*In clinical research:* a process in which an investigator identifies, analyses and corrects a problem, then reassesses it and, if necessary, begins the process over again, until the problem is completely resolved.

*In social research:* a research method for resolving a problem in a given context through a democratic investigation in which the investigators work with the local actors to seek and apply solutions to a problem that is of major importance to the community.

Syn.: participatory action research