



**Building Capacities of  
the Next Generation  
of Community-Based  
Participatory  
Researchers**

**New Delhi  
April 10<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**Andrea Vargiu**  
Università di Sassari

**Teaching  
Participatory  
Research:  
Issues and  
Challenges**

**Andrea Vargiu**  
(Università degli Studi di Sassari)

# **Teaching Participatory Research: Issues and Challenges**



Laboratorio Foist  
per le Politiche Sociali e i  
Processi Formativi



# A short intro on institutional architecture

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## Engagement

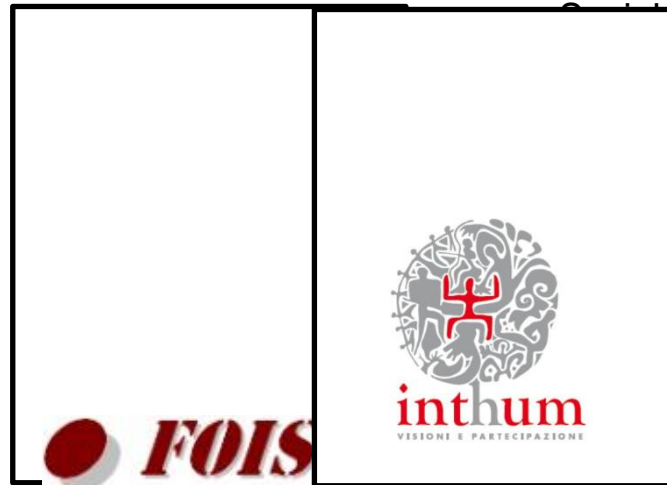
Chart of Sassari for a Community-University alliance

## Teaching

Formerly BA and MA in Professional Education  
Presently BA, MA and PhD in Social Work, Social Policies, Social Sciences

## Research

Social Policies, Migrations, Exclusion, Third Social Economy, Development, Social Inclusion, Citizen Participation, Science with Community Development, CBR, PAR, Evaluation



**Structural cooperation with CSOs**  
**Enhanced flexibility, Multiplication**



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# People we meet

## Frame 1.

### Action research and community advocacy in a disadvantaged and marginalized neighborhood

**Valeria** Works as a pharmacist in neighborhood with social exclusion, high delinquency rates, violence, segregation. Strong personality: slowly but surely became highly respected. Precious informant and influent community member.

**Don Franco** Is the old parson of the local parish. Very pessimistic about situation. A weak person, he is tapped and menaced by some neighbors. Does not understand why most of his parishioners prefer going to a nearby church and why youngsters are not interested in the facilities he proposes them for leisure and sport.

**Stefania** Social worker. Her office is located in the nearby neighborhood but knows a lot less about the local human and social history and geography than Valeria does. She's studying to get her MA in Social work and social policies at the University of Trieste. Final dissertation is on project management and social programming. Fellow colleague asked me to help him supervise her work.

# People we meet

## Frame 2.

### Consumption behaviors and use of public services of poor and marginalized people

**Vincenzo** Suffers of a light form of schizophrenia and is under treatment for alcohol addiction. Lives with other five mental suffering people in a “high density therapeutic community”, as defined by one of the law provisions that have been set up after the – official – shutting down of asylums in Italy.

**Carlo** Is the social worker who is in charge of Vincenzo’s Case. He set up the structure where Vincenzo and his fellows live. Carlo has been teaching for several years in our BA course in Social work.

**Alice** Comes from Nigeria and has been forced to prostitution ever since she arrived in Italy. She has a daughter from a Nigerian man who left her alone. Has probably paid her entire debt to her exploiters, but cannot run free because she is clandestine.

**Silvia** Volunteers as street unit operator in the organization that is trying to help Alice find her way out. Silvia got her degree in Professional Education with us, then did her PhD in Social sciences and now is studying to get her BA in Social work.



EUROPEAN  
SOCIOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION  
RN27 – REGIONAL  
NETWORK ON  
SOUTHERN  
EUROPEAN  
SOCIETIES

CIVIL SOCIETY  
ORGANIZATIONS IN  
THE  
MEDITERRANEAN  
AREA: SOCIETAL  
ROLE, CHALLENGES,  
DYNAMICS

Sassari 1-2 october 2012

**Andrea Vargiu**  
Università di Sassari



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**PERARES Project**  
Public Engagement with  
Research and Research  
Engagement with Society  
(FP7/2007-2013)  
g. a. n° 244264



# What do they have in common?

## 1. They are people

Not just “poor”, “precarious”, “mad”, “excluded”, “social worker”, “student”. They are not categories: they are human beings.

And that’s exactly where their potential resides.

## 2. They are different one from the other

As to sex, age, education, residence, family, culture, status, role, social, cultural, economic capital etc...

... but also (very important for PAR and CBR)  
socio-relational position in the community, needs, expectations, skills, capacities...

... and (very very important for PAR and CBR)

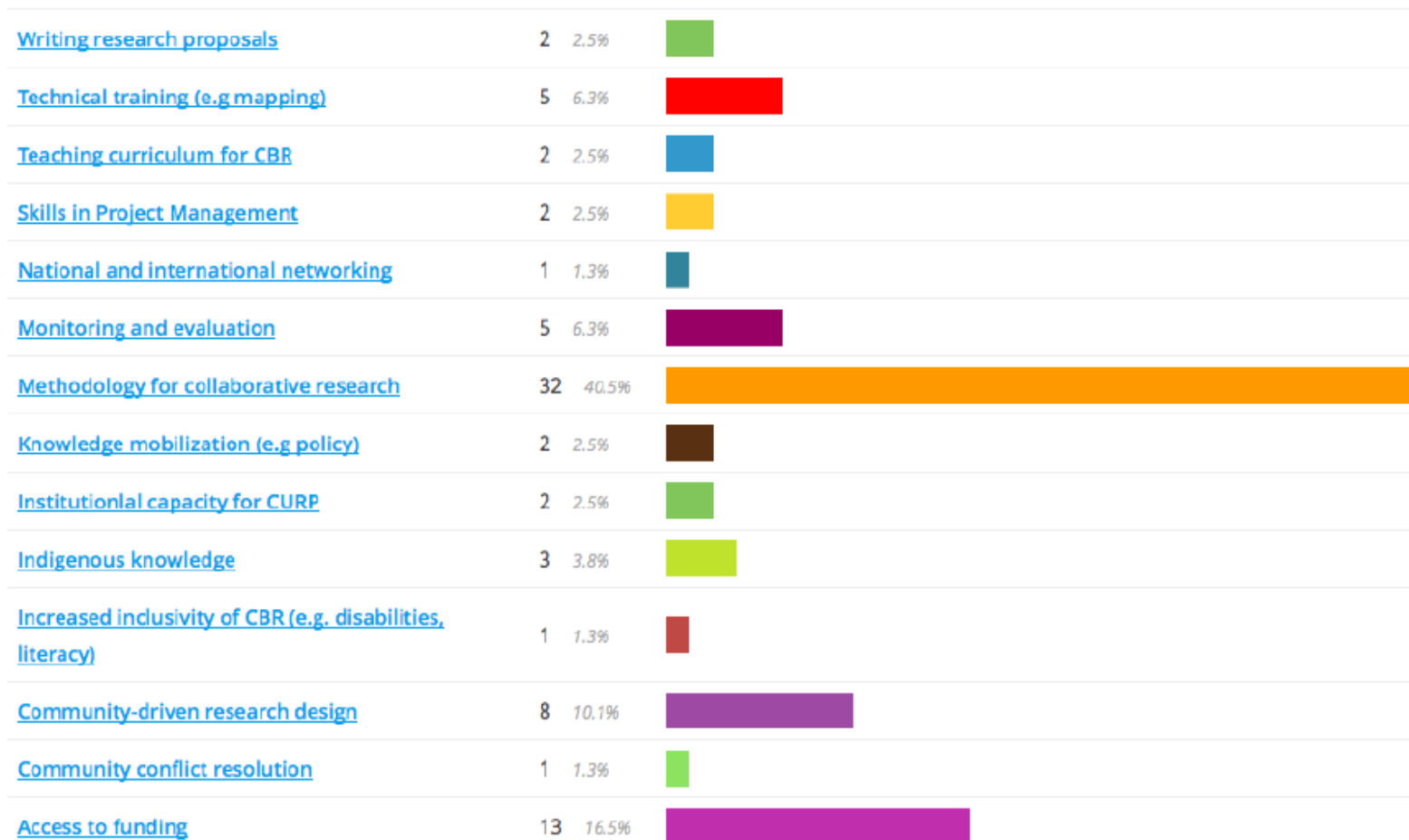
Power

Knowledge/epistemology

Interests

# What training is needed to deal with that?

Table 24. Training needs in collaborative research.



Source: Global Trends in Support Structures for Community University Research Partnerships. Survey Results -September 2014. Page 25.

# Meet another friend



**Antonio** Was an Italian violin maker who brought the craft of violin-making to its highest pitch of perfection. He was still a pupil of Nicolò Amati in 1666 when he began to place his own label on violins of his making.

His method of violin making created a standard for subsequent times.

It was long thought that the secret of his acoustically perfect violins lay in their varnish, the formula of which, though much debated, has never been discovered. However, modern research has isolated certain factors that influence the beauty of a violin's tone.

(Source: Encyclopædia Britannica)

**Antonio Stradivari** died in Cremona on December 18 1737, taking most of his secrets with him.



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# The craftsman's lab (Conviviality 1)

## The lab as a social space

- Create ties among people through rites and collective practices

## The lab as a community of practices

- Informal learning and (tacit and explicit) knowledge exchange through mentoring, peer relationships, imitation, impregnation.
- Cooperation rather than competition
- Collective achievements rather than individual excellence

## The lab as a place for autonomy, awareness and significance

- Appropriation of the work process as a meaningful whole
- Fixing and maintenance. Not just innovation or originality
- Authoritativeness based on wisdom and experience



# The democratic CBR lab (Conviviality 2)

## Expertise

- Sociable experts (enabling experts) vs Unsociable experts (disabling experts)

## Autonomy

- Holistic view and (shared) control and significance of the research process vs originality/individuality
- Possible conflict between autonomy and authority

## Altervision

- Reflexivity as a specific feature of scientific knowledge, amplified through collective mindfulness building

## Food for thought

- Collective reading and critical sharing of literature. Different forms of reading in the “video age”: from “voces paginorum” (orality) to the “liber” (vision) (1100-1200).

# Challenges for the democratic CBR lab

## Internal

- Democraticity
- Replicability
- Sustainability
- Scalability

## External

- State
- Market
- System rigidity,  
bureaucracy and NPM
- Funding and rewarding  
system

## Copying strategy

- Alliances
- Partnership
- Mutual support within and outside the academia