From action research to collective innovation

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The paper looks into how interventionist research in the field of environmental education has shifted from action research to inclusive innovation. It achieves this by exploring how the utilisation of different knowledge systems, the composition and roles of research participants, the nature of the solutions sought and the intervention methods have changed over time as part of the shift. More importantly, the paper discusses how the motive to increase both the academic and practical quality, relevance and utility of interventionist research has continued to inspire the search for appropriate processes and tools. Interventionist research is based on the realisation that understanding the world is not enough – there is need to change it so that it is more ecologically sustainable, socially just and economically viable. This involves the generation of new knowledge and tools, the development of agency among research participants and the creative application and adjustment of the new knowledge and skills. The paper not only illuminates the trajectory of change-oriented research methodologies in complex and dynamic environments but also highlights further work that needs to be done in the face of disruptive wicked problems that are difficult to define and solve.