate and employed in the school soon realized that this approach was not particularly appreciated within the framework of the traditional school culture. Despite all the obstacles, I continue to persist in helping teachers change their practice through action research. "Not because they are easy, but because they are hard; because the goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills" as former U.S. President Kennedy said in his speech in 1962. Although Kennedy's speech referred to the space effort, conducting substantial changes in education is no less challenging than going to the Moon. This requires suitable social conditions. It is not enough to wait for these conditions to mature in the future, but it is necessary to collaboratively and diligently create this future.