

REVIEW ESSAY

van Buuren, A., Eshuis, J., & van Vliet, M. (Eds.). (2015). *Action research for climate change adaptation: Developing and applying knowledge for governance*. New York: Routledge.

Reviewed by Shawna Rodnunsky, Claremont Graduate University

This publication on adaptation to climate change has several areas of focus. One is to consider possible approaches on how to address the issue of climate change adaptation. The issue that reduction of emissions will not be enough and that there needs to be a focus on adaptation to climate change has been addressed directly in this publication. The second is to provide additional scientific knowledge and to this effect, consider the processes of how to best collect and understand this research. The intent is to hopefully have an impact on practical applications and governance. Action research is emphasized as an appropriate approach to address the complexity and uncertainty of the problem and also serve to be practical in nature lending itself to a more streamline application of knowledge.

The discussion of adaptation differs from addressing how to prevent climate change. It considers that climate change may present irreversible and now unavoidable consequences thus attention must be given to how to adapt to these. As this is an emerging focus, there are many gaps in understanding from what the full impact climate change will bring, how to govern for these and how this will affect policy development. Research must be timely and responsive to be effective within these conditions as outcomes are not fully understood and may only be revealed with the passing of time.

In addressing the issue of adaptation to climate change, the editors and authors present an overview of governance challenges along with specific international examples. The differences between the processes utilized by research and policy-making institutions are identified and the case is made that application-oriented research approaches such as action-research has the most potential for success. In this way, all stakeholders can

become involved in the process in which practitioners and researchers work collectively to design, implement, evaluate and refine interventions in the field. Appropriately, “navigating wicked policy landscapes” are discussed. This includes a dynamic in which “collective puzzling” occurs and the development of story lines that are influenced by political ramifications and current thoughts on the matter rather than incorporating researched-based knowledge.

With climate change increasingly becoming a topic of public concern, this resource is timely. It provides a summary of the approach to adaptation. It also highlights key considerations to aid in the organization of researchers, practitioners and stakeholders into meaningful exploration and the development of policy that will be responsive to this issue. ■■