

Book Launch

Teaching Community-Based Participatory Research: Socially Responsible and Ethically Anchored

“Fifty years of experience in teaching and practising community-based participatory research distilled in one book. A must-read for all educators, administrators and staff in higher education institutions who want to undertake community-engaged research and make their institution socially responsible.”

– Prof. D.P. Singh, Chancellor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), and Former Chairman, University Grants Commission (UGC)



The Hybrid launch of the book- *Teaching Community-Based Participatory Research: Socially Responsible and Ethically Anchored*, at PRIA

On 15th April 2025, academic scholars, community leaders, and practitioners came together to celebrate the launch of *Teaching Community-Based Participatory Research: Socially Responsible and Ethically Anchored*, a groundbreaking contribution to the global movement for socially engaged research. Published under the auspices of the UNESCO Chair, **the book emphasizes capacity-building in Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) through a value-based, ethically grounded framework.**

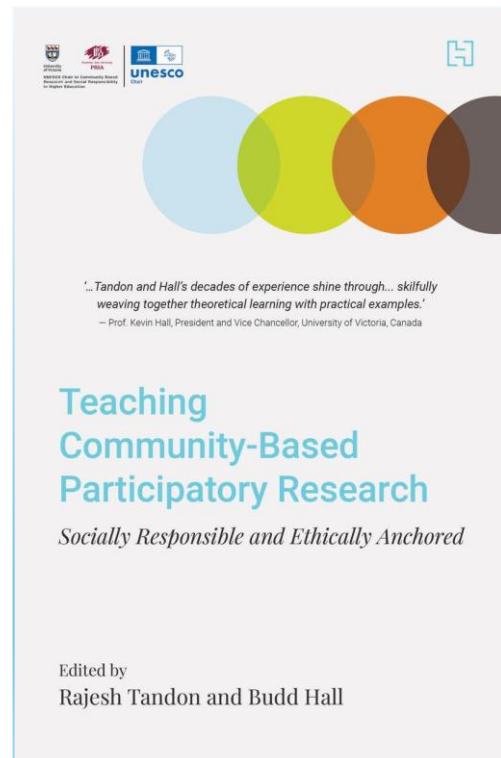
The event opened with remarks from Nikita Rakhyani, who underlined the critical importance of this book in today’s knowledge systems. She noted that this book, spearheaded by Drs Tandon and Hall, emerges from the **Mentor Training Program (MTP)** linked to the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, reflecting over fifty years of dedicated work in participatory research. It includes chapters by 19 authors from varied backgrounds and areas of expertise, associated with

different institutions across the globe. The book offers a rich collection of frameworks, case studies, and pedagogical tools for teaching and mentoring in CBPR. **It bridges theory and practice through a global lens**, highlighting experiences from countries across the Global South and underrepresented regions of the North. It further centres ethics, reciprocity, and co-learning as foundational pillars for community-university engagement. She then welcomed all the participants who joined the event in-person at PRIA and online through zoom.

Dr. Tandon then took the stage to welcome everyone and to highlight the historical significance and contemporary relevance of community-based participatory research (CBPR). He emphasized the term **co-construction of knowledge**, arguing that this process is far more complex than traditionally understood within academic settings. He noted that it has only been in the last two decades that academic conversations about **co-construction of knowledge and the valuing of Indigenous knowledge systems** have started taking shape. He further posited that genuine co-creation of knowledge can only occur through meaningful partnerships between academic institutions and communities.

To support this vision, Dr. Tandon, alongside Dr. Hall, became co-chairs of **UNESCO Chair for Community-Based Participatory research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education**. Their aim was to foster partnerships between academics and communities that are genuinely mutually beneficial, enabling a respectful and meaningful exchange of knowledge where both academic insights and community wisdom are equally valued and shared. For this core-objective of building academic capacity to engage in community-based participatory research in its truest sense, they initiated the **Knowledge for Change (K4C) project**, which has since expanded to 24 Knowledge Hubs across 16 countries worldwide with 271 mentors who have enabled over 1000 teachers and over 5000 academics to carry out ethically responsible community-based research.

Dr. Tandon then goes on to underline the newest development whereby a new program was developed by the UNESCO Chair for building students' capacity for community-based research in higher educational institutions in India. This program has now been embedded into the New Education Policy of 2020 allowing students to undertake credit-based internship programs to work within local communities and learn from them. This book is a direct outcome of that initiative and is intended to cultivate academic capacity for ethically grounded and socially responsible CBPR. He then concluded his remarks by extending heartfelt gratitude to the authors for their contributions to this critical resource.



The book- Teaching Community-Based Participatory Research: Socially and Ethically Anchored

Following this, the book's contributors shared insights into the collaborative process that shaped the volume, its pedagogical innovations, and its potential to catalyse real-world transformation. Dr. Wafa Singh reflected on the co-authoring experience of her chapter with Dr. Walter Lepore. Their chapter outlines the development of the designing of the K4C Mentor-Training Program (MTP) for teaching CBPR and invites readers to explore the **conceptualization, planning, and implementation** of the program in detail. Their chapter goes deeper into the aspects such as what is the content of the program and why, what are the pedagogical principles of CBPR, ethics, values and the importance of developing self as a researcher. They also describe how they developed the Mentor Training Program (MTP) into a scalable model, designed to be adaptable and context-sensitive, allowing it to be effectively implemented across diverse settings.

Next, Professor John Gaventa shared reflections from his chapter, 'Knowledge and Power Dynamics in Community- Based Participatory Research'. He began by fondly recalling his collaborations with colleagues at PRIA and congratulated the authors and the team at PRIA for their contributions to this timely and significant publication. Professor Gaventa emphasized that **mentorship in participatory research** should not be left to chance and commended the foundational work of Dr. Hall and Dr. Tandon in bridging the literature gap in community-based participatory research and institutionalizing the field of CBPR. He especially noted the potential of the MTP and underlined the global potential of this book to disseminate critical knowledge, adding that he is excited to use it in his teaching at the International Development Institute in the UK. The book, he notes is going to be imperative in maintaining quality of not only research but of the process of research. Professor Gaventa then elaborated on his chapter, which interrogates the **power dynamics embedded in knowledge production**; exploring the questions of how knowledge becomes power, whose knowledge is considered valid, and how that process unfolds.

Dr. Pankaj Mittal then offered her commendations to Dr. Tandon for bringing out this work and for institutionalizing CBPR. She goes on to pleasantly reiterate her partnership with Dr. Tandon and noted how they, in partnership came up with the phrase '**University Social Responsibility**', and the conception and beginning of the **Centre for Society-University Interface Research** to bridge the disconnect between Universities and Society. This centre, the first of its kind, she notes has been extremely successful in positively impacting the lives of the communities of people wherein the University is situated. She underscored the book's transformative potential for communities in India and beyond and congratulated Dr. Tandon for his life-long work and PRIA in trying to fulfil the potential of education to change the world.



The launch of the book at PRIA

The formal launch of the book then took place at PRIA, led by its contributing authors. Dr. Jyoti Gogia then presented her chapter, focusing on the **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness Model of Dayalbagh Educational Institute’s community engagement framework**. She highlighted the model’s guiding philosophy—to reach "the least, the last, the lowest, and the lost"—and encouraged participants to read the book to understand not only how academia can engage with communities, but also how communities can actively reach out to academia.

Dr. Kaustuv K. Bandhopadhyay followed with an overview of his chapter, ‘Teaching Community-Based Participatory Research Digitally in Partnership with Community’, which offers empirical insights from the pandemic period, into overcoming physical barriers in community engagement and participatory research. Co-authored with colleagues at Royal Rhodes University, the chapter reflects on his work with grassroots development initiatives, including pro-sport development, and explores how **digital technologies can make research more accessible, inclusive, and sustainable**.

Dr. Sharon Valarmathi then presented her chapter on **service learning and CBPR**, drawing on the work conducted at Christ University in Bangalore. She described the university’s unique approach to reciprocal learning and mutual knowledge exchange, asserting that CBPR has meaningfully enabled the integration of service learning into academic practice. She urged fellow academics to explore her chapter for insights into how classroom-based learning and community engagement can be effectively combined.

Next, Nandita Bhatt and Tariqa Tandon of the Martha Farrell Foundation discussed their chapter, which **outlines a feminist approach to CBPR**. They shared a brief excerpt that illustrates the importance of applying a gender-sensitive lens to ensure inclusivity in participatory research. Their contribution provides a step-by-step guide for how universities and higher education institutions can implement these methodologies to create safer and more inclusive academic spaces.

Dr. Anshuman Karol then presented his chapter, ‘Reconnecting Higher Education with Society: The Experience of the University Grants Commission in Building Community-Based Participatory Research in India’, co-authored with Dr. Diksha Rajput, detailing the UGC’s efforts to enhance CBPR capacity in India. This chapter lays the groundwork for **integrating CBPR into the curricula of Indian higher education institutions** by analysing relevant policies and initiatives under the New Education Policy. It offers a framework for meaningful curricular adoption of CBPR across academic contexts.

Dr. Sonajharia Minz concluded the contributor reflections by underscoring the book’s contemporary relevance. *She commended Dr. Tandon and Dr. Hall for establishing the field of CBPR and revolutionising research as a whole, by empowering academics to bring out not just information but valuable knowledge through the research process.* She praised PRIA’s role in transforming universities from isolated “ivory tower” institutions into accountable, community-engaged bodies and propounded that the book is a vital intellectual resource and expressed her excitement about the new possibilities it presents for researchers and educators. Dr. Minz particularly underscores key concepts such as **co-construction, knowledge democracy, and epistemic justice**, commending the publication for its significant contribution to advancing these critical frameworks.

The event came to a close with final remarks by Dr. Budd Hall, who joined from Quebec. Dr. Hall contextualized the contemporary times as deeply sobering and reminded attendees that long before the establishment of universities or the formal naming of science, communities were already generating knowledge through their relationships with nature. He notes that these communities were, for hundreds of thousands of years ‘Creating, Gathering and Living Knowledge’, and adjusting to how the world was evolving to improve their lives. He further critiqued the modern particularistic codification of knowledge, which has contributed to hierarchies that exclude and delegitimize many forms of Knowledge.

Dr. Hall argued that through the strengthening of the walls of academia and science, all Knowledge which was not formulated through positivistic methods became invalidated, making it a tool for domination. In this light, he argues that this book is an important book. He propounds that *this book is special because it has been written in collaboration with communities, by people who are trying to listen and learn from the voices of the excluded.* He then goes on to note that this book emerges as a critical resource for moving beyond the intellectual walls of the University, and emphasizes its role in advancing knowledge democracy, highlighting storytelling as a powerful tool for addressing the inequities and global challenges we face. In doing so, it reaffirms the **transformative potential of participatory research** within and beyond the walls of academia. Dr. Hall concluded by emphasizing that now is the time to create and strengthen institutions like PRIA and Indigenous universities, institutions rooted in community leadership and grounded in community-generated knowledge. **He underscored the urgent need to build infrastructures that honour, sustain, and are led by the wisdom and experiences of the communities they serve.**

Overall, the event was a resounding success in bringing together diverse voices ranging from the leading authorities at universities across the world and igniting dynamic dialogue among attendees. The book was widely praised for its accessibility, practical significance, and its potential to drive meaningful change within higher education institutions.

Teaching Community-Based Participatory Research: Socially Responsible and Ethically Anchored; stands as both a comprehensive guide and a seminal contribution to the field of participatory research. By bringing together a wide range of perspectives, it successfully promotes a vision of knowledge creation that is equitable, collaborative, and deeply rooted in community engagement. Offering practical strategies for embedding CBPR principles into academic curricula, the book serves as an invaluable resource for educators, researchers, activists, and institutions committed to advancing socially responsible scholarship. It provides the tools needed to navigate complex power dynamics, address ethical challenges, and incorporate innovative, digital and arts-based approaches into teaching and practice.

The recording of the launch is available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXEI67RvnCI>.

The book is now available for purchase on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.in/Teaching-Community-Based-Participatory-Research-Responsible-ebook/dp/B0DV94VJBH>