

Participatory Action Research: a Human Rights and Capability Approach

Dr Rory Hearne and
Dr Mary P. Murphy

with input from
Dr Nuala Whelan

PART 2 THE PRACTICE



**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth



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REBUILDING AN INCLUSIVE, VALUE-BASED EUROPE OF
SOLIDARITY AND TRUST THROUGH SOCIAL INVESTMENTS



Participatory Action Research: a Human Rights and Capability Approach: A PAHRCA HANDBOOK for NGOs and Vulnerable Groups

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PART 2: THE PRACTICE



Introduction

This handbook explains the Participatory Action Human Rights and Capability Approach, PAHRCA, developed by the RE-InVEST project. It is written for co-researchers; NGOs, trade unions, and community groups undertaking research with vulnerable people and the vulnerable as co-researchers themselves. The handbook is developed in a way that is 'user friendly'. It provides a brief overview of the theory behind the methodological approach and then includes concrete detail explaining the methodology, case studies of how it was implemented in practice, sample participatory methods that can be used and useful advice for researchers, and reflections on the role of the different participants involved.

This handbook was developed as part of our collective iterative experience of developing the RE-InVEST qualitative methodological approach which we named PAHRCA. RE-InVEST was funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 research programme under Grant Agreement No 649447. It is an innovative academic-civil society partnership that involves 19 organisations (universities, research centres and civil society organisations working with vulnerable groups). RE-InVEST is investigating the philosophical, institutional and empirical foundations of an inclusive Europe of solidarity and trust. It draws on capability and human rights based participatory approaches to examine how the European Union Social Investment Package (SIP) can be strengthened. A key principle for our collective work has been to enable the voice of the most vulnerable to be directly heard in our research, and therefore, to bring it into EU, regional, national and local policy making.

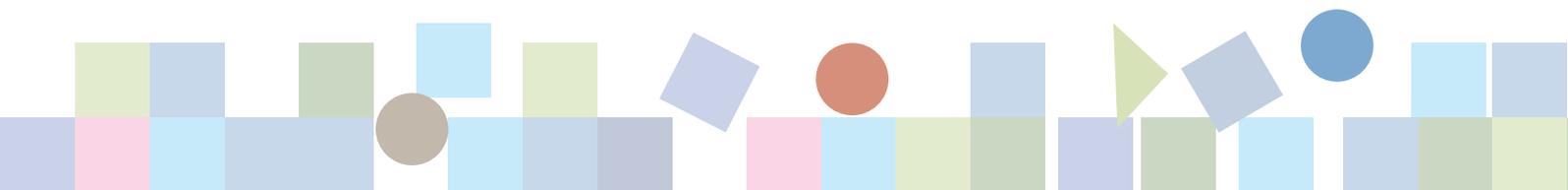
As researchers, scholar activists, NGO workers and activists, we have worked collectively to understand and implement the co-construction of knowledge about vulnerability, poverty and social problems across the EU. In developing the PAHRCA approach we hope we have

contributed to what Farruga and Gerrard (2016, p277) call an unruly and critical research, or, in other words 'an alternative politics of research'; one that challenges assumptions underpinning hegemonic or orthodox research approaches and policies. This is an extremely innovative and useful approach to co-construct, in a participative and 'bottom-up' manner, new knowledges of social and economic policies and, most importantly the experience of vulnerable people of these policies. It is also a method of 'action' that can bring this knowledge into the 'public sphere' of academic, NGO and policy debates. PAHRCA is, therefore, at least a 'potential' power that can be drawn on to empower the voice of the excluded and challenge social injustice (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2003).

This is not a traditional academic or NGO handbook that is drawn principally from theory and policy ideas but instead is rooted in the practice of praxis and, therefore, includes and reflects the experience of its implementation throughout the guide. All of the participants in RE-InVEST contributed in an iterative and participative way to co-produce the methodological approach set out in this handbook. The research methods are based on the ones we used to undertake the RE-InVEST project and they include feedback and reflections that we learnt from our attempts to make the PAHRCA work in the real world with vulnerable groups and intermediaries. It is, therefore, principally a user-guide for the practice and implementation of participatory action research (PAR).

The remainder of this handbook is about the PAHRCA methodology and advice for those co-researchers who are interested in finding out more about it and using it in practice.

- For readers who want to know more about individual country findings for our different research questions or, for our overall



analysis please follow [the links](#) to our publications at the end of this handbook.

- For readers who want more detail and explanation of the theoretical concepts underpinning this research (e.g. theories of human rights, capabilities, participatory action research and co-construction of knowledge) please refer to the PAHRCA Handbook Part 1: The Theory for academic researchers and policy makers and to our short series of briefing papers available on the RE-InVEST website. www.re-invest.eu
- For readers who want to hear first-hand about the experiences and views of the co-researchers from the vulnerable groups please also refer to the Re-InVEST website.

The main sections of this handbook include:

Introduction: We begin with some practical information about the handbook, introducing you to the process involved in developing the PAHRCA research methodology and the contents of this guide with some different suggestions of ways you might use it.

Part One introduces the key steps in PAHRCA, and some of the ideas, theories and principles underpinning this unique approach including the theories and approaches of human rights, capabilities, and participatory action research, and our understanding of the concepts of empowerment, participation and transformation. The section concludes with a detailed overview of the PAHRCA methodology, steps, and lessons from practice.

Part Two introduces findings from the RE-InVEST PAHRCA research including vulnerable people's experience of social disinvestment. It also provides a variety of detailed case study examples of the implementation of PAHRCA in 13 countries and therefore can be used as a guide-for-practice in the implementation of PAHRCA.

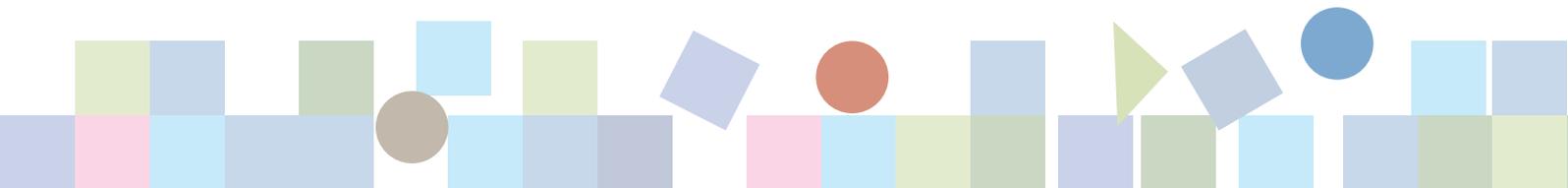
Part Three explores the roles of the different types of co-researchers involved in PAHRCA, including the vulnerable co-researcher, the NGO/intermediary, the academic or professional researcher and the peer researcher. We provide advice and reflect on what we learnt from the iterative process of co-constructing our own approach. It then provides a reflection on research ethics before outlining practical advice on some 'collective' methods that can be operationalised at group level and that can contribute towards individual and collective development, empowerment, action and equal dialogue.

Appendices: This contains useful references and sample methods used, contact lists, appendices, bibliography, online web/video links.

We hope that this handbook inspires you to implement a participatory action approach to your research and engagement with vulnerable groups. Our collective experience of implementing PAHRCA has been one of enthusiasm toward its core aim of involving and empowering the excluded and vulnerable through a participatory human rights and capability approach. Our principal advice to those undertaking PAHRCA is to be flexible, have fun along the way, and understand that PAR requires a significant commitment of time, energy and values. But, at the end of every participative action research project we have undertaken, we have felt that it has always been worth it, and has taken us another step, together, on the journey toward a better society and a more inclusive Europe.

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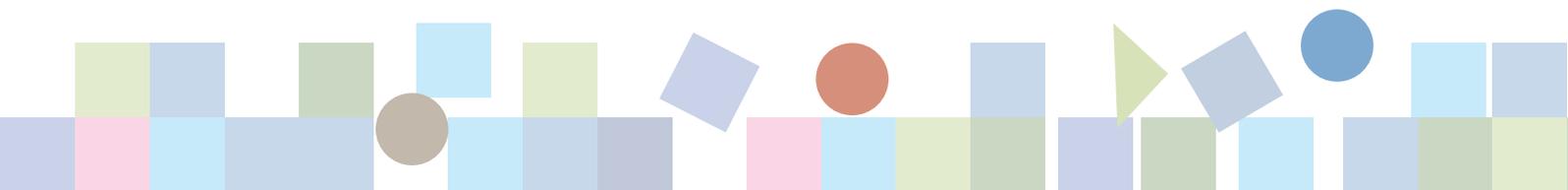
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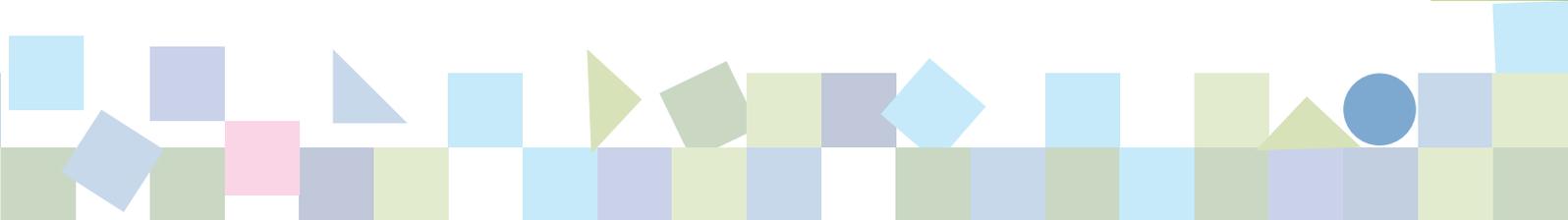




Part One

Ideas, theories and principles

In this section we present some of the main ideas, theories and principles underpinning the PAHRCA approach including the theories and approaches of human rights, capabilities, and participatory action research, and our understanding of the concepts of empowerment, participation and transformation.



PAHRCA – five key chronological steps

“Sometimes silence can be a tool of oppression; when you are silenced... it is not simply that you do not speak but that you are barred from participation in a conversation which nevertheless involves you”

(Ahmed, 2010, p.xvi)

The methodological framework PAHRCA brings together participatory, human rights and capability theory into one research approach. The aim of the research approach is to bring people into processes which involve them challenging and changing their own world and participating in the co-production of knowledge. The goal is not only data extraction, or the production of knowledge, but is about working with vulnerable groups to empower them to understand and

challenge the structures that cause their marginalisation and oppression. In short, it involves a longer period of relationship building where all actors in the research, academics, intermediary groups like NGOs and vulnerable individuals, are considered co-researchers, who are jointly co-constructing knowledge and then undertaking some form of collective action that brings that knowledge as a form of power into the public sphere.

PAHRCA is a five-step flexible approach

- 1. Identify, meet and develop agreement with partner NGO/intermediary**
- 2. Preliminary ‘meet ups’ with participants – trust building**
- 3. Developmental & capacity building: educate & implement human rights & capability approach: capacity building**
- 4. Inquiry/data gathering/analysis: method of inquiry**
- 5. Undertake action/outcome**



Human Rights

Human rights embody the universal values for well-being and a good life; they are also referred to as fundamental, basic or social rights (Nicaise et al., 2017). These rights are laid out in international treaties and are widely supported but their realisation depends on government support and good public policy.

Human rights are transformative by empowering people. Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to everyone. For vulnerable people the usage of a rights-terminology has proven to change their perspective by making them aware of their rights and the ways in which their current situation compromises these rights.

Specific groups are protected in specific treaties such as women, children, and people with disabilities, minorities, and migrants.

It remains difficult for communities to engage economic and social rights arguments, tools, and mechanisms in campaigns for local change. Human Rights Based Approaches (HRBAs) have been developed in order to address this. HRBA is based, fundamentally, upon the principles of accountability, participation and empowerment whereby states (duty bearers) are made accountable through various local, national and international processes to fulfil their obligations, arising from the aforementioned international instruments, to the 'rights holders' e.g. citizens, especially those whose rights are violated (Kenna and Hearne, 2014; Marshall et al., 2014)¹.

The HRBA aims to empower the rights holders to advocate effectively by using the language of international human rights norms, based on indicators and benchmarks, to measure compliance. It aims to change the power relationship between people experiencing inequality 'rights holders' and decision makers 'duty bearers'. Using human rights standards and principles, HRBAs have sought to achieve concrete changes in policy that

reflects the participation of local people to change service delivery through the principle of the progressive realisation of their rights by holding duty bearers accountable in this process (CAN, 2010).

Capabilities

The capabilities approach, developed by Amartya Sen (2001), develops human rights approaches by thinking about what resources people have for human development and for making rights real. The approach asks about what are people actually able to do and to be, in the given social, political and economic context in which they live their lives.

Capabilities are defined as '*the real freedom to lead the kind of life people have reasons to value*' and refer to the opportunities or freedoms of persons to opt for specific forms of functioning – beings or doings – based on a person's resources (Sen, 1999). Hence, capabilities depend on (a) the amount of resources at one's disposal, (b) the 'conversion factors' that determine the potential outcomes of the transformation process, given the allocation of resources, and (c) the freedom one has to choose. Socio-economic vulnerability can therefore be the result of a lack of resources, constraining conversion factors, and / or lack of free choice.

Bonvin and Laruffa (2017) construct a rights and capability approach by looking at three core human roles (see Table 1); people live as a receiver; people as a doer; and people as a judge.

'receiver' – a person needs adequate support (in terms of resources or services)

'doer' – a person's agency in transforming resources into valuable activities (including work, leisure, domestic activities, social participation etc. – this is an individual's '*opportunity for action/agency*')

'judge' – a person's freedom to make choices and add their voice in various 'collectives' to which s/he belongs.

¹ Participation and Practice of Rights Campaign Divis Seven Towers Flats

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w18f0DRJFww>

<http://www.hhrjournal.org/2013/09/06/a-card-before-you-leave-participation-and-mental-health-in-northern-ireland>

<http://www.pprproject.org/work-of-the-north-belfast-residents-profiled-in-university-of-essex-tedx-event>. Paul Hunt TED talk human rights RECLAIMING SOCIAL RIGHTS

Within a capability-enhancing social policy it is not enough to redistribute income (as in “passive” social policy), nor to help individuals to enter the labour market (as in “active” social policy). Capability-enhancing social policy should also open opportunities for action beyond paid work, for example recognising the value of care work and political participation. Furthermore, policy makers should recognise and involve beneficiaries of social policy in formulation and co-authoring of social policy interventions, goals and instruments.

Rights and Capabilities

Directly linking rights and capabilities, Nussbaum’s (2000) ten ‘central capabilities,’ are fundamental human entitlements inherent in the very idea of minimum social justice, or a life worthy of human dignity. Her capabilities list includes many of the entitlements that are also stressed in the human rights movement (see Figure 1). Nussbaum argues the basis of these entitlements lies in the bare fact of being a living human being.

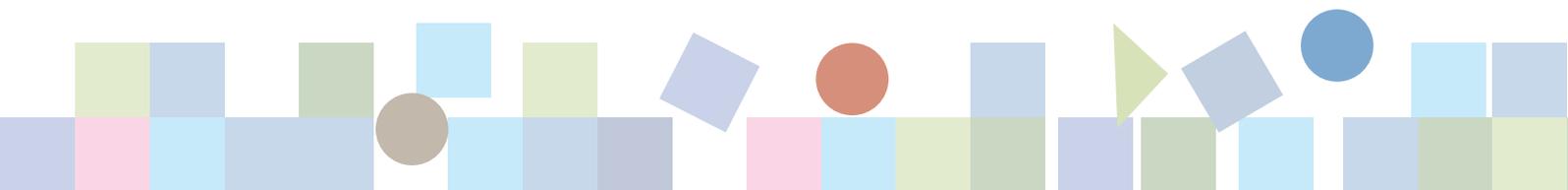
Table 1: Core Human Roles in a rights and capability approach (Bonvin & Laruffa, 2018; Sen, 1999, 2009)

Anthropological Dimension	Kind of Deprivation
Receiver	Poverty; Material Deprivation; Lack of Relational Support/Care
Doer	Lack of opportunity for action/agency (paid work, care work, political participation, play etc.)
Judge	Adaptive Preferences (lack of “capacity to aspire”); Lack of Recognition

Figure 1: Nussbaum’s Ten Capabilities

For democracy to thrive, Nussbaum suggests developing ten capabilities that determine “what people actually are and what they are able to be”

Life	able to live a full human life of normal length
Bodily Health	able to enjoy bodily health, including adequate nourishment and capacity for reproduction
Bodily Integrity	able to move freely and safely from place to place
Sense, Imagination and thought	able to make full use of the senses to experience, think, reason, imagine and create
Emotion	able to experience attachment to people, things and experiences and to express feelings of love, longing, grieving and justifiable anger
Practical Reasoning	able to conceive of the good life and to engage in critical reflection
Affiliation	able to live with others in mutual respect, understanding the position of and worth of ‘others’, and establishing the basis of self-respect and non discrimination
Other Species	having respect for animals and plants
Play	ability to laugh and enjoy recreational and playful activity
Environmental Control	able to engage with the processes and choices that affect our political and material lives, including rights of political participation, property holding and employment



Co-construction of knowledge: Merging of Knowledge

It is common now to read about co-production and co-creation of knowledge but less common to hear about involving vulnerable people as co-researchers in the co-construction of knowledge. An important innovation is the Merging of Knowledge (MOK), a method and approach developed by the International Movement ATD Fourth World (ATD 2013, Godinot and Wooton 2006)³

Wresinski (2006) highlights that there is a duty for those engaged in scientific research on poverty to make a place for the knowledge which the poor and the excluded themselves have of their condition. This is because it is unique and indispensable, as well as autonomous and complementary to all other knowledge about poverty. Academic knowledge of poverty and social exclusion—as of all other human reality—is only a partial knowledge and it lacks, by definition, a direct grasp of reality and, consequently, is not a knowledge that can mobilise people and prompt them to action. Wresinski (2006, p18) noted

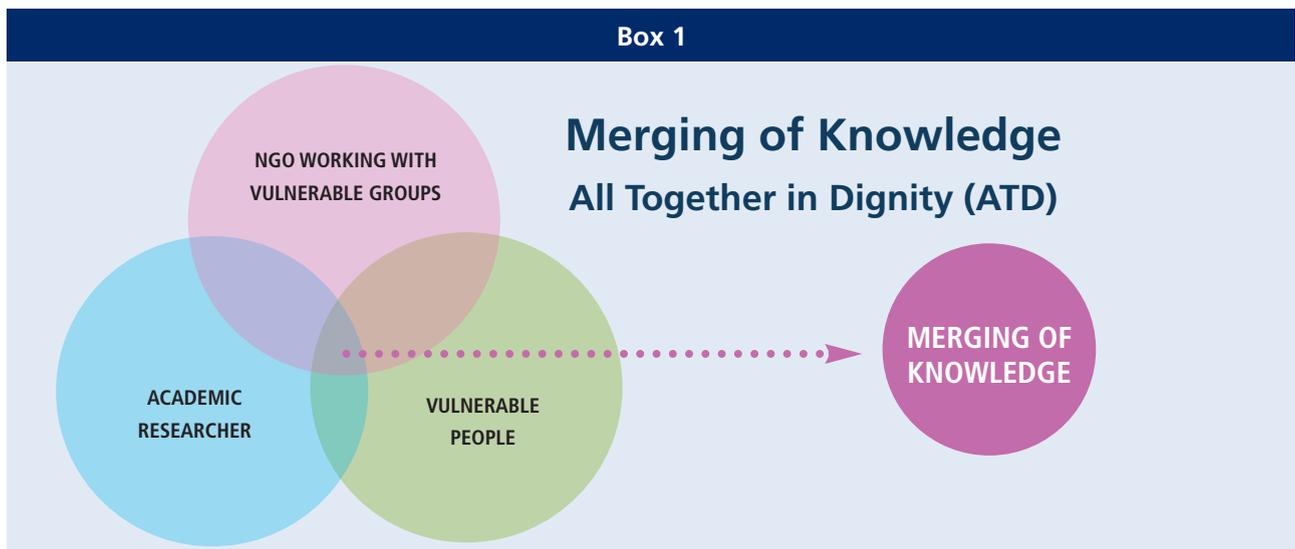
“to hinder the poorest by using them as informants rather than encouraging them to develop their own thinking as a genuinely autonomous act is to enslave them... they alone have direct access to an essential part of the answers...

All human beings and groups are researchers, seeking independence through understanding

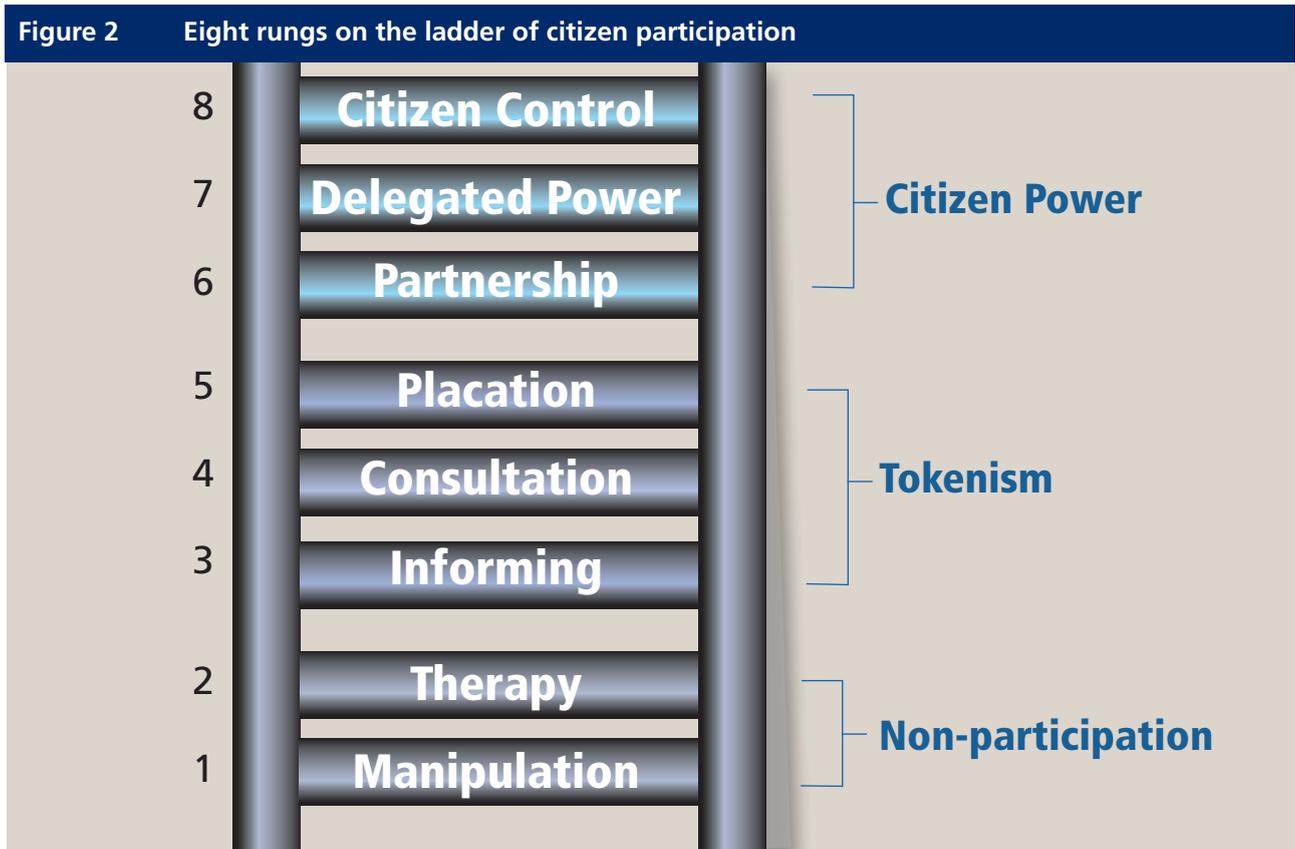
themselves and their situation so that they control their destiny rather than submitting and being afraid...”

They ignore the strategies of self-defence that the poor create to escape the influence of those on whom they are dependent. They protect their own existence, which they carefully hide behind the “life” that they spread out like a curtain and “play” to create an illusion for the external observer”.

The methodology for the merging of different types of knowledge developed by ATD Fourth World is a key development in achieving an empowering participatory approach. This includes putting together high-level academics, practitioners and people living in extreme poverty as co-researchers and co-writers (see Box 1 below). MOK processes should in no way be confused with a simple process of “ensuring the participation of people living in poverty” rather there is a relation between ‘participation’ and ‘co-construction’. In MOK it is essential that each participant is involved in all aspects of the project. Researchers should not construct the ‘shared’ perspective on ‘the reality’ on the basis of all information at hand, as a social constructivist approach to social reality suggests our observations of reality are coloured by our own images, experiences, relationships, and culture. We therefore must broaden the knowledge base of research, policy and practice with the perspective and experience of all parties involved.



³ Merging of Knowledge Video: http://www.4thworldmovement.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Guidelines_for_the_Merging_of_Knowledge_and_Practices.pdf



Participation

Neoliberal theories emphasise individual agency at the expense of collective action and social solidarity. State intervention is frowned on as a constraint on individual freedom. By contrast, the capability approach claims collective action or state action is not only compatible with individual freedom but is a necessary prerequisite of individual flourishing: no enhancement of human rights or capabilities can be envisaged without collective action and State intervention.

Public debate and democratic processes are the distinguishing features of empowering collective action and underpin the need to support political agency of vulnerable people. Arnstein provides a typology of eight levels of participation to help in the analysis of participation of vulnerable people in planning and implementing policies. For illustrative purposes the eight types are arranged in a ladder pattern with each rung corresponding to the extent of citizens'

power in determining the end product (See Figure 2). This helps to illustrate the point that so many have missed – that there are significant gradations of citizen participation.

“Citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society”.

(Arnstein 1969, p216)

Empowerment

PAHRCA aims to work with vulnerable groups to enable them challenge power and injustice. Thinking about transformation means considering deeper possibilities of empowered participative change such as the vulnerable group themselves becoming NGO workers, policy makers and politicians. There is a need, therefore, to explore what transformation would look like for vulnerable groups and how structures can be transformed.

Erik Olin Wright (2013) argues that transforming existing institutions and social structures has the potential to substantially reduce human suffering and expand the possibilities for human flourishing. He points to a process of 'symbiotic transformations' or strategies which extend and deepen the institutional forms of social empowerment involving both state and civil society simultaneously to help solve certain practical problems faced by dominant classes and elites. These are reforms that simultaneously make life better within the existing economic system **and** expand the potential for future advances of democratic power.

A human rights and capability approach attempts, like Olin Wright, to structurally transform society, by attempts at equalising power (however small or temporary) by empowering those currently disempowered to engage in transforming society. Enhancing collective and individual agency through participation is also a direct contribution to well-being, whereby vulnerable people become involved in decisions that affect their lives which then fulfils their human right and enhances their capabilities/well-being.

Participatory Action Research

"the space for the exercise of such agency will not come simply as a gift from government. It will be wrought out of a political struggle by teachers and others within society, to create the material conditions for a free, open and democratically constructed practical discourse to emerge as a context for professional action" (Elliott 2005, p363).

Participatory action research (PAR), refers to a social process where people engage in, examine and interpret their own social world, shaping their sense of identity. PAR asserts that research cannot be done on others; people can only carry out action research on themselves.

PAR was founded in the work of Kurt Lewin, who coined the term "action research," and is a form of qualitative research that seeks to understand human experiences, but goes beyond understanding to taking constructive action to ameliorate difficult, often oppressive, situations (Olshansky, 2005).

It aims to be an emancipatory process which helps people challenge and remove themselves from unjust social structures which 'limit their self-development and self-determination'. PAR involves a process of critical reflection that enables people learn to theorise about the social structures which constrain them and this is done with others who share this social world and requires collaborative reflection on the contradictions of the social world. 'It involves learning about the real, material, concrete, particular practices of particular people in particular places' (Kemmis and Wilkinson, 1998: 24) and is summarised in six key features:

1. Participatory action research is a **social process** – it investigates the relationship between the individual and the social

2. ***It is participatory*** – people engage in, examine and interpret their own social world, shaping their sense of identity. Research cannot be done on others; people can only carry out action research on themselves
3. ***It is practical and collaborative*** – it engages and connects with others in 'social interactions'. It is 'a process by which people explore their acts of communication, production and social organisation' and work on reconstructing these
4. ***It is emancipatory*** – it attempts to help people challenge and remove themselves from unjust social structures which 'limit their self-development and self-determination'
5. ***It is critical*** – it is a process of reflection in which people learn to theorise about the social structures which constrain them and this is done with others who share this social world
6. ***It is recursive (reflexive, dialectical)*** – it requires ongoing reflection on the contradictions of the social world, an act which is also carried out with others who share the same social world (emphasis in original)

PAHRCA Approach

Our PAHRCA approach to research is informed by PAR principles and human rights and capability values, and concepts like participation and empowerment. The more precise research methods used are informed by specific research questions, and varied from project to project, but given the collective nature of the approach the methods outlined are generally those that can enable collective processes of co-construction of knowledge. Collaborative and transformative approaches with co-researchers can then translate research into action for social change.

The overall approach to qualitative research for the RE-InVEST project is consistent with PAR. This approach contains a set of principles and practices for originating, designing, conducting, analysing and acting on a piece of research. It is committed to Partnership which is understood to mean an approach where power is redistributed through negotiation between the researcher and the researched. In practice this means striving for:

- Positive discrimination in the allocation of time and resources, with priority being given to the weakest participants in the process
- Effective investment in the research capacity and capability of those groups
- Phasing in of joint collaboration to the highest possible levels
- Purposeful adaptation of analytical instruments and language
- Intercultural and intersectional (gender, age, etc.) sensitive approaches
- Continuity and feedback at all stages of the research
- Empowering
- Dialogical and reflexive approaches
- Communicative and democratic decision-making

"In this process, people rupture their existing attitudes of silence, accommodation and passivity, and gain confidence and abilities to alter unjust conditions and structures. This is an authentic power for liberation that ultimately destroys a passive awaiting of fate"

(Freire, 1974: p.xi).

The challenge of achieving empowerment in practice

This PAR research process, of prefigurative politics with a 'bottom-up' lens, can generate a genuine empowerment of vulnerable groups. In many instances our research process of mutual knowledge co-creation and learning sessions evolved into dialogue and action, where participants built on their experience to express their views in the public sphere and in public policy documents (for more detail on this see the case study examples in Part Two). The co-construction of knowledge process offered the opportunity to policy makers to better understand the gaps between the reality of vulnerable participants' experiences of specific forms of social exclusion and the explicit and implicit knowledge about the vulnerable that informs much of policy responses. Drawing out such implicit assumptions illuminates policy contradictions, policy failures and underlying tensions in policy discourses:

"It changed the participants. It made the participants feel like they had a voice and their opinion mattered – even if it didn't change the housing system –they were given a voice. They came out with more knowledge than they had before so they can better make decisions for themselves. The majority of them got something out of it. The information we gave them helped them. They had a big impact in the dialogue and they really felt empowered in that".

(Peer/co-researcher Ireland)

However this outcome of PAHRCA is necessarily nuanced. Achieving this level of empowerment is very challenging for the co-researchers: academics, partner NGOs and the vulnerable participants. It requires significant personal input, research resources and time. The very short time frame of H2020 and other funded research limits the ability to achieve the level of deep participation and empowerment required to fulfil the full aims of PAR. Predetermined research questions (e.g. a

requirement for H2020 funding proposals) can also limit the capacity to engage vulnerable groups in all aspects of the research design.

Furthermore, once the research is finished there is often no further engagement with the vulnerable participants as either the researchers or partnering NGOs (who as service providers with a different set of priorities and limited resources) rarely engage in follow on collective action empowerment of service users as a group. State service delivery funding allocations often restrict NGOs from engaging in public action campaigns and state funders can flex their power and restrict NGO capacity to undertake PAR research (Faggura and Gerrard 2016).

"a person is not old at 50 – we contribute to something in our lives. As co-researchers –it gave us a real voice. Even if it was only temporary. It significantly contributed to all of our confidence and self-worth"

(Peer/co-researcher, Austria)

The PAHRCA aim of bringing the voice and reality of vulnerable groups into the public sphere did translate into enabling the concerns and experiences of socially excluded participants to be taken seriously within some local and national political and policy spheres. However this was limited in scale, scope, and ultimately outcomes. Nonetheless, such new co-created knowledge now exists in the public sphere as a benchmark for assessing policy into the future and can be effectively drawn on by various stakeholders and civil society campaigns. At the more local level, it can be used by service providers to respond to some of the issues raised by the research. However, a key issue in our experience has been the lack of purchase of new forms of knowledge amongst policy makers and the resistance of such state actors, at national and international level, to examine the ways in which the policy system reproduces specific knowledge(s) about vulnerable groups which is too often stigmatising, inaccurate and exacerbates inequalities.

PAHRCA – Five Key Chronological Steps

The methodological framework, therefore, brings together participatory, human rights and capabilities into one approach. Nussbaum’s concept of human dignity provides a theoretical link between capabilities and rights approaches. The aim of the research is to bring people into processes which involve them challenging and changing their own world and to participate in the co-production of knowledge. The goal is about liberation of those in poverty and not just the production of knowledge. It is about working with vulnerable groups to empower them to understand and challenge the structures that cause their marginalisation and oppression. Table 2 provides the conceptual framework that underpins the key aims in PAHRCA.

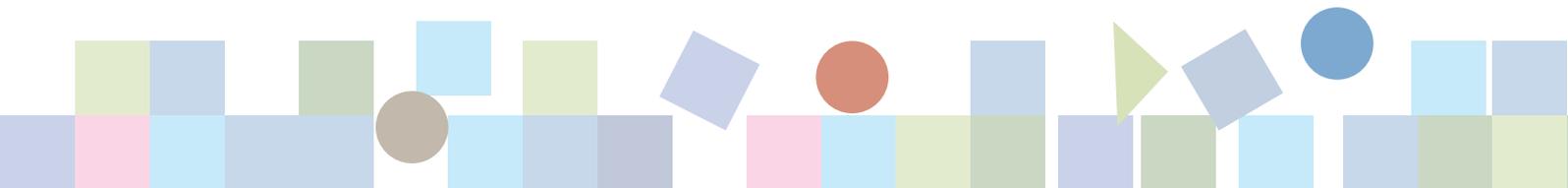
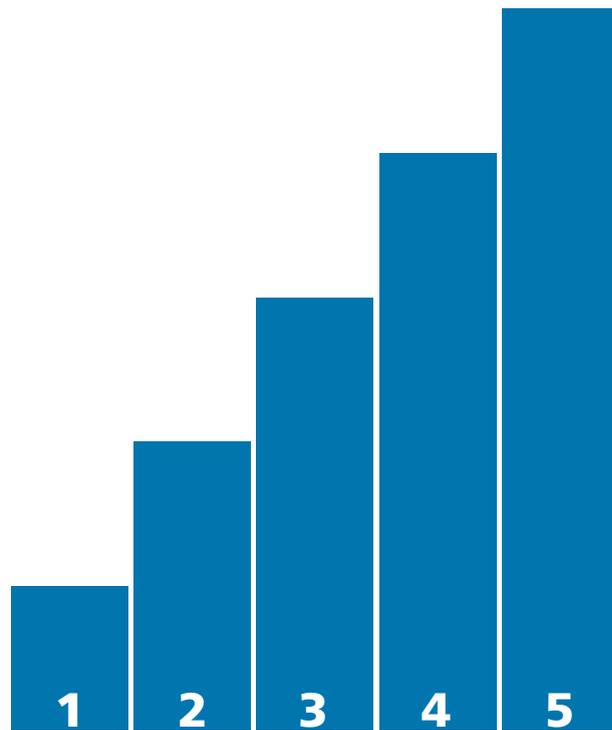


TABLE 2: A Conceptual Framework and the Aims of PAHRCA

PAR Framework	Aims	Detailed aims
Participation (Judge)	Arnstein's 'ladder of participation' Co-production of knowledge Raising voice Critical consciousness raising Creating new spaces for public deliberation and <i>political participation</i>	Democratisation of knowledge production Does it open up spaces for democracy and participatory politics? Education to enhance people's awareness of their rights Increased awareness of policy measures
Empowerment (Judge/Doer)	Enhancing capabilities/capacity & human rights Strengthening individual & collective agency Improving individual & collective well-being Achieving political participation Challenging structural causes of injustice/oppression	Does it nourish people's 'capacity to aspire' and 'sense of entitlement'? Creating a culture of rights? Improve 'capability for voice' Increase awareness and capacity for action
Transformation (Doer)	Action Impact on public policy Impact on public sphere Become a fulfilled citizen Power redistribution Public critical action Challenge existing patterns of inequality Rebalancing power Structural change towards social justice	Making results/knowledge public Empowering vulnerable groups to enter the political sphere as a public actor Achieving democratic participation – speaking uncomfortable truths Transforming practice of institutions & welfare state Academic as publically engaged NGO/Trade union/civil society engaging in empowerment & transformation

We now outline the five key steps to the PAHRCA methodology.

STEP 1.

Partnership with NGOs / intermediaries: identify and meet the partner NGO

Academic researchers often value NGOs and other intermediaries (such as trade unions and community groups) as gatekeepers to recruit participants for their research projects. They rarely see the NGO as an active holder of knowledge with great capacity to use research for transformative ends. In contrast, the RE-InVEST PAHRCA approach treats the intermediary as a key participant themselves – as an active holder of knowledge with the capacity to use action research for transformative ends.

Thus when we refer to 'co-researchers', research 'participants', and 'participation' we are including the vulnerable groups/those in poverty/suffering social exclusion, the academic researchers and the intermediaries (staff/volunteers in the NGO, trade union, community group etc.). It is important to remember that as the NGO/intermediary you are also an active participant in this PAHRCA process. You must remember to be reflective that you are also contributing actively to this research project.

From an ethical perspective, action research can only ever be sustainable when grounded in a longer term systematic way so that the research can become part of a transformative project. This means that the NGO/intermediary should have an active role in the earliest possible stage of the research and before research questions are fully developed (and ideally the vulnerable group should also be enabled to input at this stage).

It also means that the academic researchers should scope out with the NGO (or the NGO can undertake this themselves if they are applying it with other NGOs, policy makers, community groups, vulnerable groups etc.) the full range of possible input they can make, the supports and upskilling they require or aspire, and honest discussions about research ethics, resources, culture and capacity. This will take time, will require a process of trust building and is necessary to ensure a full understanding of the project and the agreed parameters, scale of ambition and respective roles.

It is useful at this stage to develop a 'partnership agreement' which can be used at various stages of the project including evaluation.

Note: Part Two of the handbook provides examples of implementing this stage in practice. Part Three of the handbook includes further reflections and advice on the role the different partners play in the research (intermediaries, academics, vulnerable people, policy makers) and their relationships.

STEP 2.

Preliminary 'meet ups' and meeting with participants: trust building

Step two involves the setting up and carrying out of initial meetings with participants. The focus should be on 'trust-building' and creating the group. Here we suggest using visual group work and individual methods that put the focus on building mutual trust (be aware also of overcoming language/culture barriers) – ensure a very open meeting – people need to enjoy it, feel safe, feel listened to and part of the research process.

Note: Part Three outlines two collective trust building methods which can be used in group work at this stage.

STEP 3.**Developmental & capacity building: educate & implement human rights & capability approach**

This step involves implementing the developmental human rights and capability approach with participants / the group. The aim is to develop an enhanced ability amongst vulnerable groups to talk about and understand capabilities and rights. This is about what we are bringing as researchers and we introduce in a creative way human rights and capabilities. Participants may reject this language.

Note: Part Two of the handbook provides some examples of how this stage was implemented in practice. Part Three of the handbook outlines some examples of collective developmental methods to use for this stage e.g. methods that introduce human rights and capabilities through creative ways such as using cartoons.

STEP 4.**Inquiry, data gathering, and analysis**

While the method of inquiry should be directly related to the research question, the PAHRCA approach encourages the use of participative methods to collect and analyse data with as much input as possible from the NGO and research participants.

It is both possible and good practice to engage research participants in data collection, analysis and report drafting. Participants with sufficient literacy can engage in colour coding key themes in transcripts, while those with less literacy can identify key themes from audio recordings and in visual exercises. Anyone who wishes to can read drafts, offer comments, suggest accessible language, and in particular use local or thematic knowledge

to assist in turning broad conclusions into more specific and practicable policy recommendations.

Note: Part Three of the Handbook includes collective data collection methods to use in this stage.

STEP 5.**Undertake voice – action – outcome approach**

After the data collection and analysis stage the research process including academics, NGO and research participants will be in a position to identify ways of using the research findings and outcomes to influence social change using the PAHRCA 'voice – action – outcome' approach. In Part Three of the handbook we outline a number of examples of action that can be undertaken through the PAHRCA approach. Such action research could include a 'crossing of knowledge' process with local policy makers or a local advocacy project based on a rights and participation approach. Co-researchers (academics, NGO/intermediary and the research participants) should work together to identify emerging issues that could be progressed over the course of the research as a form of action. This could include for example, improving the local delivery of a specific public service. The PAHRCA is about maximising the opportunity that the research might be able to realise shorter term transformational outcomes. Some principles for action include:

- The group should be asked to decide what action they would like to take and develop this themselves. The more time and effort that the researchers/projects can give to work with the vulnerable groups, the greater the likely level of PAR/action that is taken.

- This can take place at local, regional national and international levels.
- The more concrete the demand is the better. For example specify an issue the NGO or state services can change, something that is localised and small enough to be addressed.
- Participation and voice are core principles of both human rights and capability approaches, and such approaches that create dialogue and enable voice and participation are an essential part of transformation.
- Action ideally should involve bringing the voice of participants and new knowledge created into the public sphere

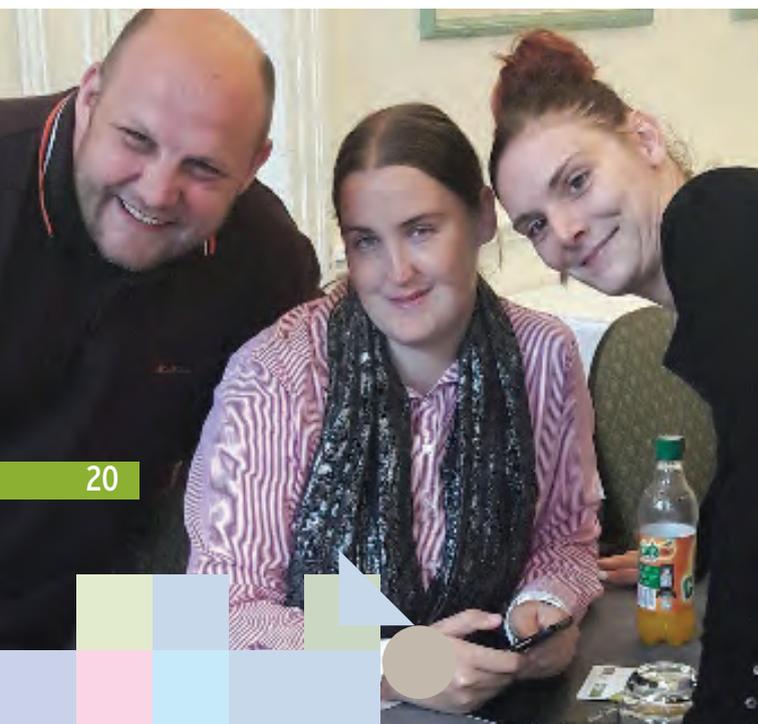
Note: Part two of the handbook provides some useful examples of the different forms of action that took place within the various RE-InVEST PAHRCA case studies.

It is essential that the NGO/intermediary considers and plans how it has the capacity/

resources and motivation to continue to work towards action/PAR during, and after, the lifetime of the research project. NGOs should consider how the academic and policy makers can support them in these areas.

Furthermore, given that many research funding grants or research projects are of a short term nature, in order to maximise the sustainability of outcomes, the partnerships with NGOs should ideally allow for follow up action to the project. Genuine co-produced outcomes will build capacity and ownership by NGOs and they will hopefully be able to carry on action for the improvement of their member's rights.

There may also be tension between the aims and outcomes of PAR research and the aims of NGOs (particularly directors / senior management / those focused on service management and relationships with state actors). It is important, therefore, that NGOs are supportive of the transformative and empowerment aspects of PAR and accept that it is likely to be challenging but a necessary step towards improving social exclusion.



Flexibility of the PAHRCA approach

Given that the resources / capacity of researchers / projects and the relationship and capacity/motivation of the co-researchers vary considerably, it is understandable that a broad range of PAR will be undertaken by co-researchers implementing a PAHRCA – from a moderate level of action to, hopefully in some instances, a more significant level of participative public and policy action. It is important to emphasise that the PAHRCA is a flexible approach, in particular in the following areas:

Ambition of PAR: this can range from a moderate, medium to significant level of PAR within PAHRCA. The approach is designed so it can be scaled up and down as appropriate or possible.

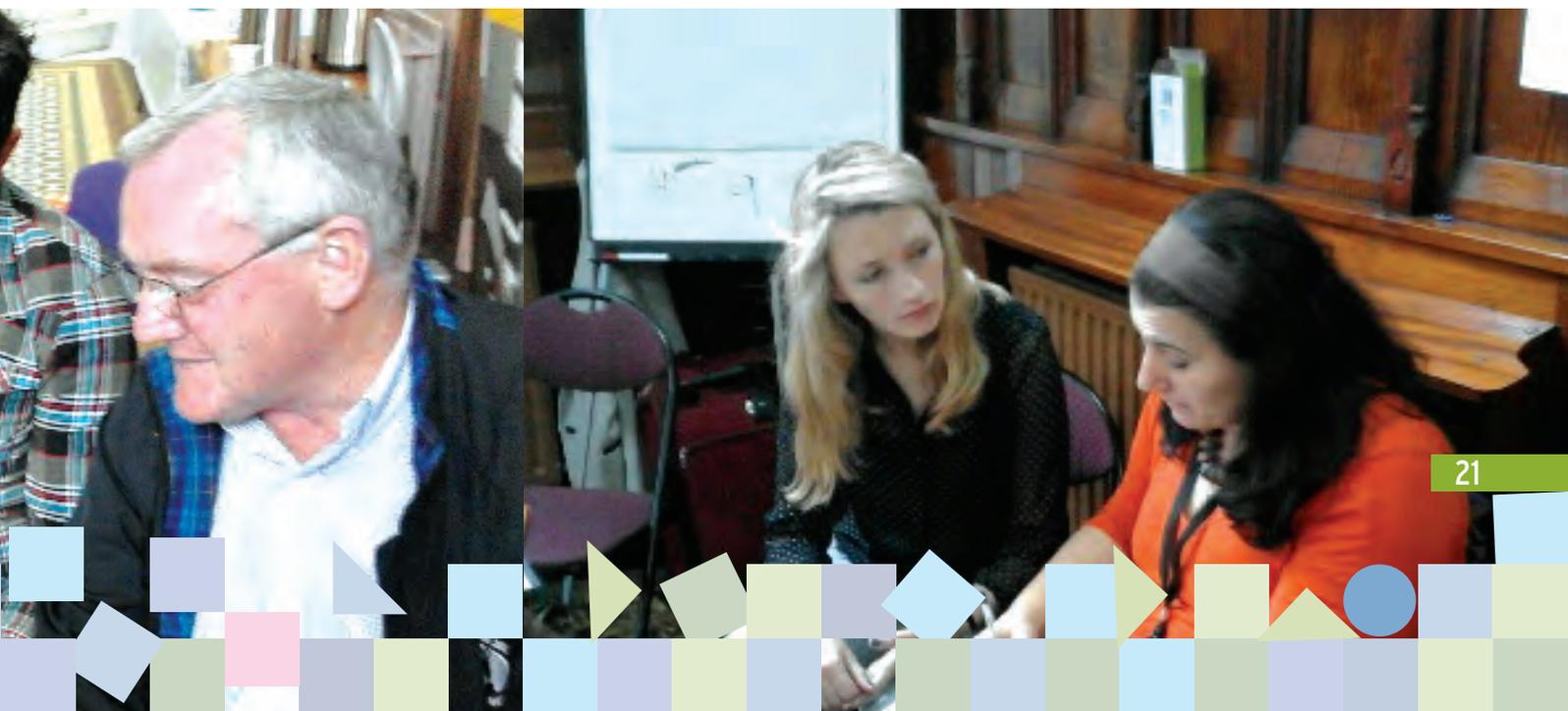
Degree of diversity: It is essential to recognise (and work to achieve) the diversity of people and target groups involved in the research as this will influence the approaches used to mediate and train all participants. Specific attention should be devoted to the composition of 'mixed research teams', particularly with regard to the gender/ age / ethnic profile of participants from vulnerable groups.

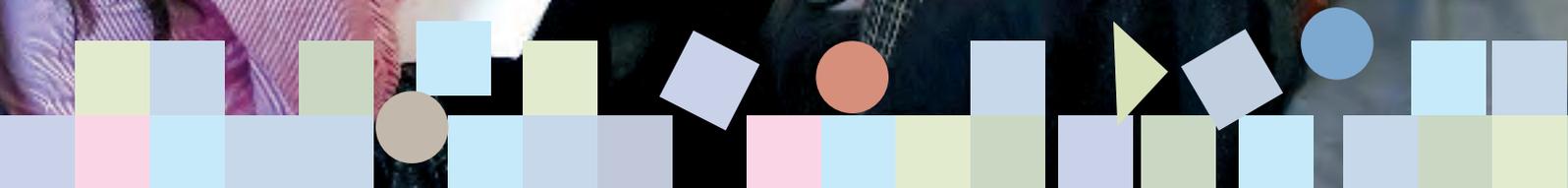
Scale of engagement: it is possible to work with a range of methods within the overall methodological framework, and this choice depends on the specifics of each research

team and the research questions they are working with. Each project should adopt a method that best suits their abilities/capacity and partnership setting.

Action: People on the frontlines (NGOs and vulnerable co-researchers) understanding of 'action' can be different from an academic researcher's interpretation or understanding of action, and so the concept of 'action' should be flexible and fluid to enable groups work at different levels of ambition. There may also be a desire on the part of some participants to engage in more public and collective action than that which NGOs or academics are familiar or comfortable with. It is important, therefore, to at least bring about a development of people's capacity through awareness raising / education of their rights and capabilities, and this in itself is a form of action / PAR. A meaningful outcome could, therefore, be as moderate as enabling / empowering vulnerable participants to define their rights. But if a group wants to engage in more public collective action, this should also be supported as a form of bringing voice into the public sphere and empowerment towards transformation. The group should decide the action and develop this themselves.

Appropriate: as with any research approach or method PAHRCA may not be suitable for the question being asked, the group, or the researcher.





Part Two



The experience of PAHRCA from RE-InVEST

PAHRCA research (2016-2018) - 13 case studies

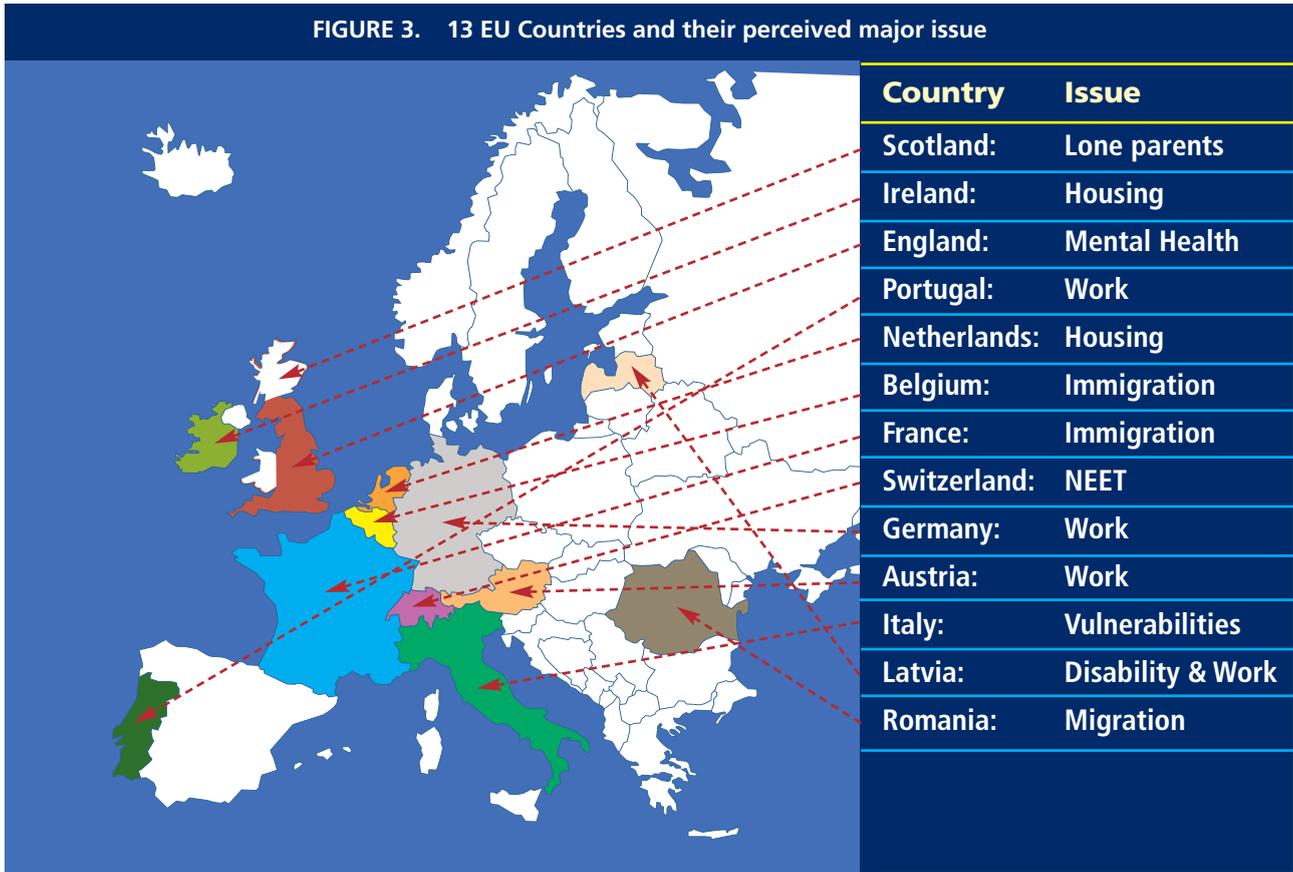
The RE-InVEST H2020 project, was funded under Euro 3 European Societies after the Crisis and took place over 2015-2019 in 13 countries among 19 organisations (including universities, research centres and NGOs) which worked in a mixed-methods approach to construct new theoretical, quantitative and qualitative knowledge that could enhance social investment across the EU. For three of the research questions (RQ) in RE-InVEST we adopted a PAR approach through implementing PAHRCA with vulnerable groups and our research examples outlined below are from this research.

RQ1 – assessing the social damage of crisis and austerity policy

RQ2 – assessing peoples experience of labour market and social protection policy

RQ3 – how investment in social services relate

FIGURE 3. 13 EU Countries and their perceived major issue

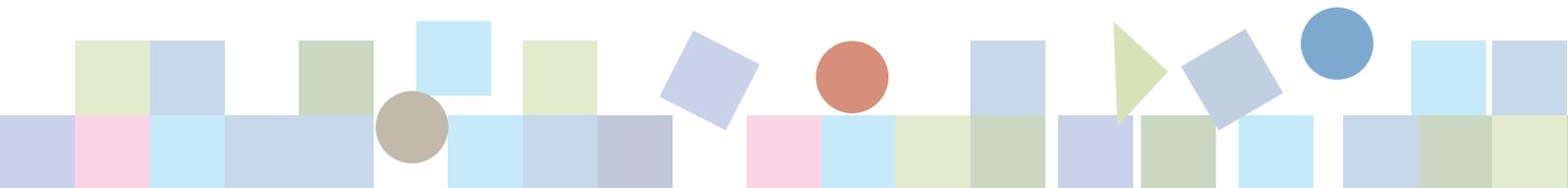


Evidence of social disinvestment and structural violence

The 13 local RE-InVEST teams spent many months co-constructing knowledge about the longer-term effects of austerity policies on the lives of the most vulnerable people. Our research findings affirm the massive human damage of social *disinvestment* during the crisis years. The RE-InVEST country teams collected evidence of damage that is often irreparable: new-born babies sleeping in ice-cold shelters, chronically ill people stopping their treatment because their medication became unaffordable, bankrupt parents leaving their children behind and emigrating to find work in other countries, families breaking up, and peaking suicides. We found brutal social disinvestment has devastating long-term effects on people's lives.

In the subsequent phases of our research, we examined the characteristics of *social investment strategies in various policy domains*:

social protection, labour market policies, early childhood education, housing, health care, water provision and financial services. This research is still ongoing, but we have some findings. In our study of *labour market policies*, three teams examined activation measures for young people. This allowed us to draw lessons for the Youth Guarantee (Youth Employment Initiative), which is part of the Social Investment Package. In Portugal the scheme was dramatically under-resourced, over-burdened and low quality. Employment services kept young job seekers busy in carousels rather than integrating them, or enabling them to claim their right to support, while those who managed to find a job were not lifted out of poverty. In France, things were a little better, thanks to the outsourcing of activation programmes to local NGOs who were more familiar with the target group. In Switzerland, we analysed an experiment (Scène Active) that was based on the capabilities approach: it combined personal development training with skills



upgrading, and put a strong emphasis on the free participation of the young people. From these examples, we learned that one-size-fits-all programmes can produce adverse effects, whereas genuine social investment necessitates longer-term, tailored, integrated approaches that are negotiated between job seekers and their counsellors. The latter are obviously more expensive, but their net return is far higher.

In our studies of *service sectors* we provide the example of *water provision in Flanders*. The present Flemish government reformed the market according to strict ecological criteria but completely ignored the social dimension: a pre-existing free-of-charge minimum provision was abolished, as well as the social tariffs. Following NGO provided (Combat Poverty Service and Samenlevingsopbouw) investment in capacity building and knowledge-sharing with groups of vulnerable households, testimonies of 'water-poor' households illustrated how basic human rights are at risk in a market without social corrections. A new social tariff and a guide to good practice was developed to better prevent cut-offs and to foster a more socially responsible attitude among all stakeholders. This experience demonstrates (i) the necessity of social minimum standards in service sectors of general interest, (ii) the necessity to invest also in the 'collective agency' of vulnerable groups through civil society organisations (iii) all service markets, should include criteria relating to the quality of communication between providers and service users. Furthermore our research found many European citizens are involved in struggles to maintain water as a public good and were even successful at shifting privatised water services back to public provision. These examples illustrate some of the lessons that need to be drawn from the crisis period. Other lessons include:

- Austerity policies should always be linked to the *non-regression principle* in human rights: social impact assessment must precede any possible cutback - where basic rights of vulnerable citizens are at risk mitigation measures must be taken or the austerity measure must be withdrawn altogether.
- The *conceptual framework* of the Social Investment Package (SIP) needs to be enriched from a 'human capital' to a 'human rights and capabilities' approach. The present policy documents underpinning the SIP are based on a rather instrumental vision of social policy as a means to boost labour productivity and growth. This is too limited. Basic human rights (to health, education, family life, social participation etc.) deserve top priority for investment. Moreover, investment in the earning capacity of individuals is insufficient without legal frameworks, institutions, public services and a civil society that gives voice to, empowers and enables, vulnerable citizens.
- Funding of a large-scale social investment programme needs to be secured. The dominant budgetary and monetary consolidation agenda leaves little room for more public revenues but we know Europe is rich enough to afford an ambitious SIP through public funding; this needs a coordinated and fair fiscal policy to be implemented.
- To avoid contradictions between the macroeconomic policy context and the social investment discourse it needs to be clear where resources for social investment are to be found in the EU model. We need to draw lessons from that experience. The social investment agenda should prioritise human rights; the EU should help setting social minimum standards in all relevant service sectors; and governments must be made accountable when pushing their austerity policies too far.

The voices of the vulnerable: examples of PAHRCA in action

RE-InVEST is just a research project, but from the beginning this research was conceived as 'transformative'. We encouraged all co-researchers (NGOs and the local groups of vulnerable citizens involved in the research) to use our joint findings for their own advocacy. A lot of local seminars, press releases, and hearings have already taken place, and further events are planned at EU level. RE-InVEST partners are members of a wider network called 'Alliances to Fight Poverty' that will continue to mobilise for a more solidarity Europe. Here we let our work speak for itself as 13 vulnerable people from across Europe who were involved in our research speak directly about how they experienced social disinvestment and structural violence as a result of austerity focused policy. Three of these case studies are detailed below and the remaining ten are described in full in Appendix 4. In each case the participant's voice is followed by key aspects of how the PAHRCA approach was implemented in that particular country as an example of a guide for the implementation of PAHRCA.

Case Study 1: AUSTRIA The case of older job seekers

In 2005 Katrien was a self-employed married woman with one 14 year old son, when her consultancy-business began to decline:

'There was an insane hype about things! Every other Tom, Dick or Harry had or needed some kind of consultancy and there was good money to be had in the business; and then when the crisis started, you realise: aha, the deals are drying up, firms can no longer really afford these expensive consulting services. And I discovered that our own firm was going downhill continuously.'

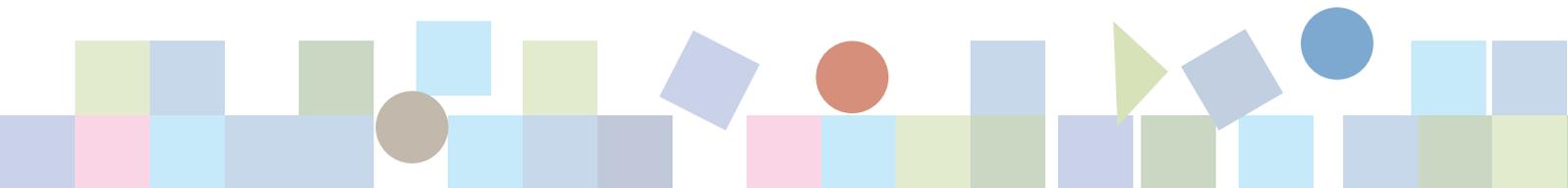
'In good times the bank had showered us with their money, 3 parallel credits, easily repayable, and then the business stops flourishing and you are on your own.'

'I had never thought that I would be unable to pay the school fees for my child. It was inconceivable that that would ever become an issue.'

'In 2012 I applied for social welfare benefits for the first time in my life and it was only then I knew where I stood. It really was a black hole in its purest form. (...) Only low-life have to apply for social welfare benefits! I come from an academic background, I'd been to university and so on. Does this help me? Not in the least!'

'I took on any occasional job I could get. And, well, where is that possible? In gastronomy. Because I had just turned 50. I was too old for most of the other jobs. And for most employers. (...) and so I took anything that was going in the restaurant business. But these are mostly temporary jobs. Seasonal work and so on. And that's the way it's been all along.'

... and even then you have to be careful what you say! People seem shocked if you tell the truth about being devastated and are almost



forced to sleep rough (under the bridge) – this is shocking for them!’

‘My whole social network – with the exception of my family – has changed completely. There is no one left from my former circle of friends.’

‘My son has dropped out of school and enrolled in the army for the next couple of years. This way he earns money at least. (...) He would have liked to study, of course. Even if he was no good at school, he could have managed his Matura (school-leaving certificate post-18 tr.). But under these conditions I can’t even finance his studies anyway. (laughing) Goodbye, school. So turning his back on school was that much easier.’

‘You reproach yourself for not being competent as a mother. You don’t expect something like this.’

‘(...) you will not be empowered by dealing with these institutions in my experience. There may be others who have fared better, but in my case, these encounters have always been like another kick in the shins.’ ‘They are very insensitive,

they are not bothered if you are suffering from severe psychological stress or not. I got no end of medical certificates from my doctor stating that she had been suffering from the rarest forms of depression, but the staff at the employment agency are just not bothered.’ ‘They send you round and round in circles, nobody is responsible for your case, you have to seek your own way in the end and stick at it with all public authorities. And you yourself need to carve out the deal which suits you best personally’

Looking back, she sees the economic crisis as a gradual process during which all certainties have begun to totter and her ‘ideal world’ has crumbled bit by bit:

(...) politically, economically, from things that happened a long way away from me to my very own private problems. Naively, I never would have thought any of this possible. Everything that has rolled our way recently. That is both at the personal level and like the whole EU-crisis, the economy, the refugee issues. Never, ever would I have thought that my child would be keeping guard at the border calming down refugees.’

Researchers:	Ortrud Leßmann and Elisabeth Buchner University of Slazberg
Peer Researchers:	Helmut Moser, Konny Obermüller, Karin Owsanecki, Michaela Ziegler
Research location:	Salzburg, Austria
Research target group:	45+ years old and unemployed, many of them with health problems, some with care-duties

PAHRCA STEPS

Step 1.
**Partnership with
NGOs**

The Austrian team drew on the institution's contacts specifically those organisations working on labour market issues, and through this approach they identified and met with their NGO partner 'Alliance for Jobs for Best Agers' (Bündnis Arbeit für Best Ager), a grassroots initiative of older unemployed people.

The researchers met with leading figures in the NGO several times and established a steering group based on the existing contacts and aimed to ensure NGO knowledge was well integrated in the project.

Step 2.
**Preliminary meet ups
and meeting with
participants**

The aim of the next phase was 'recruitment and trust building' – the research team and NGO launched a call for participation which was published by other stakeholders as well. Six women and three men from the target age group came to the first meeting, where the team explained PAHRCA and the context of RE-InVEST (including the content of the informed consent form). As an initial trust building exercise the participants and researchers did some sociographic line-ups. Participants discussed and agreed upon rules of conduct within the group which included: confidentiality, respect and recognition of limits, no advice unasked for, no discouraging story-telling, punctuality, reliability, and honesty. They also used a drawing exercise as an ice-breaker, asking the participants to express their views of the government.

Step 3.
**Developmental and
capacity building: human
rights and
capability approach**

To introduce the capability and human rights approach participants were asked to indicate the three most important elements of a good life. In a second step, participants were asked to indicate their achievements in a grid referring to the human rights dimensions identified by Burchardt and Vizard 2011b (see Figure 4). This proved a useful way working with vulnerable groups, using capabilities and human rights to develop their own definitions and dimensions of well-being.

Step 4.
**Inquiry /
data gathering /
analysis**

Data collection methods focused on use of a snake time line & biographical story telling. The main data collection tool used was an individual 'snake' which represented both the last ten years in their lives and also the collective concerns regarding the economic, social and political developments in Salzburg, in Austria and in Europe. Many of the participants had a strong desire to speak about their lives with people who listened and understood their experiences. In terms of biographical storytelling, a core group of three participants engaged in story telling while the others listened and commented afterwards on the biographies, and on the ensuing conversation which began to identify the main concerns for the group. The resulting findings were then discussed with the full group in a meeting type setting.

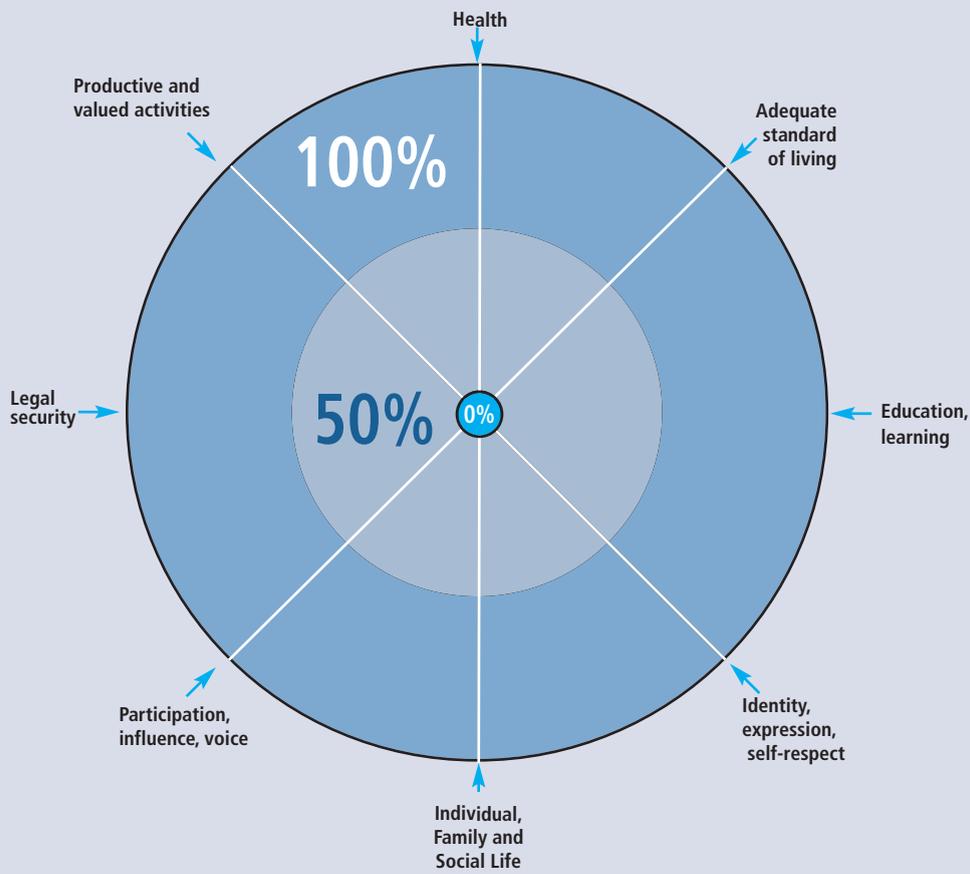
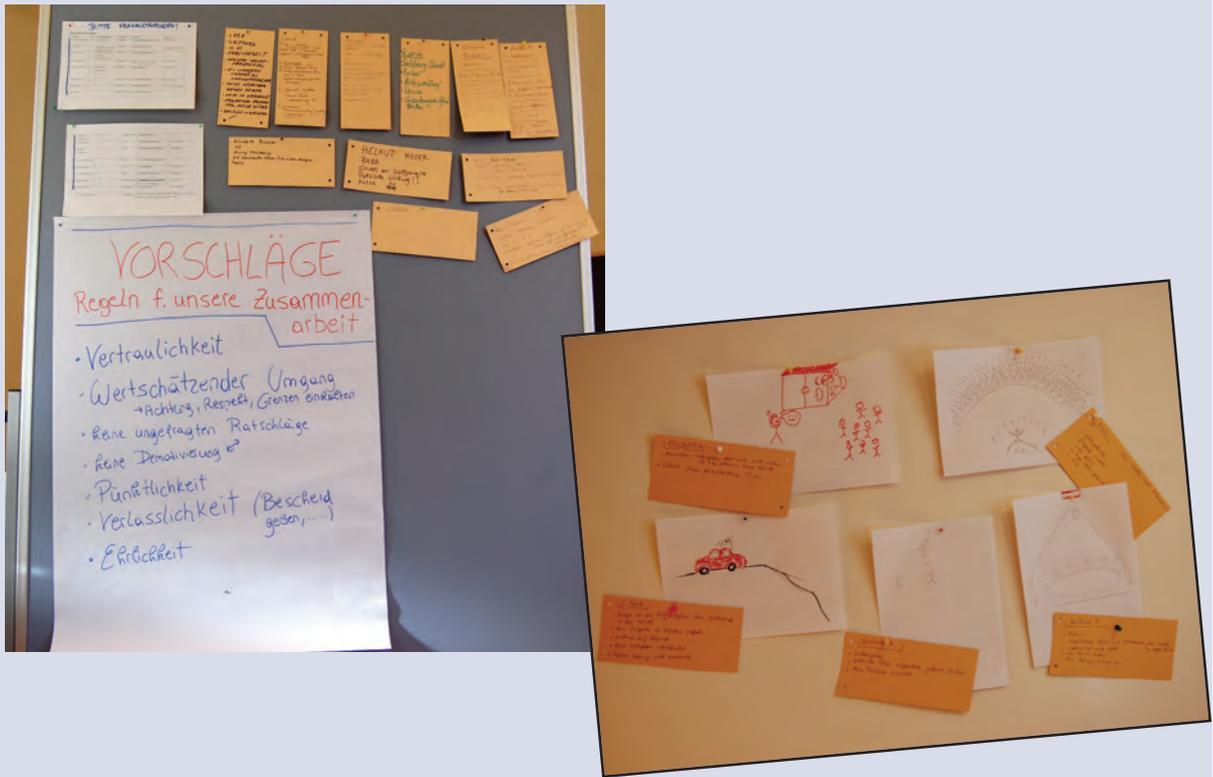
Step 5.
**Undertake voice /
action / outcome**

Participation was maximised through group discussions with participants. Several times the group of 10 split into two small groups of 5. Discussions amongst and with the other participants emerged.

The drawing exercise in the first workshop showed participants distrust in politicians and the political system. Participant's portrayed politics as a slimy wall and the political institutions as separated from the population. They viewed politics as a circus that exhibits vulnerable people in its ring and worried that politics engulfs society in the abyss.

Participation in society is mainly ensured by agency, i.e. by being an active member of society. Employment constitutes one form of agency, but other activities constitute agency just as well. It is most important to enable unemployed people to become agents of their own well-being and counter the loss of social recognition – both at the individual as well as at the collective level.

FIGURE 4: LIST OF ELEMENTS OF A GOOD



Case Study 2: IRELAND

The case of homeless people

Pats story: A 27 year old father of three, previously homeless, and now a housing NGO tenant

In 2011 rent allowance was cut. Then they took 20 euros off my rent allowance, so I couldn't afford the apartment which led me to the criminal activity to afford the apartment which led me to be in trouble with the Guards [police], it was only then that they would help me with my addiction, because I was on probation. I came out of my first treatment and I relapsed, I lost my Community Employment (CE) scheme, my rent supplement, my dole got cut to €144 per week.

Since then I have been in and out of institutions, like my girlfriend, for mental health and drug addiction, I didn't take any notice of what was going on with the government but I knew I was getting screwed.

I appealed it 3 times, because even if they gave me €188, it's an extra €40, that I could of paid for my 3 children that I found it financially difficult to support... me and my ex-partner were on and off at the time but I still had to support them, with maintenance and stuff they needed every week. To be honest it led me to criminal activity to be able to support my children. I was eventually then made homeless, I couldn't afford rent anymore, and I had to live with nuns, and a non-profit, got a place and I couldn't afford it and I ended up homeless.

I would like to get a house that I can call my own. I know I can go out to work, but at the time I didn't have the capability to nor did I have the skills. I applied for numerous jobs but they say I don't have the experience. You are stuck between a rock and a hard place. I'm going to college in September, Focus Ireland has helped me to do, it costs €950 euro's, the government won't help, Focus Ireland said they would help me with the money and my CE scheme employer said he may be able to help me as well. I'm going to college, no matter what to do 'youth and community work'. My counsellor that I've been in contact since I was 13 she is going to help me as well. When I get my qualification I can go to work. I have long term goals, and I'm going to make it happen.

Researchers:

Mary Murphy, Zuzanna Kuchardski, Rory Hearne, Emma Richardson, Paul Haughan, Kathleena Twomey, Tom Kelly

Research location:

Dublin, Ireland & regional towns

Research target group:

Homeless individuals and homeless families

PAHRCA STEPS

Step 1.
Partnership with NGOs

Academic researchers engaged with Focus Ireland, a charity NGO that works with homelessness. The research team recruited four peer researchers (present and previous clients of Focus Ireland services who had experienced homelessness in the past) to collect and analyse data for the national report and also to help embed a more participatory culture in Focus Ireland. The research team organised six 2-hour sessions to develop their peer research skills.

Step 2.
**Preliminary meet ups
and meeting with
participants**

All participants in the research were invited via contact with a Focus Ireland key worker. The research team worked with the same NGO to identify how to focus the research question and to recruit participants. They also worked with a second NGO to advance recruitment with the team eventually comprising the peer researchers and ten homeless families. The participant families were all female-headed families (9 of whom were lone parents, seven were of Irish origin and three were migrants), all with young children.

Step 3.
**Developmental and
capacity building:
human rights and
capability approach**

The team worked over twelve weeks using PAHRCA, the first session was introductory, explaining the aim and purpose of the research and trust building. The initial focus of the research was to gather families' experiences of marketization of social housing policy, however the families consistently raised the impact of the emergency accommodation on their well-being so this was also included. The sessions introduced the families to recent trends in housing policy in Ireland and the right to housing. Participative methods (such as drawing and small group dialogue) were used to enable them to identify what the right to housing meant to them, to identify their key issues of concern, and to contextualise them in a rights and capability framework.

Step 4.
**Inquiry /
data gathering /
analysis**

As the sessions continued the researchers discussed influencing policy makers and agreed to organise a 'dialogue' between the families and policy makers to try influence policy on social housing. The families were prepared for the dialogue through role play, enabling them to practice what they would say, anticipating responses and questions, while also co-constructing solutions aimed at transforming policy that could be proposed at the dialogue.

Step 5.
**Undertake voice /
action / outcome**

The key 'action' for empowerment and transformation was the organisation of a 'dialogue' between the homeless families and policy influencers. Held in June 2016 with two senior local authority officials, a housing spokesperson of the main opposition party in the national parliament and the Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC). The principles of dialogue were explained to all participants. The policy makers found the dialogue to be a powerful and unique approach which gave them new insights which they committed to inform policy development and practice. The families felt empowered through the dialogue process. The knowledge generated by the research found an institutional home when IHREC subsequently took up the research recommendations.

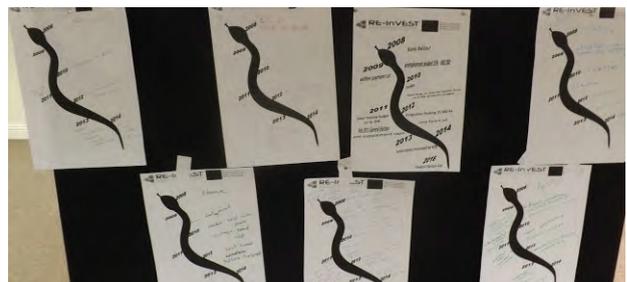
Policy Brief: A comprehensive policy brief (Hearne & Murphy, 2017) was also published to bring this new co-constructed knowledge and policy recommendations into the public sphere and influence policy and practice. This resulted in national media coverage, discussion in the national parliament and a subsequent invitation to discuss the findings with the parliamentary committee on housing in September 2017. Research findings were also discussed at NGO organized housing seminars and conferences (some of which were attended by research participants and peer researchers presented at it). The families, pleased to see the research published in the public domain, felt it was an accurate portrayal of their views and experiences.

Impact/Empowerment

The voice and reality of the families was discussed in the public sphere and the concerns and experiences of this socially excluded group of female headed homeless families was taken seriously within the national political and policy housing sphere. This new co-created knowledge is continually drawn on by various political and civil society campaigns.

Lessons

- The two female peer researchers played an important role in relationship building with the families. Formerly homeless themselves, the peer researcher chatted informally with the families before and during the sessions, explaining the various aspects of the sessions in non-academic language, thus enabling the families to feel comfortable and enabling them to engage fully in the sessions. “The participants were very open once they learned we were homeless before ourselves – if we said we were staff members they would have closed up – they opened up as a result to us. We were trying to get information (from the participants) but not poke too much. Because we were homeless before and we were open about being homeless – they kinda looked up to us – It also helped that nice biscuits and cake were put on by the NGO which the parents enjoyed”
- It was the explicit aim within PAHRCA of influencing and changing policy to meet the human rights of the vulnerable groups that attracted the families to the research, and motivated them to continue to engage in the process.
- Achieving this level of empowerment within this case study was very challenging for the researchers and the families as it required significant personal input, research resources and time.



Case Study 3: ENGLAND

The case of mental health care users

The English policy of 'work capability test' is undertaken by a French company ATOS who are contracted by the government to assess people's suitability for work and/or out of work benefits.

Agnes's, previously a teacher, reveals how deeply distressing it can be to go through the 'ATOS test'

Rob's example of mental health discrimination was very recent:

'I had all the paper work [from the initial test] so I knew I was marked down for being of smart appearance, so at the appeal I didn't go of smart appearance. I took my cousin with me, and in the meantime my mum had died and she died like three weeks before so I went in and there was a legal guy and a doctor, in this big room, he was there and this woman about 15 yards away, right down the other end of the room. And you're behind a desk, you have to stand up, and I said well 'I can't stand up', I said 'do you mind if I lean on the table?' 'No that's ok'. So she started asking me all these questions and I told her.

'I went for a job interview last week for a company, ... as soon I as mentioned that I have mental health problems and I suffer from Asperger's syndrome they literally switched off and didn't want to know. And that really upset me, and I walked out of the interview and I knew I hadn't got the job. As soon as I mentioned that [my mental health situation] they were just like they didn't want to know ... This raises the question of whether you do risk it in job interviews. The problem I find now is that I have been away from work for a year and half and they ask question 'why did you leave your employer?' 'What do I say now?'

She accused me of being my mum's fulltime carer, but... I wasn't able to care for my mum, I had to put my mum in a care home and that's one of the worst things that anybody's got to do. Your mum looks after you and when it's time for her to be looked after you can't do it. ... She talked about other things that I had wrong with me. Well do you go to this clinic, I said "no, I go and see the consultant." I have bowel problems and I have incontinence and she asked "do you go to the incontinence clinic?" and I said "no I don't, I go and see Mr. G--- the consultant and I see the stoma nurse." "Oh so you don't go there, so you're not incontinent then", you know and she was just horrible.'

PAHRCA STEPS

Step 1.
Partnership with NGOs

In recruiting respondents the team drew on existing links between a university department that the researchers were based in and a local non-profit welfare providing organisation through a service users group, Person Shaped Support (PSS). There were 13 members of the group with a reasonable age spread, 9 females and 4 men.

Step 2.
**Preliminary meet ups
and meeting with
participants**

In this session the researchers explained the aims of PAHRCA and the wider RE-In-VEST project. Each member of the group was asked to briefly introduce themselves and then blank 'snakes', essentially timelines, were handed to each participant. Group members were asked to fill in the snake by noting major life events since 2007. The researchers asked them to include personal changes in family life, changes in employment, welfare services and benefits they had received or lost and also major changes in their mental health, including periods of crisis and periods where they felt they were improving. After the snakes had been completed, a group discussion was had regarding what they felt about the exercise of reflecting on their lives since the financial crisis.

Step 3.
**Developmental and
capacity building:
human rights and
capability approach**

This meeting kicked off with an overview of what human rights are and, in particular, a summary of the UK Human Rights Act 1998. After this the group were asked to fill in a worksheet in which they highlighted what rights they felt were most important and whether they thought that they had experienced specific instances of human rights abuses. After this a group discussion was had where we collectively worked through the Human Rights Act 1998 to explore which rights were relevant to people experiencing mental distress and welfare service users.

A second meeting kicked off with an overview of the capabilities approach. In operationalising the capabilities approach the researchers focused on two issues. Firstly, they asked respondents to complete a worksheet reflecting on the full range of factors in their life, both in terms of informal support networks, welfare services and hobbies, which helped them in managing mental distress. Secondly, they asked them to think about what their current life plans were, how these could be achieved and what barriers they faced.

Step 4.
**Inquiry /
data gathering /
analysis**

Given that in the first four sessions so much conversation had orientated around the ways that interactions with welfare professionals and other people in the community were often harsh, stigmatising and degrading, the group felt it was important to look further at the ways others depicted welfare users. For this session the researchers chose a selection of newspaper headings which reported negatively on disabled people and benefit recipients. These were shown to provoke a general debate about social policy reform and the political dimensions of austerity.

Step 5.
**Undertake voice /
action / outcome**

The action component of the research had been discussed at various points in previous meetings but in this session it was agreed that they would develop, as a group, a photo exhibition. The group were given cameras and then took photos which they felt spoke to two main themes. Firstly, what experiences in their everyday life result in deteriorating mental health and, secondly, what resources in their communities allow them to survive in spite of mental distress and other forms of marginalisation.



Impact / Empowerment

- Participants outlined that involvement with the University gave them a social purpose: 'I think the work at Hope has helped me, because you feel that you're of use, you know you're not thrown on the scrapheap.' Agnes.

It gave the 'opportunity to give something back'. This reflects the fact that the opportunities where people felt empowered and valued combated both the pervasive stereotypes that mental illness was about personal or moral failure.

- Opportunities such as local campaigning or participation in community groups also help the respondents to develop a critical understanding of their mental health.

- All valued the opportunity to learn from others, both those who had experienced similar experiences and professionals, which assisted them to understand that their mental illness was the result of systemic factors, with class and gender both being mentioned.

Learning: In order to ensure there was support available if any difficult issues arose for individuals in the group and to foster the merging of knowledge, a fully qualified and registered social worker also participated in the meetings.

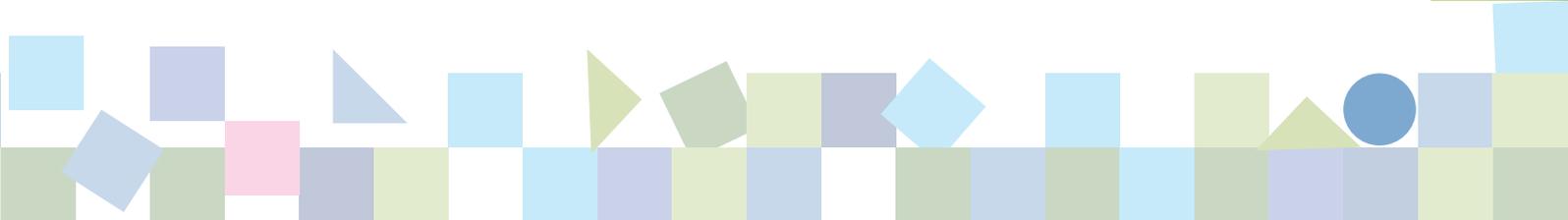
Researchers: Michael Lavelette, Rich Moth, Joe Greener, David Neary

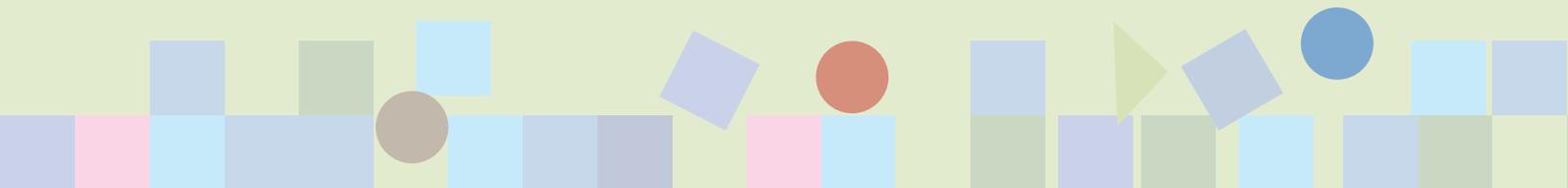
Research location: Liverpool

Research target group: Self-identified people with mental health problems and are in regular contact with mental health services.

Conclusion

Ten further case studies can be found in Appendix 4, illustrating how the participating countries implemented the PAHRCA approach with vulnerable people so as to co-construct knowledge that could enhance and improve social investment across a range of complex social issues.





Part Three



Roles, approaches, methods: co-researching with vulnerable groups

In this section we first explore the roles of the four different types of co-researchers involved in PAHRCA, starting with the role of the vulnerable co-researcher and then moving to the role of the NGO/intermediary, before examining the role of the academic or professional researcher. We then review the role of the peer researcher. Table 3 provides an overview of the varying motivations for engagement in PAHRCA amongst the different co-researchers that you should reflect on and consider when reading this section.

TABLE 3: Motivations of vulnerable groups, NGOs and Academics for Partnership in PAHRCA

NGO	Academics	Vulnerable & Vulnerable Groups
Instrumental need for advice on methodology, evaluation, commissioning research	Opportunity for knowledge transfer amongst the partners. A desire to understand social ex-/inclusion issues better from an insider perspective	Voice
Add academic knowledge to own knowledge and/or opportunity to reflect	Enhance impact and dissemination	Aspiration to advance, learn skills
Rubber stamp validity – enhance status and trust	Requirement of funding	Solidarity
Access to resources – journals	Social transformation agenda of public intellectuals and civic minded universities committed to public social science	Social change
Dissemination and impact	Need for gate keeper to recruit research participants	Need to acquire resources

The role of co-researcher from vulnerable groups

This section reflects on what we learnt from the iterative process of co-constructing our own approach such as dealing with time pressure, adjusting expectations, accepting realities and limitations.

There is then a reflection on research ethics and an overview of some suggested methods based on what RE-INVEST implemented. This includes practical advice on some 'collective' methods that can be operationalised at group level and that can contribute towards individual and collective development and empowerment. The focus is on methods that were positively assessed through our own evaluation and were used and discussed in the earlier case studies.

A key purpose of PAHRCA is to provide NGOs/intermediaries with a method within which to engage/undertake an empowering form of research with vulnerable groups. For the person who is vulnerable and committing to working within a PAHRCA process there are a number of things to think about.

Language – think about what language you might want used by the research project, for example we have insisted that all participants are called 'co-researchers' implying a generic equality across all participants. Some projects might prefer to use the inclusive language of 'residents' rather than the sometimes more exclusive language of 'citizens'. For others, a key terminology to consider is whether people using public services are claimants, clients, customers or service users.

Knowledge: PAHRCA is based on the concept that your knowledge of the experience of poverty and exclusion is a valuable knowledge. You should keep this in mind at all stages – when you have a view point you should express it – the process is an opportunity for you to share your knowledge and co-construct new understandings with others. Never feel that your views and knowledge are of lesser value than other participants.

Time: the commitment has time implications in two respects; PAHRCA takes more time than once-off research experiences; PAHRCA also implies a longer time scale of commitment as the vulnerable person as a co-researcher will ideally be involved from inception to completion of the project.

Challenges: working as a co-researcher from a vulnerable group will bring its own challenges and will be a different experience from other co-researchers in universities or NGOs. While an equal partner you may have specific needs such as literacy, English as a second language, cultural differences, and it will be necessary to ensure these needs are met within the general process of the research.

Resources: it will be difficult as a person in a vulnerable situation and often living in poverty to have the same level of material or financial resources as other co-researchers who are paid for their work as researchers or in NGOs.

Remuneration: Different projects will have a different capacity to pay co-researchers but you should at the very least not be 'out of pocket', participating should not cost you money nor should participation require you to spend money up front for later reimbursement. Think about food, transport, mobile phone, care costs, social participation costs for campaigning etc.

Contributions: Think about what personal or collective resources you are bringing to the

research, for example, your time, expertise, experience, information. Access to NGOs, meeting rooms, and in some instances free travel, translation services, and your skills – drawing, computer skills etc – are all valuable contributions.

Advocacy, power and voice: it is important in projects that seek to maximise the vulnerable person's voice in external advocacy to also make sure there is sufficient internal voice and advocacy, including systems of redress, should you feel the process is not honouring the principles of PAHRCA. There are also power inequalities that the PAHRCA process aims to redress by empowering you to influence the world around you. You have power.

Ground rules: ideally all of the above might be captured in a set of ground rules which are co constructed and regularly reviewed by all participants, and which include regular 'check-ins' and review processes.

Implementation of any methods requires that the facilitator is aware of and understands the possible needs of vulnerable people and groups and has strategies to meet needs as they arise.

Questions that might be unpacked when developing partnerships with vulnerable groups include:

- The practical unequal relationship between the researcher and researched (remuneration)
- Cultural understandings that are divergent
- Lack of trust based on the vulnerable groups previous experiences of researchers
- Different preconceptions about what the research is to achieve
- Being aware of the limitations of the research

- Managing/raising/lowering expectations of participants
- What to do in changing circumstances
- Role of facilitators, and dealing with risks
- Communication, power and empowerment
- Depth of power/oppression – how to deal with reality of structural violence
- What to do if/when motivation spirals downwards when the research encounters problems
- Honest exit strategies while aiming for sustainability
- Being honest about obligations to funders
- How best to create a good atmosphere, the best venue or setting
- Issues of safety and safeguarding, and other fears of vulnerable co-researchers
- Balance – how to facilitate vocal co-researchers /less confident or quieter co-researchers
- Processes to enable continual feedback

The role of NGOs, and advice for partnering with academic and professional researchers

The transformative potential of PAHRCA is strong and principles underlying the approach are appealing to the core values of many NGOs.

However, the community development and human rights principles underpinning much NGO work with vulnerable groups has been undermined by social disinvestment, pressure on NGOs to deliver more social services and in some cases curtailment of advocacy roles. In these circumstances there are real issues and opportunity costs committing time and

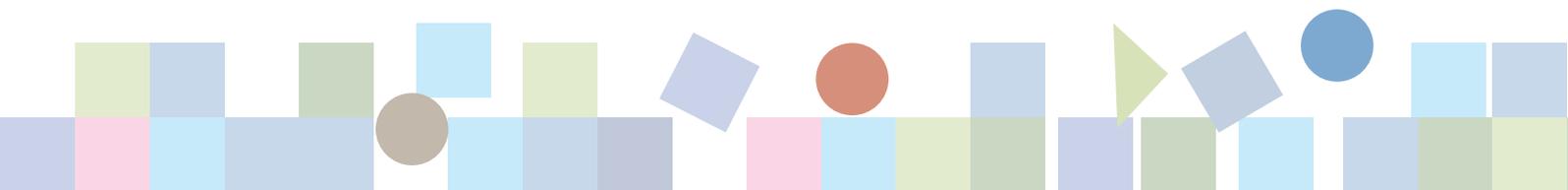
resources to working in processes of co-construction with vulnerable co-researchers.

NGOs working with vulnerable groups often work to co-construct knowledge with vulnerable groups but may have less experience of equal relationships with academics. The case for partnership with NGOs and academics is very strong (Green, 2017). NGOs bring operational and political presence on the ground as well as communications skills. Academia contributes research credibility, and when combined with third sector collaboration, creates a vehicle to influence policy and practice – an increasingly important demand from government when funding research. Impact is an important criteria for most academics and funders (including H2020), so academics are seeking more to work with partners who can communicate their research findings.

‘there is clear scope for universities and third-sector organisations to explore working together to influence policy and practice, building on the trust enjoyed by university research, while also capitalising on voluntary and community organisations’ apparently greater success in reaching policy and practice’

(Shucksmith, 2016)

More academics have moved beyond seeing NGOs as just sources of data and dissemination of their findings, and more NGOs are interested in joint research (Green, 2016). But it is not necessarily social transformation that drives such collaboration. NGOs often need evidence-based results and evaluation of their work to maintain funding, and under new governance regimes academics are more interested in impact. Some funders are also requiring such collaboration. However Shucksmith (2016) is clear that collaboration requires being able work in, and understand, the cultures of both worlds, and only some academics and not all NGOs can transcend this divide. Universities often under-resource such crucial intermediary roles and the university



system and ethical processes make it difficult for academics to work through such partnerships that create a direct relationship between the two, much less give a real co-research role to vulnerable groups.

Here we explore some guidance for NGOs who are working with vulnerable groups and who are considering working with academics in a PAHRCA process.

Three requirements for co-production (Pohl et al., 2010)

- Power: addressing power relations between different actors
- Integration: ensuring a common understanding
- Sustainability: ensuring knowledge production serves social transformation

Three levels of academic-NGO partnership Ross et al. (2003). PAHRCA aspires to achieve the highest of these levels:

- Low: academic leads, NGO endorses
- Medium: academic initiates and designs, NGO provides ideas, information and advice
- High: both fully engaged in shaping and carrying out research, sharing and dividing up tasks

NGOs and Universities are different and recognising such diversity is essential. It is not always evident that academics and NGOs share the same values and objectives or recognise and respect each other's potential role in creating knowledge (Shucksmith, 2013). Co-operation may not always be mutually beneficial but it can bring together implicit and explicit knowledge and create partnerships for transformation.

Knowledge Framework

Lam (2010) provides a useful Analytical Knowledge Framework for understanding different knowledges:

Explicit knowledge is codified, embraced, encoded and acquired by formal study and deductions, it can be stored in objective forms in single locations and appropriated

Tacit knowledge is intuitive and unarticulated, it is acquired through practical experience and cannot be easily aggregated

Transfer of tacit knowledge requires close collaboration, shared understanding, trust and co-operation. It is action oriented. Learning and innovative capability requires mobilisation of tacit knowledge and fostering its interaction with explicit knowledge. Knowledge can also be individual or collective (lodged in the culture, procedures, and systems of an organisation).

Building Trust

Approaches to building Trust between partners in PAHRCA

- Trust is very important and can really only be developed through individual bilateral relationships between the NGO worker and the specific academics
- Trust building is difficult when people are working in different cultures, using different language and when they have competing priorities
- Connections between people are the only way to begin to develop productive partnerships
- Trust can also be built through secondments, face to face meetings, learning networks, communities of practice and action research
- Justification for co-creation often lies in a regional or local context, and relationship building makes sense at these levels

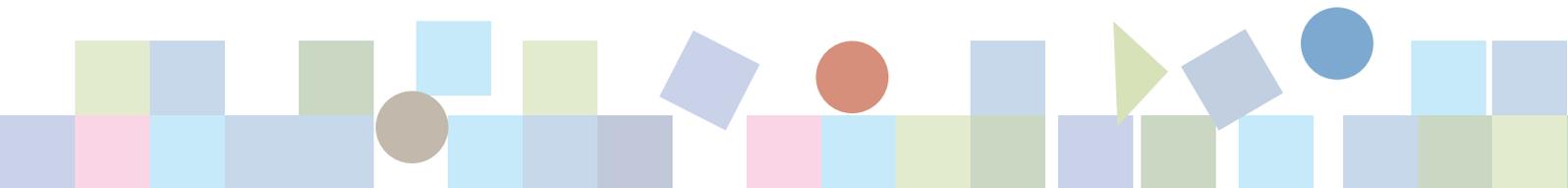
- Starting small with a limited piece of work can be a good way of building trust and building up to bigger projects and funding applications
- The clearer the joint purpose and common understanding the more likely it is to work out
- NGOs often have different ways of working with universities - teaching on applied modules, external committee members, and external members of quality review teams. This can be a way of networking and making contacts
- Building relationships by inviting academics on to boards, research committees and policy committees. This enables real time accompaniment where the academic is embedded in a programme of work observing real life of NGOs and understanding them better
- Power dynamics are inevitable, co-creation has the capacity to disrupt power inequalities
- Language and nomenclature is important- often we use similar words but mean different things by them. All actors involved are co-researchers so avoid practices which name or understand academics as the primary 'researcher'. Consensus building can mean releasing power and losing autonomy (Bertosa, 2017, p9).
- NGO staff also need to be open about research and evidence – many ignore evidence in favour of personal preference, or are uncritical or overawed by 'hard numbers' so there is a need for more 'evidence literacy'. NGOs may want hard numbers to impress funders or media but the real learning may be in qualitative analysis.

Developing the academic partnership

- An explicit process should be developed – to include a subcommittee or steering group - for the period of the project. The committee oversees the research and the choice of methods that maximise the role of participants to determine the content of the research and express their voice.
- Partnership in practice means that planning and decision-making responsibilities for the research are shared, for example the partnership agreement could include explicit agreements on the data collection, analysis, drafting and action dissemination where the academics, the NGO and the vulnerable participants have clear roles.
- The NGO is an active partner in the project and a source of expertise and insight. When partner NGOs are involved in focus groups, workshops and seminars, opportunities should be identified to ensure they have an active presence and a voice in proceedings.
- Knowledge construction and co-construction of knowledge: The NGO and research participants should have the opportunity to engage in a dialogical process developing the research findings so that they can be used locally.

Involving others in the NGO – academic partnership

Knowledge brokers can be important and can come from any one of the partners, the academic, the NGO or the vulnerable group. Cooper (2010) identifies five characteristics: understanding of the research method, literature, experience of both academic and NGO life, sound interpersonal skills and an ability to translate and communicate complex ideas into meaningful materials for all users. Bertosa (2017, p10) sees this as happening through knowledge brokers and boundary crossers, people who have moved across the different fields over their life time.



Working with students: Many NGOs are used by students for service learning, placements and work experience. While this can be used to good advantage it is not the same as a merging of knowledge opportunity between academics, NGOs and vulnerable co-researchers. The student is in training and needs a lot of support and there is not always an alignment between student and NGO needs. There are, however, lots of ways to incorporate and involve longer term and more advanced Masters and / or Doctoral students who will be committed to longer time spans e.g. 2-3 year's work.

Research funders can play a positive role; they often enable *rapid response funding* to enable researchers and NGOs to seize opportunities, but can be overly resistant to learning approaches that emphasise qualitative methodologies, learning by doing processes or advocacy / action research. Foundations may be less risk averse than government or EU sources of funding.

The role of the academic co-researcher

The academic co-researcher within PAHRCA should draw inspiration from what Farruga and Gerrard (2016, p277) encourage as 'an unruly', 'critical' or 'an alternative politics of research'; a research practice that challenges assumptions underpinning hegemonic or orthodox research and that creates new knowledge that is used in the public sphere and engages with policy, politics and activism. Baker et al. (2004) challenges researchers to be reflexive while Gill (2017) encourages us to be less silent about the conditions in which research is produced, our experiences as 'knowledge workers', and our labouring subjectivities. Most academics are middle class and while many who will use this handbook may have applied research backgrounds in community based campaigns, others may be venturing into this approach for the first time.

The handbook reflects approaches within the

'scholar-activist' tradition and also the tradition of 'pracademics' who cross policy and academic worlds (Murphy, 2016).

- Scholar-activists are academics working as both teachers and researchers in third level institutions, while also being activists striving for progressive or more radical social change (Croteau, 2005).
- The term 'pracademic' describe scholars who have professionally bridged the academic and practical world, particularly those who go into academia having already embarked on a career as a practitioner.

A PAHRCA approach to research should prove challenging for academic researchers, it should challenge your own biases and motivations, force you to re-examine notions of empowerment and to question the boundaries of your own commitment to this form of research and your role in public engagement and societal transformation. In practice, academics will have different levels of ambition for the contribution the research might or could make to empowerment, and in reality will often have to negotiate to adjust different levels of expectations about what might be achieved. Middle class academics will often have to 'check their privilege' and will find themselves challenged to do so by both participants and peer researchers. Intersectionality, gender, class, race and age will also influence the process of research, and in all likelihood pose practical cultural and linguistic challenges.

Researchers will also have to negotiate carefully through research ethics, which can only guide pre-figurative research processes which define research questions with the active participation of research participants. Researchers will have to be ready to adapt, change and lose original research questions as they share the research space equally with others. There are also challenges of managing

research relationships with NGOs and the expectations from the research of broader critical policy and political communities and in some instances researchers may have to respect collective decisions to hold back research findings considered damaging by the wider community.

Bertosa (2017) argues that universities need to take practical steps to create conditions to encourage societal impact via the co-creation of knowledge. Universities (rather than academics), however, are not easy partners for NGOs as they are highly fragmented and siloed. They are also driven by marketization and globalisation and the related league table competitive culture which leaves little space for collaboration with NGOs, not to mind vulnerable groups. For example:

- Time frames can be different, NGOs are more immediate while academics work under varying time frames: participatory research can be extremely time consuming
- Language and terminology is different as well as communication styles
- Budgets are different, university research costs are often staggering to NGOs who in their opinion often do more with less
- There are key differences between knowledge transfer (which academics do) and knowledge exchange – or knowledge co-creation, co-production (which NGOs want to do)
- Often academics have a hierarchy of knowledge and place an undue value on rational linear knowledge
- Reviewers (of journal articles and funding applications) often lack the expertise to appreciate the nuanced process behind co-creation and the time and work involved
- Those academics that work towards co-construction are often working outside

their comfort zone and in ways that are not always nurtured or appreciated within the university

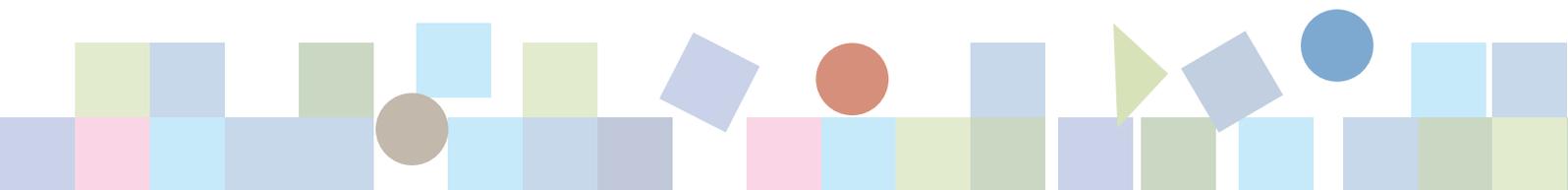
- Ethical considerations for co-construction are difficult to process in university settings which often require specific details before the research process begins and requires the academic to position those they will work with as passive 'subjects' rather than active co-researchers
- Rather than focus on compliance with guidelines research ethics in co-creation need to focus on virtue based approaches which insist on character, disposition, motive and integrity

Furthermore, Bertosa (2017) highlights other complexities that should be considered in partnerships between academics and NGOs:

- Legal and practical notions of intellectual copyright
- What and whose problem need to be researched
- Which and whose knowledge is most valued
- Which impacts are valued - media, political, academic publications
- How can cultural shifts happen
- What are the implications of co creation for research methods and design
- How do partnership relationships develop
- What models of co-production work and do not work and why

When people have the opportunity to come together to share and debate ideas and learnings (including research findings), new knowledge, the capacity to take action- to engage in new performance – is enhanced

(Mosher et al., 2014).



The role of peer researchers

It was very useful to continue with some participants and train them as peer researchers. Some results would not have come about otherwise because jointly analysing the results needs a lot of confidence. I do think that it is PAR if actions for voice count as actions. However, the opportunity to make structural changes is very limited. This is what should be analysed in the first place: If it is possible to influence the structures and how. A main challenge was that the research was very time consuming. It is also necessary to develop a personal relationship with participants.

What is peer research?

- Peer research is developed from the traditions of 'participatory', 'action' and 'empowerment' research
- Members of the research target group adopt the role of active researchers, interviewing their peer group about their experiences - the ultimate in participatory research
- Adopts a 'bottom up' approach where those individuals who are going to be directly affected by the research play an active role in the process
- Adopts a standpoint that peers are 'experts' within their field of experience

Peer research was used in three of the research projects in RE-InVEST. We draw here from the SOVA led project⁴ 'Women into Work' and their briefing guide into peer research.

Peer Research is suitable when the objective is to be transformative, to shift the power base and ownership of the research process to 'non experts' and reduce the 'academicism' of research. It lends itself to an interactive qualitative approach and helps ensure participation is real and enables empowerment – and not token.

It can reduce hierarchies within the research environment – between researcher and researched, but also between 'academic' and 'peer' researcher.

Peer research can assist with recruitment of research participants, and reduces the gate-keeping role of NGOs if peer researchers are also service users, but it should not be used solely for this reason.

Peer researchers should be involved in all aspects of the research including framing research questions and research design.

Interviews with peer researchers can be empowering for both participants and peer researchers. The atmosphere may be more supportive and relaxed making it more likely that high quality data will be gathered. However shared experience and increased rapport may lead to more emotive interviews than in traditional research.

Peer researchers may at times be too close to participants and have had particular experiences with some participants' client groups (leading to concerns for either).

Relevant training opportunities and work experience should be made available for peer researchers who want to develop new skills and knowledge and improve life chances.

⁴ 'Peer research methodology' Sovo – Women into Work



Peer researchers will likely have their own agendas and opinions and may ask questions in a leading manner. There may be tensions between the wants and desires of 'peer researchers' and a perceived need for academic rigour.

Peer research takes time and emotional energy from all involved, it can be more time consuming (and expensive) than not working with peer researchers.

Peer researchers may have difficult and chaotic lives and will often need flexibility as they exit in and out of the project.

In some cases peer researchers will not complete their research tasks or will not reach an acceptable standard of work. This needs to be managed carefully, in a supportive manner, according to clear prior agreements (or contracts) which specify standards and conflict mediation processes.

In some cases tensions will arise between peer researchers and/or between academics and peer researchers. This can be very demoralising for that person who may require specific supports.

Projects often end as funding or research periods are completed but peer researchers' lives continue. Therefore, a sustainable transition strategy is necessary, ideally involving the NGO, as the academic researcher withdraws.

Peer Research Case Studies

Case Study 1: The potential for peer research – the voice of a PAHRCA peer researcher

"The involvement having come from a homeless background and to go on to the training to be a peer researcher was a huge step-in having the knowledge behind you and knowing about the subject you were talking about. I found it quite empowering. It did build my confidence – I'm not afraid to say stuff now and I say what I feel – whether it is right or wrong."

"It did empower me. It gave me more confidence and self-esteem – it helped me get employment from Focus – it helped me to go on the relief panel and give me confidence that I could do it."

"It made me feel like I did something—especially when we presented at the parliament – we don't get opportunities to do that. Even though I was terrified doing it – I was so nervous. The feedback we got after that was incredible. It was great to see our name on things like the policy report – we wouldn't have ever had that. It's important to have something to show – we are not just doing this and it's forgotten about"

Case Study 2: The Austria RE-InVEST experience of developing peer researchers

In phase two of the Austrian research, researchers, vulnerable people, and experts jointly analysed the features of Austrian Active Labour Market Policy and Social Security. Four participants from the first phase were trained and involved as peer-researchers in this second phase⁵. The training (one preliminary meeting and two half-day training sessions) empowered them to carry out qualitative research in cooperation with the IFZ-researchers and they then participated actively in all stages of the research process. Peer researchers and the steering committee explored best strategies to involve more vulnerable participants for the group discussions. We managed to have three group discussions, two urban one rural, with more vulnerable people in terms of migrant background, low qualification, and health problems. Each data gathering activity was carried out by a team consisting of one IFZ-researcher and one peer-researcher. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The focus groups were documented by the IFZ-researcher on the spot, while the peer researcher was leading the discussion. The material was then coded and analysed according to predefined categories. The peer researchers participated actively in the coding and analysis of the material – involving the peer researchers in all steps was good if challenging. We jointly developed a guideline for interviews of PES

staff and for group discussions. We then developed criteria for jointly analysing the transcriptions of the interviews and documentation of the group discussions. The peer researchers pre-selected a range of 'measures' for analysis, which they considered particularly relevant for their own situation and their peers. One peer researcher also joined the Steering Committee which met to give feedback on the research questions, research strategy and preliminary questionnaires (Nov 2016) and for the second time to discuss the preliminary findings (April 2017).

Impact of peer researchers: Peer researchers are a valuable addition to participative research. In the development of the guideline and the analysis of results the peers highlighted points the academic researchers would not have seen. Training the peer researchers was important as some results would not have come about otherwise, because jointly analysing the results needs a lot of confidence.

Learning points: This research methodology requires personal trust between researchers and participants. Peer researchers reported that the research lifted their self-confidence and self-respect, however there is the challenge of raising hopes that cannot be fulfilled and finding time for a very time-consuming project.

Reflections of the practice of PAHRCA

It is important to recognise, in providing a handbook for PAHRCA, that this is not a perfect formula to achieve PAR, empowerment and transformation. Any attempt to achieve PAR in an effective manner is an extremely challenging (and rewarding) process for all co-researchers, and implementing and developing PAHRCA was no different. Here we present some of our reflections as we progressed through the iterative process of doing our best to implement PAHRCA (and not always succeeding) and to make this approach work.

⁵ Topics covered were basic knowledge on qualitative research design and process, research ethics, interviewer techniques and practical exercises to apply the theoretical knowledge. The last session was mostly dedicated to elaborate the research questions and questionnaires for the planned focus groups and interviews.

Working with 'rights' and capabilities

The importance of the non-material aspects of rights and capabilities approaches such as the concept of human dignity was emphasised. It was a challenge to define how rights can be used as an instrument in daily lives. In some country specific contexts it was noted that terms like rights can be seen as political and some vulnerable people say 'we don't trust politics'.

We were aware that sometimes the practical issue of sharing stories amongst a vulnerable group of their various experiences of rights being denied can be disempowering as it can reinforce their problems. In this context it was noted that it can be difficult to make people 'talk' about feelings in poverty such as 'shame'. In addition this approach can often individualise a sense of self-blame for their experience of poverty rather than growing a sense of solidarity amongst participants. The rights framework can be useful in addressing this by moving from victim to the concept of rights holder as it focuses on the duty bearer who has responsibility for addressing social crises and exclusion. In this context it is important to be able to empower people to work towards action.

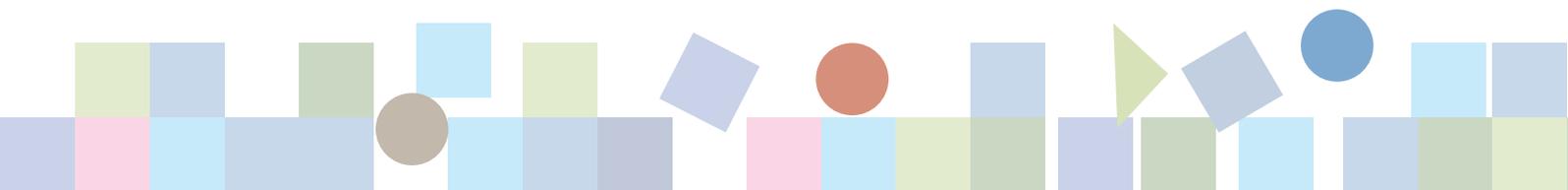
The particular human rights defined at UN and European Social Charter level do not necessarily translate into national official political / legal obligations, therefore, it was highlighted that using the rights frame as an empowering tool can create a public pressure that provides sanction / obligation through empowered rights holders. In the rights approach there is a need, working with the vulnerable group, to identify a set of rights and how they relate to a measurable social problem that affects them. This can also provide a mechanism for empowering those who are considered 'rightless' or at least seen as to be not entitled to the same rights as everyone else. For the projects and groups, including their partners, the challenge in the rights approach is how to develop a collective process of deepening / developing knowledge on rights.

Timeframe and definition of Action in PAR

The lack of time was a key issue/barrier for completing PAHRCA in the RE-InVEST projects. Projects were keenly aware that the limited timeframe of RE-InVEST (for example, having just a few weeks, or months to work on a specific project with participants, rather than the much longer periods of time required to achieve an effective PAR community development approach) reduced their ability to deliver genuine participation and empowerment within the groups. The difficulty of transferring methods and methodology of long research action projects like Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) / Rialto Rights in Action Group (RRIAG) and MOK to RE-InVEST with its short term engagement and little time for detailed engagement by researchers was raised as a particularly important challenge. The challenge for RE-InVEST was how to judge / assess if an outcome / process is meaningful and, most importantly, how can projects achieve meaningful outcomes over short time periods.

While acknowledging the considerable time needed for truly participative processes it was suggested that implementing a participative approach should not be a case of 'all or nothing' and it was questioned whether one has to be participative in every step of the project? The difference between consultation (voice heard) and participation (influencing) was emphasised. It was felt that there was a need to achieve a level of co-production of knowledge from the outset and also to raise our awareness, and the participants' awareness of structural issues – a requirement to 'raise consciousness'.

Thinking about how not to let participants down the French RE-InVEST partners found PAHRCA too challenging to use with NEETs. Individual interviews were the only means possible with this group. Implementing innovative methods would have required more time.



Overall, we found that the very short time frame of the research limited our ability to achieve a deeper level of participation and empowerment required to fulfil the full aims of PAR. Once the research was finished, there was generally no further work with participants as a collective group by either the researchers or the NGOs, although in some cases on-going support and involvement was provided by NGOs and academic co-researchers to peer researchers. There was a strongly expressed concern that when the research is finished, it was important to identify how researchers can continue to work with the vulnerable group that they have established. There was a fear that they would be abandoning them at the end of the project.

Also NGOs, as service providers, rarely engage in collective action empowerment of service users as a group, as they have a different set of priorities and limited resources. The collective action approach in PAHRCA can, therefore, be challenging to their internal structures and approaches. Faggura and Gerrard (2016) discuss the reality of complex relationships between the state, service delivery, advocacy and campaign organisations, and research and how funding allocations restrict advocacy. In the Irish example one funder, the DRHE, have flexed their power and subsequent to this research restricted the use of on-site research in homeless facilities.

Expectations

It is challenging to promote the idea that social problems are structural in cause whilst simultaneously retaining the possibility of transformation and attempting to encourage and undertake social action amongst participants. A key question in this regard was 'how

do (research) projects promote the structural conceptions of people's position in society but then also retain a possibility for change and transformation?'

It was asked whether there are too many expectations and too much optimism about achieving the level of change highlighted in the HR/MOK approaches without having the resources (as academics or NGO co-researchers) to exert (or create) the political power to change these things. There was also a concern of being 'too political' by encouraging public collective action of participants. On the other hand, some of the most impactful results from the RE-InVEST projects were achieved when such public collective action was undertaken.

Action

For RE-InVEST the achievement of actions within PAHRCA was the most challenging aspect of the research approach. Many projects achieved the co-construction of knowledge, but did not have the time, experience, resources or NGO support to undertake collective action towards transformation. However, as we have shown in Part Two through the case study examples, there are also some good examples within RE-InVEST of forms of action that enhanced (if even temporarily) the individual and collective rights and capabilities of participants and challenged social injustices. Action in the public sphere can be immensely empowering but also extremely frightening for those who are not seasoned activists. We feel there needs to be greater consideration given from the outset to this question of action, how and who is to undertake it, and what role the different actors can play.

Voices of the PAHRCA experience: reflections of co-researchers

It is very demanding for both participants and researchers – there needs to be sufficient resources in terms of time and money to do the research. There also should be an analysis of the prospects for action and improvement for participants: what can be offered to them? Agency in the sense of Sen is some achievement, especially for vulnerable people: getting a voice, being heard as an equal. Yet, I wonder if this is fair if there is no improvement in their well-being alongside. That may also consist in paying for participation in research.

The agency and empowerment dimension was difficult to implement in the period of time established. Furthermore, the NGO contacted do not have an on-going dialogue practice therefore we did not have, for instance, the collaboration of peer researchers. Young people were very much concerned about getting a job and mobilise their strategies to succeed in the labour market. HR is considered as abstract concepts and individual responsibility. This view has made the HR approach more difficult to work with. They ask for more investment in education and health sectors from public entities as well as more confidence in their skills and capacities from employers and civil society.

Participatory research can enrich (European) social policy analysis (as it leads to new ways of gathering and interpreting information, framing topics and highlighting aspects that would have been overlooked or underestimated without participation of persons affected; also it turned out that some participants needed time to build confidence and opened up only after quite a while – the knowledge gathered by our methods would have been impossible to gather through conventional social research methods) but the potential for structural change is very limited.

Also, participation is limited because the research questions (the “problem to be addressed”) are defined by the researchers beforehand, allowing for a slightly less intimate relationship – in our project the participants opened up very much during the research process, which blurred the lines between professional cooperation and intimate friendship. The theoretical framework of capabilities and human rights was very challenging for our participants (actually for me as well) – in this respect we would have needed a clearer framework and probably also elaborated, standardised methods on how to incorporate capabilities and human rights in the research process.

Sample PAHRCA methods

Before considering which method is the most appropriate for use in implementing PAHRCA, you should think about and develop the ethics of your research. This is often required for ethical approval for research from Universities, funders and NGOs.

The Ethics of Research

Both action and participatory methodologies are seen to require special attention in terms of ethics due to:

- The sustained period of research
- Closer relationships built between participants and researchers
- A myriad of organisations can become involved
- Relationships are necessarily embedded within the 'micropolitics' of the social setting
- The involvement of vulnerable participants
- A requirement of consistent reflection on the politics of the research

Instrumental ethics means following pre-determined guidelines i.e. privacy / informed consent. Genuine ethics means consistent reflection on the politics of the research, being sceptical about the possibility for ethical committees to make ethical decisions, ethics 'done' in the field.

In considering the ethics of your research you will need to consider:

- Role and capacity of university research boards to determine ethical approval
- Ethics 'done' in the field – guidelines debated, or privacy/informed consent contested
- Never consider that ethics is 'done' – it is an ongoing process (design – data collection – publication)
- Payment for participants time
- Developing an agreement – discussions about confidentiality, privacy and informed consent and making sure it addresses group confidentiality
- Code of conduct for relating to each other in the group and dealing with any disagreements
- Stick to notions of 'action' which are truer to the definition set out in theory
- Consider who are the ethical agreements to be made with – the NGO, vulnerable group etc. NGOs often have their own different ethical guidelines
- Highest regard should be given to the research participant rather than the research institution
- Consider how the research is providing support for the vulnerable participants
- Issues relating to ownership of data and data obligations under GDPR (May 2018)

Trust building – Visual methods, photo, drawing

As seen in examples from [Portugal](#), [Switzerland](#), [Ireland](#) and [Scotland](#), drawing is a device that can be used by any group anywhere and needs little in terms of tools or resources. It can also be a small group or an individualised activity. It is of obvious use in instances of mixed language, second language or literacy barriers. It is a set of techniques to involve an individual or group reflect on how they feel, to explore issues, voice concerns or simply to be creative and be a first step in telling stories. This process can be very empowering, enabling someone to communicate their needs and ideas non-verbally. It can be a highly effective tool to engage and mobilise marginalised people and to help them highlight their issues.

Step 1. Explain what you are interested in and that instead of talking you will ask people to draw.

Step 2. Supply some blank sheets and pencils to each participant. Ask each participant to draw what for them is the most important change in their lives over the last ten years.

Step 3. Ask participants to write a few words to describe their drawing (if literacy levels allow).

Step 4. Data gathering – look at everyone's drawings, ask for volunteers to describe what they have drawn and prompt them to expand- ask how people feel about the drawing.

Step 5. Data Analysis – the drawings can be simply initial prompts or they can be the focus of much more analysis.

Ask can you photograph the drawing and record how it has been described, explain that it would be interesting to compare with similar drawings.

Step 6. The drawings or images can be used as public representations of how people feel and as a way to begin conversations with other duty bearers. They can also be scanned into national reports etc.

There are no rules and no rights or wrongs – participants can draw anything they want. The exercise can be done relatively quickly; taking too long can give too much time for participants to worry about their drawing

Key concepts in the method

Freehand drawing, along with image interpretation and discussion, can be used to encourage reflexive engagement to generate alternative perspectives. The use of drawings, in enabling participants to express visually what may be difficult to verbalise. Through freehand drawing and employing the higher order thinking that is integral to visualisation, can define their knowledge of a topic that is universally understandable and rich in complex content

Trust building – methods using group snake time lines

The point of this method is use the 'snake' as an image to construct a timeline. This was used in many projects; see [Ireland](#), [Romania](#), and [Austria](#). This can set the scene for a group, community or local level biographical enquiry and can be used as prompts for gathering personal testimonies in later qualitative interviews. The snake method enables those with limited literacy to visually document their personal experience.

- Step 1.** Identify the key areas / themes / information you would like to cover in the exercise – for example how did the crisis impact on you? Prepare some prompt questions before hand – one or two for each theme/topic above.
- Step 2.** Explain clearly the purpose of the research to the participant and the project – ensure they are comfortable with it and relaxed. Perhaps they want to do it with someone else they know in the room: a key worker or NGO worker present?
- Step 3.** Prepare a large snake twenty feet long and three feet wide, place it on the floor of the room you are working in, the tail represents a certain starting time, the head is now.
- Step 4.** Provide large coloured markers, ask the group to write or draw on the snake the key time lines and impacts of the crisis and austerity on vulnerable groups in your country. People can record community and individual impacts. (20 mins)
- Step 5.** This will generate conversation and discussion, allow this to happen, people will say how they felt and how others were impacted. If useful you can stop and start the exercise. (10 mins)
- Step 6.** Ensure you give time for the participants to think, speak and express themselves and allow the exercise to take different directions as participants tell their story.
- Step 7.** Ask participants if there are any areas they feel should be covered that you haven't done so – or if there are other questions they would ask about this topic.
- Step 8.** After the exercise take time to write up your notes and reflections on the interview and identify the three key themes/points/pieces of information you feel are most worthwhile.
- Step 9.** Each group selects a volunteer researcher and volunteer participant. The researcher uses the snake timeline to interview the participant about the impacts of the crisis on them. The rest of the group observe the interview.
- Step 10.** Feedback to larger group on the experience of using the method

Note: If recording ensure you get permission from participants to do this – recording can sometimes make a participant feel uncomfortable

The Universal Declaration of HUMAN RIGHTS

Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, the Universal Declaration states basic rights and fundamental freedoms to which all human beings are entitled.

WE ARE ALL BORN FREE AND EQUAL
EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO THESE RIGHTS
 NO MATTER YOUR RACE, RELIGION OR NATIONALITY

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO LIFE, FREEDOM AND SAFETY

You have the responsibility to respect the rights of others
NO ONE CAN TAKE AWAY ANY OF YOUR RIGHTS

No one has the right to hold you in slavery.

You have the right to own property.

No one has the right to torture you.

Everyone has the right to belong to a religion.

You have the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Freedom of Expression: You have the right to free thought and to voice your opinions to others.

We are all equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law.

Everyone has the right to gather as a peaceful assembly.

You have the right to seek legal help if your rights are violated.

You have the right to help choose and to take part in governing your country, directly or through chosen representatives.

No one has the right to wrongly imprison you or force you to leave your country.

You have the right to a fair and public trial.

You have the right to social security and are entitled to economic, social and cultural help from your government.

Everyone is innocent until **PROVEN** guilty.

Workers' rights: Every adult has the right to a job, a fair wage and to join a trade union.

You have the right to privacy. No one can interfere with your reputation, family, home or correspondence.

You have the right to leisure and rest from work.

You can travel wherever you want.

Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their family.

You have the right to seek asylum in another country if you are being persecuted in your own country.

Everyone has the right to education.

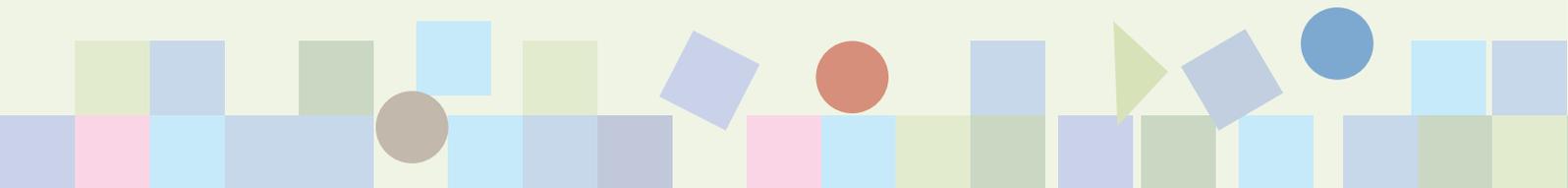
Everyone has the right to a nationality.

Your intellectual property as an artist or scientist should be protected.

All adults have the right to marriage and to raise a family.

We are all entitled to social order so we can enjoy these rights.

© UNITED NATIONS 2013 FOR THE FULL VERSION OF THE DECLARATION VISIT UN.ORG/EN/DOCUMENTS/UDHR/ zenpencils.com



Developmental Human Rights Indicators

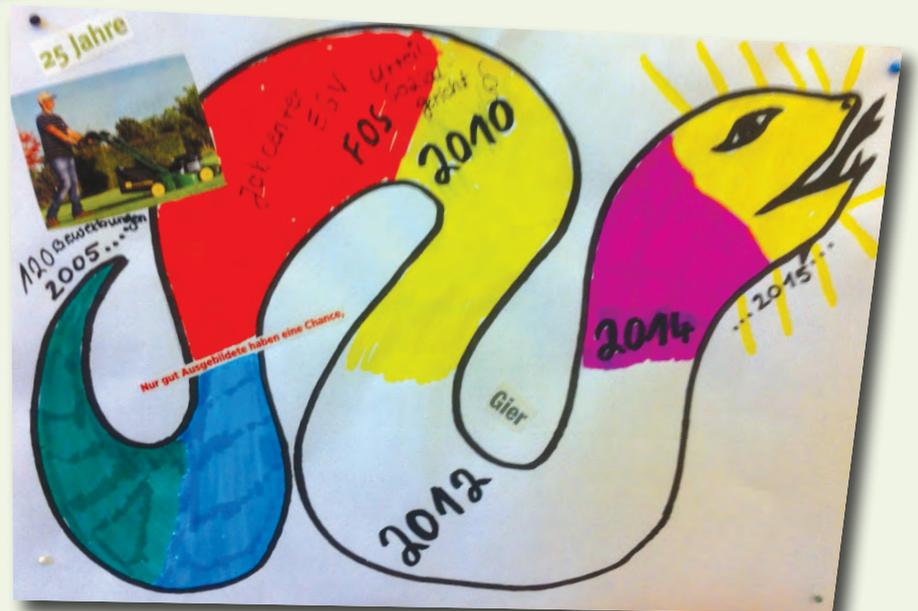
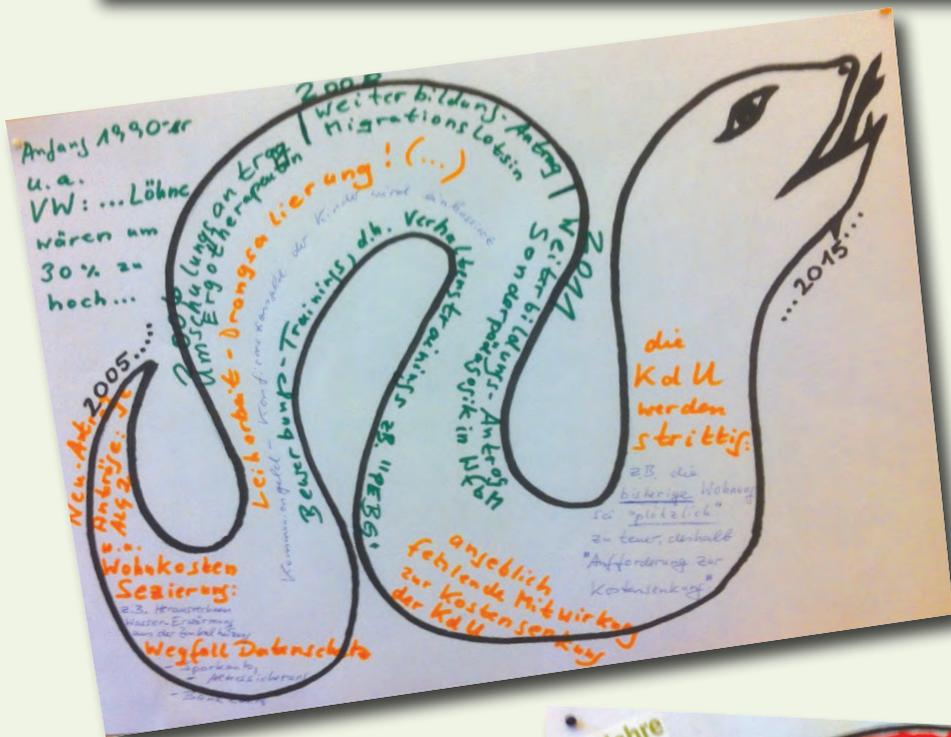
Using the chart of the 1948 Fundamental Declaration of Human Rights there are different types of group exercises you can use to unpack and explore different aspects of human rights, see for example [the Netherlands and England](#).

Human rights – exploring experiences of practical human rights

- Information: discuss what ones rights are **and** the social mechanisms to attain them
- Taking initial steps: enable participants to unpack a previous negative experience (suspicion, fear of possible repercussions, feeling oneself to be of no consequence), all these constitute obstacles which may lead a vulnerable person to give up on their initial intention
- Proceeding with their intention: identifying what needs to be done to request their intention, the kind of reception they might receive, expressing and officially registering the request, the cost and time involved
- The result of these efforts: how are rights attained? In what time frame? For how long?
- Was the response adequate? What are the consequences of the suggested response? Are there any negative consequences for the life of the person/family concerned?
- Eventual measures of recourse in the face of a (non) decision taken, consequences including erasure from administrative archives as a state of absolute denial of rights

Developmental – Human rights imagination exercises

- Distribute the summary 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (opposite)
- Give a brief explanation of the declaration, conventions and monitoring processes
- Give ten minutes to each participant to read and/or read aloud
- In small groups allow participants select the human rights they feel are most relevant to their own lives
- Select one agreed human right to focus on and ask the group to imagine what would be different about their lives if this was fully implemented
- Ask the group to translate the differences into concrete policy demands
- Describe in policy terms what needs to be done to realise human rights and discuss what other groups have done to use rights to promote social change (using U.N. web sites, PPR)



Developmental Merging of knowledge MOK – in our own words

The aim of the project that generated this poem was to counter stereotypes about people living in poverty and social exclusion by presenting honest, personal accounts of daily life and personal aspirations. Get participants to read this poem or another poem relevant to your group

*I am not a chav.
Yes, I've lived on a council estate
And, yes, I've claimed benefits.
Yes, I've got mixed race kids,
some of them from different dads
And, yes, I've worn Nike and Adidas
and hoodies, smoked cigarettes
and had a can or two and a spliff.
No, I wasn't born
with a silver spoon in my mouth,
I didn't have a posh education
And most of what I've learned
has been off the web,
woven of conspiracy theory and fact.
But I am a truth seeker
and I never taught my kids to lie
and I never taught my kids to believe lies.
Given the choice,
I would rather be an honest beggar
than a deceptive thief.*

Step 1. Using this resource, or find other local resources in their own words, read aloud the poem, play the song or give people an opportunity to review a visual image, drawing, play, photo, painting.

Step 2. Ask people to tell you what it means to them and how it makes them feel

Step 3. Introduce the word stigma and ask people about how it feels to be stereotyped and what can work to counter stereotypes about people living in poverty and social exclusion

Step 4. Ask people to bring in their own photographs or portraits, ask project participants to write or say short texts to explain their lives, their hopes and their place in society as seen through their own eyes.

A poem about poverty

What poverty feels like in 1980's Ireland by poet Rita Ann Higgins

Some People (for Eoin)

Some people know what it's like,
to be called a cunt in front of their children
to be short for the rent
to be short for the light
to be short for school books
to wait in Community Welfare waiting-rooms full of smoke
to wait two years to have a tooth looked at
to wait another two years to have a tooth out (the same tooth)
to be half strangled by your varicose veins, but you're
198th on the list
to talk into a banana on a jobsearch scheme
to talk into a banana in a jobsearch dream
to be out of work
to be out of money
to be out of fashion
to be out of friends
to be in for the Vincent de Paul man
to be in space for the milk man
(sorry, mammy isn't in today she's gone to Mars for the weekend)
to be in Puerto Rico this week for the blanket man
to be in Puerto Rico next week for the blanket man
to be dead for the coal man
(sorry, mammy passed away in her sleep, overdose of coal
in the teapot)
to be in hospital unconscious for the rent man
(St Judes ward 4th floor)
to be second-hand
to be second-class
to be no class
to be looked down on
to be walked on
to be pissed on
to be shat on
and other people don't.

Developmental Visual and creative methods: Participative Video

Key concepts in the method

Participatory video becomes a powerful means of documenting local people's experiences, needs and hopes from their own perspectives. Participatory video films or video messages can be used to strengthen both horizontal communication (e.g. communicating with other communities) and vertical communication (e.g. communicating with decision-makers). The video medium is transportable, easily replicated and easily shared; it thus has a wide spread effect. Video is an attractive technological tool, which gives immediate results. It can empower by being a fun participatory process that gives participants control over a project. Participants find their voices and focus on local issues of concern. Participants can become a community, which takes further action.



Participant's task:

Make and upload a public video on to the RE-InVEST Facebook Page

Step 1. Identify from the group for example 3 ways the crisis and austerity impacted on the human rights of vulnerable groups

Step 2. Think about the most useful way to describe these impacts to a public audience for the video

Step 3. Discuss what language you want to use and what you want to say

Step 4. Agree someone to present the impacts on the video

Step 5. Record a 30 second to 1 minute video of the impacts on your phone

Step 6. Watch the video as a group and see if it is what you want to upload or try again

Step 7. Upload the video on to the RE-InVEST Facebook site

Step 8. Listen and watch the uploaded videos

Data collection – Focus Groups, Role Play Method



See for example Ireland, Portugal, Romania.

A possible Task

You are a focus group discussing the impact of austerity and the crisis on you as members of vulnerable populations. Each individual in the group will be given a role to play. The point of this exercise is to get you thinking about the different perspectives about a local policy issue so that the group can explore human rights and vulnerability. Please make notes after the exercise on the challenges you faced in your role and your reflections on the process. Do give a research participant the role of the facilitator/moderator so they can develop some skills and be in the role of researcher

- Ensure all voices are heard
- Ensure the conversation sticks to the topic at hand
- Gather data/information from a focus group

Steps:

Give a role and prompt to each of seven participants, homeless lone parent, mother of a homeless young man, social worker, NGO, human rights activist, couch surfer, low paid worker saving to buy house.

Step 1. Focus Group Role Play: 20 mins

Step 2. Individually make reflective notes on your experience of listening

Step 3. Discuss as a group and make three key learning points for policy issue

Step 4. Feed back & whole group discussion

Data collection Focus group — fish bowls

Description of the fishbowl process

Fishbowls involve a small group of people seated in a circle, having a conversation in full view of a larger group of listeners. Fishbowl processes provide a creative way to include everyone in what is otherwise a small group discussion and are particularly useful in a large group, or can be used when you have a visitor to the group that you want to engage with in a creative way.⁶

The Fishbowl setup

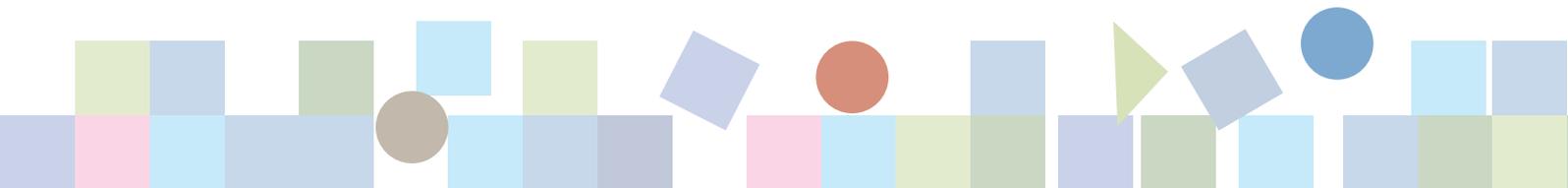
- 4/5 chairs in an inner circle
- Concentric rings of chairs and/or round tables around the inner circle
- Aisles to permit easy access to the inner circle
- Easel stands for written or graphic recording of key ideas

The Rules

- The inner circle should represent all the different viewpoints present, and all others must remain silent. The process offers others a chance to speak only if they join the 'inner circle' by sitting in the empty chair
- Participants in the inner circle are encouraged to be brief and to have a lively discussion. The moderator may not need to keep a strict time limit but gently signal that someone has spoken too long using a notice ("You have 1 minute left" or "Please conclude")
- An empty chair in the inner circle (the fishbowl) is available for participants in the outer circle who may, one at a time, join the discussion. The time limit for how long one person can occupy the visitor's chair is 3 minutes.

Rapporteurs are invited to share

- the typical opinion and any significant variation that happens in the discussion
- most popular ideas emerging
- any interesting/ innovative suggestions



Data Collection – paired interviews and / or peer research interviews

The focus here is on enabling qualitative interviews as a data collection method but also to be as empowering and transformative as possible. This approach can be used with various types of research interviews but probably works best with story-telling or narrative style interviews (see examples from the case studies [Romania](#), [Latvia](#)), however it can also be used with semi structured interviewing.

It is essential to have sufficient time for the group to understand the different research questions, to unpack them and to be explicitly aware of the scope of the research. Practice runs are also necessary, for example with active listening questions, using prompts, giving reflective feedback and dealing with unexpected responses. A supportive environment is necessary for all participants – both those interviewing and those being interviewed. Finally, think about how data will be recorded and transcribed. Audio recording can be done on most mobile phones but a system for retrieval is necessary as well as resources for transcribing- all this takes time...

Non-Verbal Signs of Attentive or Active Listening ⁷

This is a generic list of non-verbal signs of listening, in other words people who are listening are more likely to display at least some of these signs. However these signs may not be appropriate in all situations and across all cultures.

Smile: Small smiles can be used to show that the listener is paying attention to what is being said or as a way of agreeing or being happy about the messages being received. Combined with nods of the head, smiles can be powerful in affirming that messages are being listened to and understood.

Eye Contact: It is normal and usually encouraging for the listener to look at the speaker. Eye contact can however be intimidating, especially for more shy speakers – gauge how much eye contact is appropriate for any given situation. Combine eye contact with smiles and other non-verbal messages to encourage the speaker.

Posture: Posture can tell a lot about the sender and receiver in interpersonal interactions. The attentive listener tends to lean slightly forward or sideways whilst sitting. Other signs of active listening may include a slight slant of the head or resting the head on one hand.

Mirroring: Automatic reflection/mirroring of any facial expressions used by the speaker can be a sign of attentive listening. These reflective expressions can help to show sympathy and empathy in more emotional situations. Attempting to consciously mimic facial expressions (i.e. not automatic reflection of expressions) can be a sign of inattention.

Distraction: The active listener will not be distracted and therefore will refrain from fidgeting, looking at a clock or watch, doodling, playing with their hair or picking their fingernails.

⁷ <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/active-listening.html>

Data Collection — The biographical narrative method

Narrative inquiry has the potential to place the research task firmly in the arena of social justice if we are to pursue the task of empowering research participants to its potential. See for example [Ireland, Italy, Germany and the examples of voices in each country case study](#).

The biographical method is the collection and analysis of an intensive account of a whole life or portion of a life, usually by an in-depth, unstructured interview. The account may be reinforced by semi-structured interviewing or including and talking about personal documents or objects which serve as memory triggers or, for example, with a snake life line.

Rather than concentrating upon a 'snapshot' of an individual's present situation, the biographical approach emphasises the placement of the individual within a nexus of social connections, historical events and life experiences (the life history). An important sub-stream of the method focuses upon the manner in which the respondent actively constructs or co-constructs a narrative of their life in response to the social context at the time of interview (the life story).

Narratives (stories) are discourses with a clear sequential order that connect events in meaningful ways for definite audiences and offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it.

There are three core elements to this storied form

- It should have a time or *chronological* dimension
- it should be *meaningful*
- it should be *social* as it is produced for an audience

Furthermore, this form is structured in such a way as to contain the content of the story in a coherent whole. The telling aspect of narrative is synonymous with the "'story'". The power of narrative from a critical perspective is in the transformative potential of communication as joint interpretation of the life-world with the participants in the study (Gómez et al., 2011).

The researcher should not see the research participant as objects of information to assist with the accomplishment of the research task 'but as human beings whose voices we are grateful to hear, and whose experiences we are grateful to share'. We don't want to be too directive about what you will find. A typical narrative might be 800-900 words in length with as much diversity as possible in the range of horizontal issues interacting in the life story (health, housing, family, depression, job, community etc.). Please don't try to fit your narratives in these frames, they are just examples, be true to the actual life story you have been told.

Collective Dialogue

Dialogue is an action method (see Ireland, Switzerland) for creating a safe space to explore difference and co-create change. It enables the study of issues that people / communities struggle with, and exploration of how things are, and how they could be different. **Dialogue is not about ranting, giving out, complaining, arguing, debating, or negotiation.**

Dialogue draws on the theories of people such as David Bohm and many others working in fields such as organisational development and change management.⁸

David Bohm developed *Dialogue*, an approach to conversation that creates “a flow of meaning” and space for learning and listening, for sitting, talking, thinking and feeling together – dialogue assumes more than one valid experience or view-point of perspective.

Dialogue incorporates a ‘Whole Systems’ change methodology which believes that we tend to only see the world from one perspective/experience/expertise but seeing it as ‘a whole’ means so much more knowledge with which to work and plan for the future. In *Dialogue*, people learn to use the energy of their differences to enhance their collective wisdom leading to conversations of possibility, grounded in an open and honest reality that acknowledges the potential and the constraints.

Dialogue is underpinned by distinct practices:

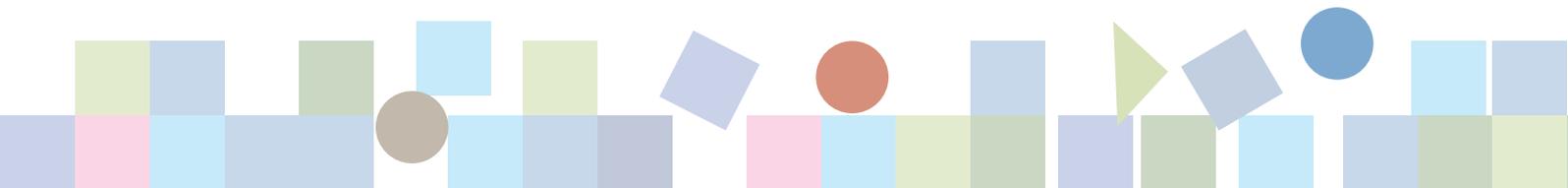
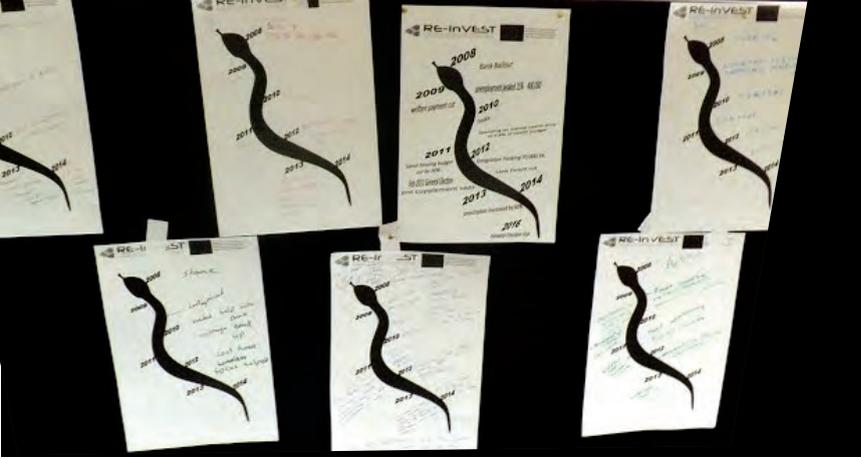
- Speaking one’s true voice and encouraging others to do the same.
- Deep, mindful, listening both within oneself and to others.
- Listening not just to what is said but to what is not said.
- Respecting others by listening to what they are saying, whether we agree or not.
- Acknowledging everyone has a legitimate reason for holding his/her viewpoint.
- Suspending our own reactions, opinions and the certainties that lie behind them, so that we can listen without judgment to that of others.
- Being mindful of the limiting assumptions we make in relation to others.

These practices enable us to understand how we act and behave in relationships with each other. Understanding our current culture of engagement allows us explore how it could be different into the future.

‘a way of really hearing what people think and feel in a space that is based on equality and that allows for different experiences of the same thing to be shared — I felt the shakeup of power just hearing what was about to happen and knew that whatever the outcome, this would be an event to remember for everyone who participated in it’

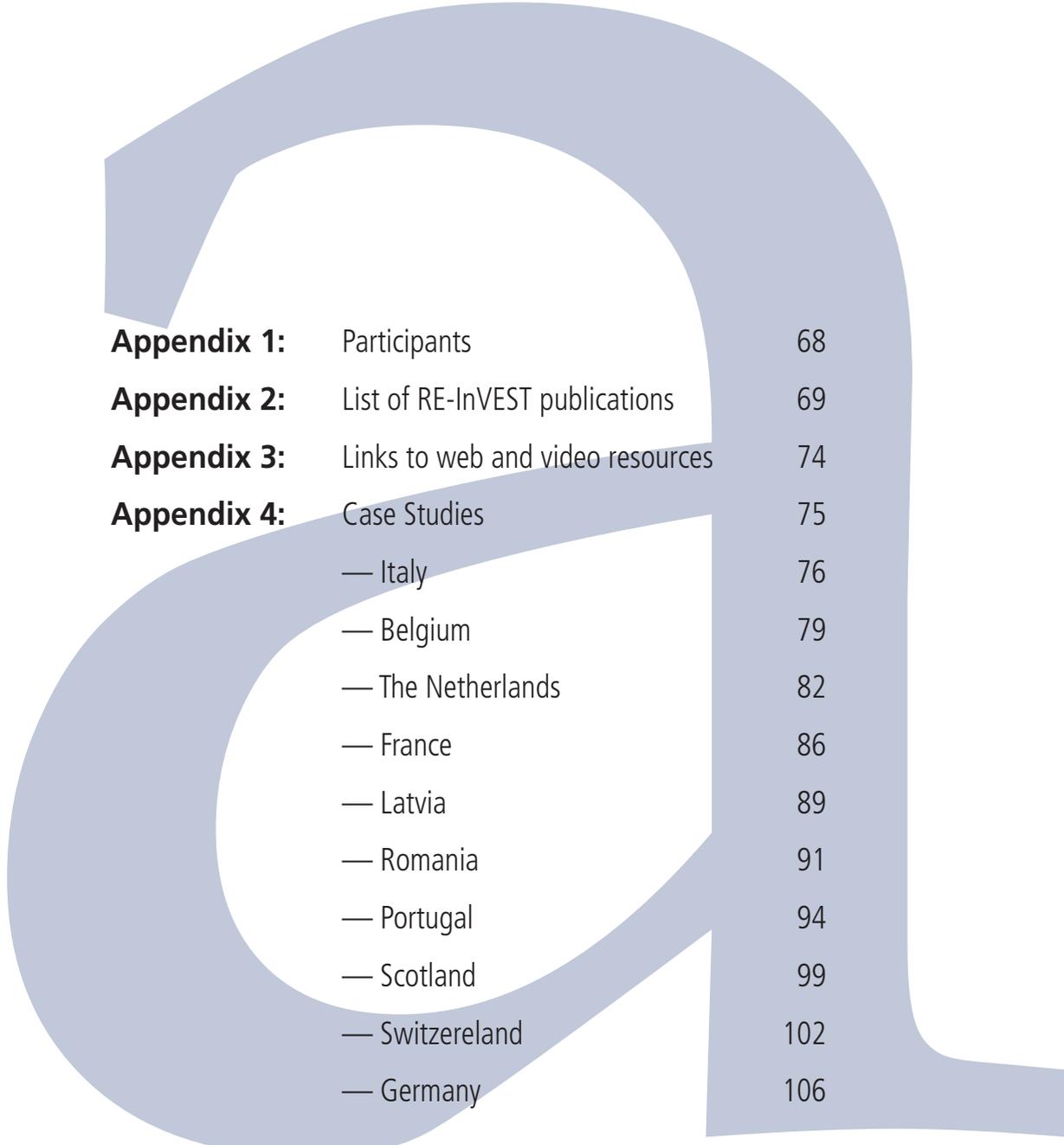
(Cecilia Forrester CAN, Ireland)

⁸ Community Action Network (Dublin), ATD Merging of Knowledge, Practice and Participation of Rights (Belfast).



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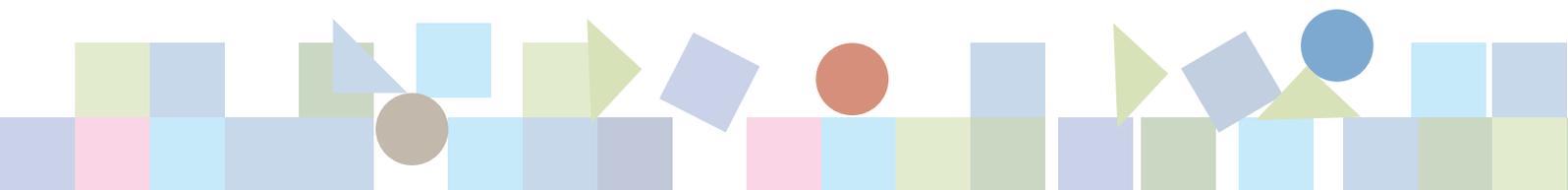
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APPENDICES

No	Participant organisation name (Short name – lead researcher)	email	Country
1	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KU Leuven – Ides Nicaise)	Ides.Nicaise@kuleuven.be	Belgium
2	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS – Robert Salais)	salaisrobert2@gmail.com	France
3	Soziologisches Forschungsinstitut Goettingen e.V. (SOFI – René Lehwiss-Litzmann)	rene.lehwess@sofi.uni-goettingen.de	Germany
4	Internationales Forschungszentrum für Soziale und Ethische Fragen (IFZ – Gunter Graf / Ortrud Lessmann)	ggraf@ifz-salzburg.at o.lessmann@web.de	Austria
5	Universite Catholique de Louvain (UCL – Jean De Munck)	demunck@anso.ucl.ac.be	Belgium
6	National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM – Mary Murphy)	Mary.P.Murphy@mu.ie	Ireland
7	Loughborough University (Loughborough University – Jeremy Leaman)	J.Leaman@lboro.ac.uk	United Kingdom
8	Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam (EUR – Mahmood Meskoub)	mahmood.meskoub@googlemail.com	Netherlands
9	Technische Universiteit Delft (TU Delft – Marja Elsinga)	M.G.Elsinga@tudelft.nl M.E.A.Haffner@tudelft.nl	Netherlands
10	Liverpool Hope University (Liverpool Hope University – Michael Lavalette)	lavalem@hope.ac.uk greenej@hope.ac.uk	United Kingdom
11	Institut de Recherche pour le Developpement (Jean-Luc Dubois)	jlucdubois@aol.com	France
12	Observatoire Social Européen asbl (Rita Baeten)	baeten@ose.be	Belgium
13	University of Geneva (Jean-Michel Bonvin)	Jean-Michel.Bonvin@unige.ch	Switzerland
14	Rigas Stradina Universitate (RSU – Tana Lace)	Tana.Lace@rsu.lv	Latvia
15	Beweging vzw (Michel Debruyne)	Michel.Debruyne@beweging.net	Belgium
16	EAPN Portugal (EAPN Portugal – Sandra Maria Lopes Mendes dos Santos)	sandra.araujo@eapn.pt	Portugal
17	Fundatia The Open Network for Community Development (Fundatia TON – Christina Chert)	chert_cristina@yahoo.com	Romania
18	The Poverty Alliance (The Poverty Alliance – Peter Kelly)	peter.kelly@povertyalliance.org	United Kingdom
19	Coordinamento Nazionale Comunità di Accoglienza (CNCA – Cinzia Brentari)	cinziabrentari@hotmail.com	Italy
20	Groupe de Recherche et de Réalisations pour le Développement Rural (GRDR)	rafael.ricardou@grdr.org	France

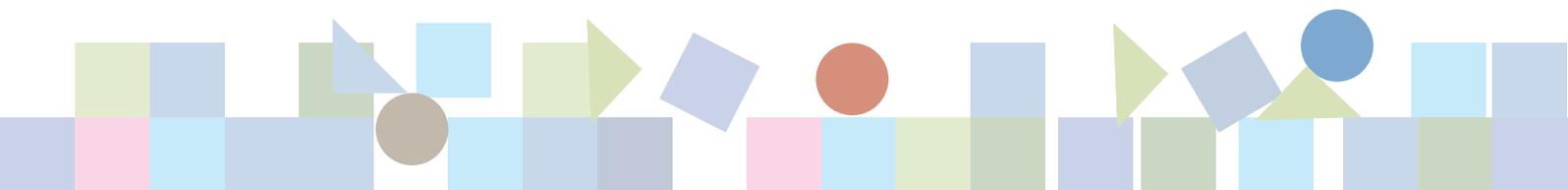
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D5.2 Lehweß-Litzmann, R., & Nicaise, I. (2018). Labour market policy spending in the EU: re assessment from a social investment perspective (RE-InVEST Working Paper Series D5.2). SOFI Göttingen/ HIVA-KU Leuven.	http://www.re-invest.eu/documents/reports
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D6.1 Van Lancker, A., Bircan, T., Nicaise, I., et al. (2018). Towards inclusive service delivery through social investment in Flanders. An analysis of five sectors, with a particular focus on water provision. Leuven: HIVA	http://www.re-invest.eu/documents/reports
D6.1 Rovere, A., Baeten, R., Messkoub, M., Murphy, M., Unver, O., & Haffner, M. (2018). Towards inclusive service delivery through social investment in Italy. An analysis five sectors with particular focus on health care.	http://www.re-invest.eu/documents/reports



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D6.1 McHardy, F. (2017). Towards inclusive service delivery through social investment in Scotland. An analysis of five sectors, with particular focus on financial services, Glasgow: Poverty Alliance.	http://www.re-invest.eu/documents/reports
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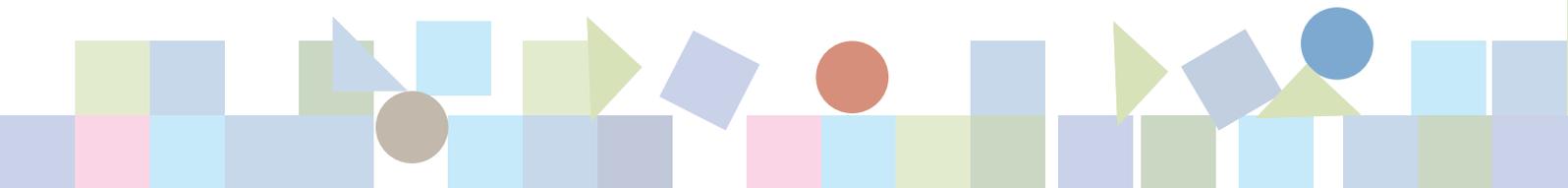
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Italy

Romania

Belgium

Portugal

The Netherlands

Scotland

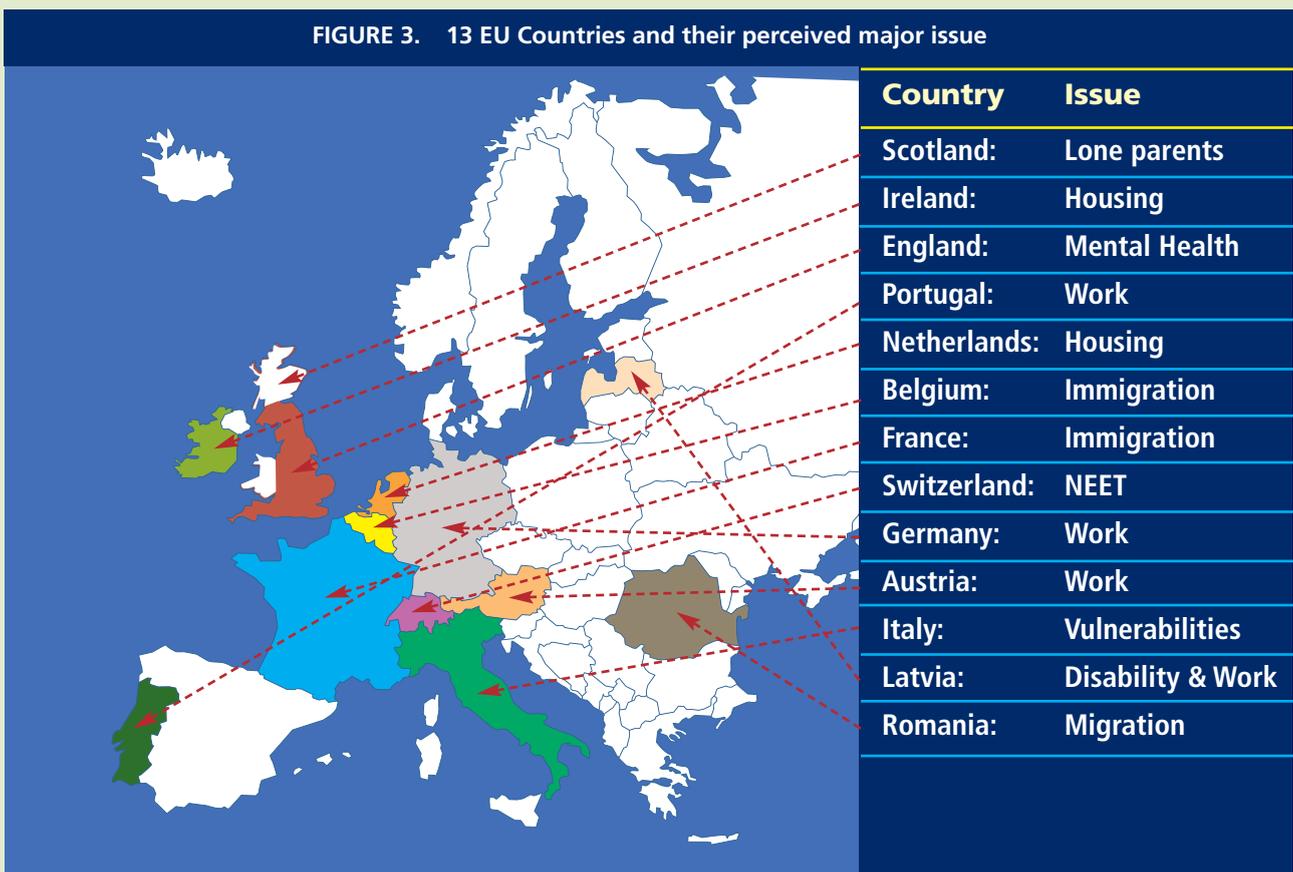
France

Switzerland

Latvia

Germany

FIGURE 3. 13 EU Countries and their perceived major issue



CASE STUDY:

Italy:

The case of people with health problems

Researchers:

Alberto Revero and participants in a housing shelter for vulnerable women



Emila lives in an NGO run women's housing shelter in northern Italy:

'In 2008, this crisis started by banks... also for me! [Laughs]. At that time they started to close the banks... So I was doing different jobs but one of these was in a cleaning company who worked in the banks. If we cleaned 4 or 5 banks I found myself to only work only in two... And consequently to the reduction of the work has lead to an initial reduction of economic opportunities [...] It is true that then luckily I did not just work on cleaning in the banks; I had other commitments as a caregiver and assistant to some families with elderly people and I cleaned the homes of some private ... so for a while I still managed. Of course it was not easy because it was a lot of commitment fragmented as time and I slept bad... this made me nervous and I suffered a lot.'

'Around 2009 I began to have difficulties in paying the rent. At that time I skipped some payments and began to realise that I could not pay the rent in a constant and continuous way. At the same time I found myself in trouble because I could not bring my son to study... he was struggling to find work and I wanted him to do a training. In the late 2009 and early 2010 I just began to tighten our belts. We begin to deprive us of so many things and have to save on primary commodities: food, clothing, heating consumption. I've never had so many things but in 2010 I started to go shopping at Caritas. In that period there were the first signs of a possible eviction from the house where we lived. The house owner started to be insistent on me having to pay the arrears and, though gently, she pressed me to return the debt to her. When I did not go to Caritas to procure food, I remember that sometimes I spent time to collect what was left at the end of the markets in the square or, more rarely, happened to take the second choice in the supermarket.'

'At that time the medications weren't paid by the National Health Services so I gave up taking them... I had a lot of thyroid problems which were going to add up to my depression. For my daughter, who is celiac, we could not afford to buy what she needed to eat without getting sick, at that time I could not buy food to suit her... she consequently did not eat much. In the same period we received clothing from Caritas.'

'Four or five years ago, however, I realised that even though I was sick, I could find work or pieces of work here and there, perhaps as a waitress or a few hours to clean some houses ... now I can't find even to clean the toilets as a volunteer... and if you think we are supposed to be living in a republic founded on work.'

PAHRCA STEPS (Continued)	
Step 1. Partnership with NGOs	Made contact with housing NGO in Alba , already an affiliate of the main NGO who was part of RE-InVEST
Step 2. Preliminary meet ups and meeting with participants	A group of participants emerged including a group of eight women aged between 25 and 52 years living in the area of Alba, in the Piedmont region and characterised by different psycho-social vulnerability factors including mental health, addiction, rehabilitation, migrants of Romanian nationality, with dependent children.
Step 3. Developmental and capacity building: human rights and capability approach	The first focus group aimed at getting to know the participants, encouraging a first analysis of the subjects of research; to stimulate mutual understanding, building compliance with the objectives of the research and a good group atmosphere. During the first meeting the meaning and objectives of the work were also discussed, the methodology was described but we also wanted to collect alternatives and methodological insights from the participants.
Step 4. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Inquiry — data gathering — analysis 	<p>At this stage the groups of women initially proposed to work together and to collect data by images, building collages from newspaper and magazines. After a group discussion, however, the choice to take pictures of situations related to their daily personal lives prevailed (photo-voice technique), in a way that shows to other people 'as we see it'.</p> <p>In the second focus group participants were asked to complete the model snake timeline exercise. The cards were then the subject of a group discussion, comparison and reflection about their own and others' past and current situation. At the end of the second meeting digital cameras were distributed for women to use for the photo project. The objectives and tasks of the photo-voice work were discussed.</p> <p>In the third focus group participants shared and discussed the photographs collected during the previous weeks, representing situations, facts, and events of their daily routines connected with the economic crisis. The images depict situations, themes, and daily problems as perceived through the eyes of the participants.</p>
Step 5. Undertake <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — voice — action — outcome 	<p>The last focus group, organised after the drafting of the report, aimed at discussing with participants the main results, sharing ideas, impressions and gathering their critical comments.</p> <p>Lessons: The importance of the participants deciding on the research methods. In this case the participants wanted to adopt a photo-voice.</p>

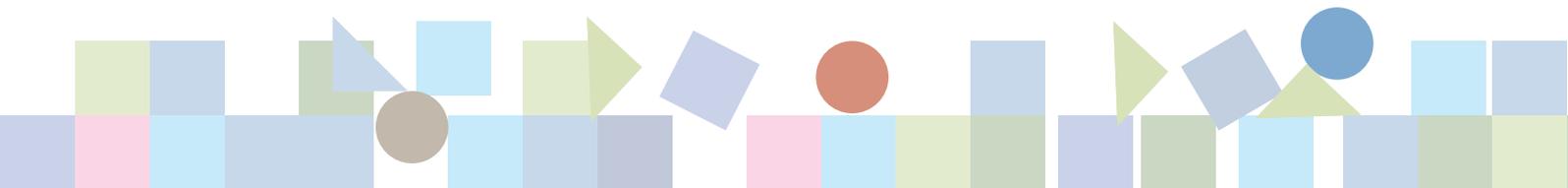
This is Rotoalba, the company's entrance closed. The company worked a lot, with many employees ... And this is something I've seen in just the last three or four years ... A lot of demonstrations, people dismissed, until they just closed ... Now to see this abandoned place it's a bit 'sad'; before there was always a bustle of people ... it was lively, there was the world inside it! Now it's all off, closed and abandoned. It's a pity because before there was a nice hedge, the entrance was well-groomed, in short, it was a pleasure to pass by, it gave you pleasure to look inside'



This is our bean soup, it is a little sad to see such an image ... and still good humor also depends on what you eat ... when you eat a meal like this for a few times you will see in the morning what kind of face when you wake up ... instead if you eat a steak or a nice amatriciana with a glass of wine or even a pizza or lasagna ... you feel in another way ... C1.43.FG2



'The picture of this wall gives the idea of degradation and the cost that you incur to rearrange it ... asking someone's help to fix a wall with moisture leakage is costly ...' M2.46.FG2.



CASE STUDY:

The case of newly arrived immigrants in Flanders

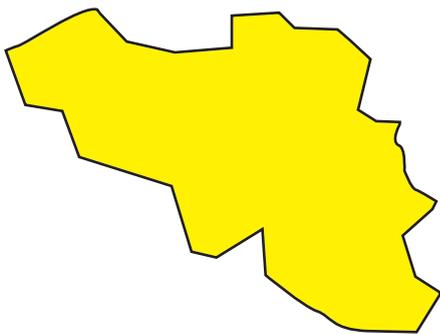
Researchers:

Sofie Put and Michel Debruyne

'Beweging vzw' researchers

Research participants/target group:

Migrants that have arrived in Belgium within the last 12 years. Their stories are about their struggle to integrate and to survive during their integration period.



Anna, a migrant living in Brussels

Anna doesn't feel discriminated.

"I follow my own path, I do what I have to do. I encounter friendly and un-friendly people. But that's the same in my own country".

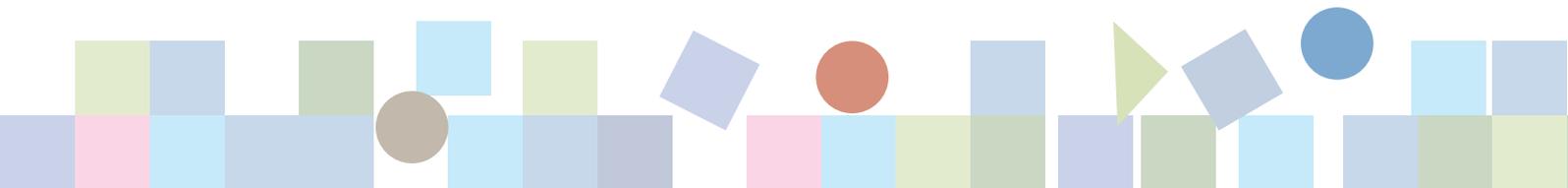
What has changed during the last years in Belgium? Life becomes harder: a lot of people are seeking a job and a good home and there aren't enough jobs and good houses available. She also points at the rising number of homeless people. Anna also mentions the rise of the gas and electricity cost.

"Life became so expensive that it is really hard to survive with only one family member having a job. Both parents need to go to work to survive now." She also fears the consequences for society after the Paris attacks. "People who do not believe in a democratic world, bode ill for all of us. This is for nobody a good and healthy situation".

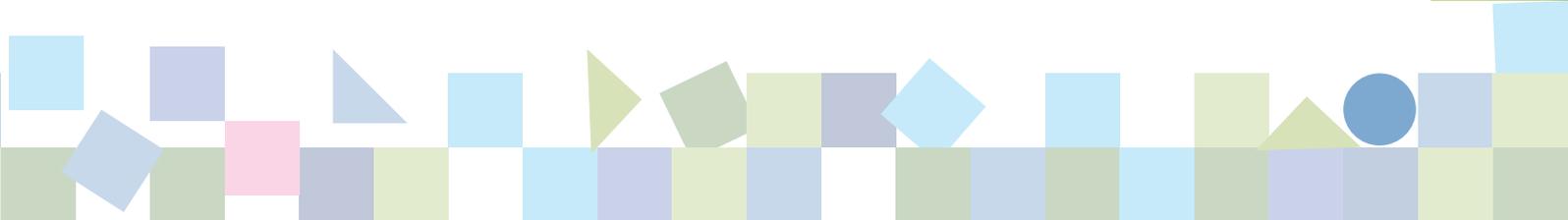
Our life has been practically devastated. The firm gone, house gone, livelihood gone, son has given up school and I have started from scratch.

"It is unfair, society wants me to integrate, which I did, but I do not get a fair chance."

PAHRCA STEPS	
Step 1. Partnership with NGOs	Contact with a social worker from the NGO involved
Step 2. Preliminary meet ups and meeting with participants	Social worker provider contact with an already established quite resilient focus group. The total number of participants involved was 15, and eleven were present during all sessions. Of the 15 participants nine were female. There was also a quite diverse range of nationality within the focus group: Cameroon, Iraq, Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Morocco, Russia. The main common characteristic was that all participants were involved in volunteering work.
Step 3. Developmental and capacity building: human rights and capability approach	<p>Trust building: NGO and social worker attended the first 2 group sessions</p> <p>Group work: During the period September 2015 to mid-February 2016, ten group sessions took place. Participants spontaneously started talking about their previous experiences with research projects and questionnaires. They stressed that they wanted more than just telling their story again. They wanted their situation to change. The project focused on themes participants wanted to discuss 'their rights', 'work', 'education' and 'social services' and focused on the process of policy making and policy recommendations. This was complemented with individual sessions on 'trust', 'well-being', 'future plans', 'the role of their children'.</p>
Step 4. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Inquiry — data gathering — analysis 	<p>The second phase of the research produced a report which was co-created with the peer-researchers. Our six peer researchers who were involved in the first stage wanted to remain associated to any further developments of the project. We organised a two-day training course on peer research and interview techniques and prepared together with them the research topic and interview questions. They selected and interviewed 18 job-seekers with a migratory background. The interviews are the result of a mix of the knowledge of the interviewees and the peer researchers. Afterwards, we interviewed other stakeholders and a more nuanced report was produced.</p> <p>First draft presented to the participants (including NGO) for feedback and amendments.</p>
Step 5. Undertake <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — voice — action — outcome 	<p>Participants will be invited to the final conference where their voice will also be heard.</p> <p>Action: Video: The migrants made a movie on the human rights of refugees as a result of being involved in the PAHRCA. The movie explains how they arrived and their experiences in Belgium. They</p>



PAHRCA STEPS (Continued)	
<p>Step 5. (Continued)</p> <p>Undertake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — voice — action — outcome 	<p>wanted to do it themselves. It is a very powerful video.</p> <p><i>A petition:</i> One of the requests of the participants was that their life stories would be heard and have a political impact. The participants wanted to speak on behalf of all those who are struggling to survive and fighting for integration. They made a petition as a plea to become true members of our society.</p> <p>Lesson: Reading their biographical story gave some of the participants' strength: "I realised that I am indeed making progress and that I can be proud of myself."</p> <p>Participants have noticed the development of a culture of distrust and discrimination. They are becoming little people. Little people are not heard, they have no voice. Participants are concerned about rising inequality and increasing visibility of poverty. However, they also ask to invest in little people, because they want to be part of the Belgian society: "We wanted to be a part of this society, so give us a chance to be part of it". They don't want to use the word 'poverty' to describe their situation. They feel that, should they start using this word, it would only add to their misery. It adds to the precarity of their existence. They are very poor indeed, but refuse to admit it. 'We don't want to use a negative word to describe our situation, and using the word 'poverty' is depressing, it plunges us even deeper into our misery.'</p>

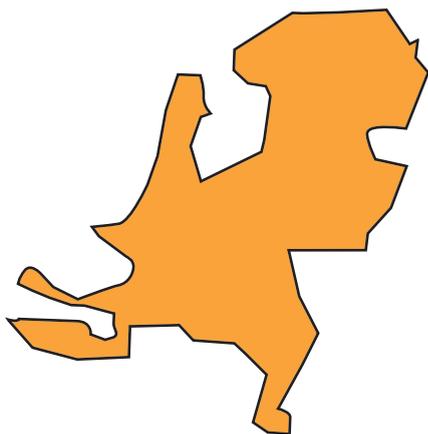


CASE STUDY:

The case of households in the Netherlands that have difficulties with making ends meet

Researchers:

Marietta Haffner, Gust Mariën
and Marja Elsinga



Marco a migrant with third level education living in the Netherlands describes his experience with the labour market institutions:

'You have to sign a contract that includes the following statements: I will generally apply for five jobs every week; I am available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week if they call me - you have to sign to confirm that - and other similar requirements, but I've never seen them refer to a particular legal statute to show that this is a lawful approach.' 'So I wasn't properly informed, but I either had to sign the contract or I would not receive any welfare payments. So effectively you are forced to sign under duress: there is no option of not signing. And if you decide to argue you'll have problems with your client manager, and it is the client manager who decides whether you will be punished or not; it's better to keep in your client manager's good books. He can punish you by reducing or stopping your benefits.'

...And then there are the letters you get: "A contract is a contract!" They write you some really threatening letters. 'There is never a signature on those letters, or sometimes just the digital signature of the corporate director. So I don't know who writes those letters or who is responsible. But I do wonder - does the manager know what kinds of letters are being sent out? And who is actually in charge there anyway? Is it the manager or is it the ordinary people in the departments who decide what happens?' ... and the computer signature: Does he know that his signature is being used for letters like that? Has he ever read this letter and approved it? Because if he hasn't, is that not a violation of standard legal procedures?'

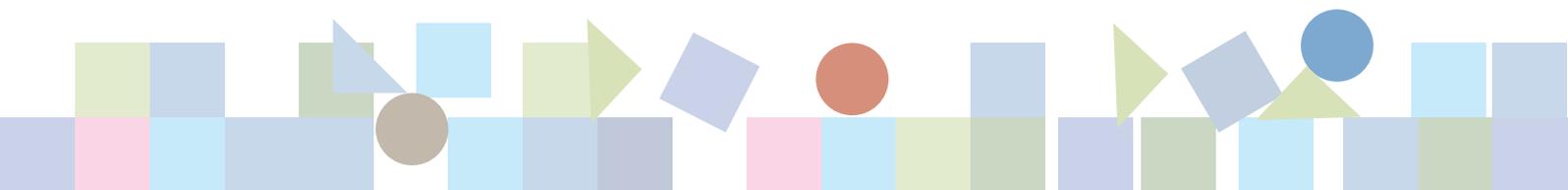
This is our challenge, for all of us. We must not accept no, but be creative in order to get your way! .. 'it is important that you organize together nice and inspiring sessions to inform each other about what you know collectively ... what works in practice, which errors did you make, what did you learn from ...'.

PAHRCA STEPS	
	Make contact with social housing landlord in Rotterdam
Step 2. Preliminary meet ups and meeting with participants	<p>Recruit participants with experiential knowledge, contact (by e-mail) tenants who were or had been active in resident participation.</p> <p>Second NGO, a local poverty network also helped us to find participants from their own members.</p> <p>Ten people participated, most had difficulty with making ends meet and to prepare individuals interviews were had with each person. Two biographical narratives were conducted with the snake as guiding time line.</p>
Step 3. Developmental and capacity building: human rights and capability approach	<p>Three meetings with the focus group were then held in the period December 2015 to March 2016. The first discussed the project objectives and the focus group meetings, as well as the code of conduct and some initial reflection on financial precarity and crisis. In the second and third meeting two groups discussed the criteria to be met that we have defined for a decent (good) life. We used Vizard and Burchardt (2007) as modified for RE-InVEST and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) to develop examples of criteria to be met for a decent life or a life with human dignity (see the list in Table 4 below).</p>
Step 4. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Inquiry — data gathering — analysis 	<p>All participants read the (longer) Dutch report to verify that it correctly described their input in this research project.</p> <p>Six participants (3 males, 3 females) continued to work to provide their experiential knowledge and one new participant (male) from the poverty network joined in the second phase of the research. Two meetings took place in March and April 2017 to discuss housing policies, how housing is organized, how the group evaluated the organisation of the housing provision, the city's strategy and affordability of housing, and how one could be active in the provision of one's own housing. In the first meeting of phase two, the participants discussed the three core human roles as developed by Bonvin and Laruffa (2017) in a rights and capability approach (Table 1) from the point of view of affordable housing.</p>
Step 5. Undertake <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — voice — action — outcome 	<p>Action: For the second meeting of phase two, the topic was affordable housing. The seven participants actively discussed this topic with the three representatives from political parties and local government and the three representatives of social rental housing providers. The group split into three groups each consisting of participants from each actors. Each group analysed the situation on the housing market from the point of view of the occupier of the dwelling, the social rental housing provider and the local government, respectively. The main question was: How can we achieve an effective right to housing? Participants shared their experiences on life in a precarious financial situation. During the meetings the participants offered each other help and exchanged tips. For example, cooperation with the neighbours to influence the policies of social landlords was considered necessary to enforce a legally enforceable right to adequate housing. Barter (I help you, if you help me) and or charity (I help you) in repairing or maintaining the dwelling were also given as examples.</p>

TABLE 4: Criteria for a 'decent' life

Criteria	Examples (to be considered based on vulnerable financial situations)
Adequate standard of living	My standard of living, including food and clothing, is adequate for me (and my family), as well as the access to social security/support, if needed, and especially, if there are dependent children in the household
Adequate standard of housing	My standard of housing is adequate for me (and my family), as well as the access to social security/support (housing allowances), if needed, and especially, if there are dependent children in the household
Education and learning	I am able to access education and (to keep) learning
Productive and valued activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I undertake productive and valued activities – I work in just and favourable conditions, including a fair remuneration, a fair treatment during pregnancy and a healthy and safe place to work
Individual, family and social life	I am able to influence my situation, the situation of my family and my social life
Participation, influence and voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I am able to have influence and voice by participating in the decision making of the society – As has my neighbour, I have equal access to public services, including infrastructure and services by the municipality
Health	I achieve the highest possible standard of physical and mental health
Legal security	I am equally being protected, as is my neighbour, by rules and laws
Identity, expression and self-respect	I have an identity of my own and I can express myself, if necessary, and I have self-respect
Bodily integrity	I have no fear that I will undergo individual or collective violence. Violence is described as a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment
Life	I find life worthwhile (the limitation are not such that ...) I will reach the 'normal' lifespan, because I do not have a bigger chance to be ill, neglected or injured

Source: RE-InVEST draft Methodological Toolkit (2015: 14), elaboration of Vizard and Burchardt (2007), own elaboration



Impact/Empowerment

- Creating understanding for each other's situation, participants helping each other with suggestions, tips etc. and participants sharing 'solutions', how to help oneself and each other
- Co-organising the meeting to present results to other actors (municipality, social landlord, etc.)
- One of the NGOs -the poverty network- was also active with its members as RE-InVEST-participants; they remain active in the poverty network and will have taken on board the useful elements of the RE-InVEST project
- In practice, the network has had impact as it has taken on a role in finding solutions for individual cases of harshness. The poverty organisation itself has had to step in and provide help
- Participants observed that it is often difficult to activate people in the face of the power of the establishment. Those in power would hamper initiatives; it looked like *'rules and the like are in place in order to lie to the citizen'*. To circumvent those in power that often are attributed *'too much power'*, participants should act themselves through self-organisation, this is especially important for the young generation.
- The *'right to challenge'* was discussed in various variations: Challenge the landlord, the government or the energy company to do tasks more cost-effectively; trade-off of service tasks (cleaning the hallway) (not popular) or repairs and rent/service costs. In the latter case one can do this together with neighbours, helping each other or exchange help or goods via barter, or bring together people who can and people who do (short: *'Can? Do!'*).
- Furthermore, participants offered the following 'do-it-yourself' housing options: These examples show that in order to realize a broadening of the capability set, an individual often needs to find 'partners'. These partners could either be the like-minded individuals, the (social) landlord, social organizations, facilitating and/or supporting local government (rules, regulations, financial support, social work, etc.). This type of cooperation is encompassed by the concept of collective agency.

CASE STUDY:

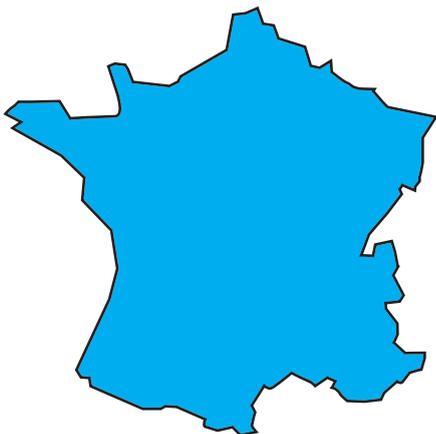
The case of West African women living in poor areas of Paris and its suburbs

Researchers:

J-L Dubois, I. Droy, R. Ricardou

Research location:

Seine Saint Denis department in the town of Aubervilliers, a marginalized suburb of Paris.



Awa is a Malian woman who was born in Mali around 1975. She grew up in Bamako, until she was 18 years old when she worked as a street trader and left Mali with a touristic visa to stay in France at her sister's home.

'I did not want to create problems with my sister, for she is my half-sister. With this problem, if I raised the issue in Africa, everyone would be against me (...). Actually, it is better that people in Africa should not hear about our troubles here.'

'I want a place to sleep, I can work, I have two hands and two feet, I am never sick. I only want a place to sleep with my daughter'. She got an open-minded spirit from this difficult experience: 'I made friends with many people because before I have lived in social welfare homes, in several flats, usually as colocation. It makes ideas exchange, and you can discover people as well and they know more about you too.'

'I don't want to work in hotels until retirement. I want to change profession and work with children on language learning and training. My problem is that I know how to write but I cannot read. Before, I followed several trainings with associations which provided me French classes, but I need more time for learning.' 'In my work, one needs to read and write. They could fire me, because they need literate people. My job is not secure despite my permanent contract.' However, she tries to help her surrounding by exploiting her social network.

Then, she got involved in the creation of the AVISA association, which aims at generating relationships between people through several activities such as women's alphabetisation and homework support for school children.

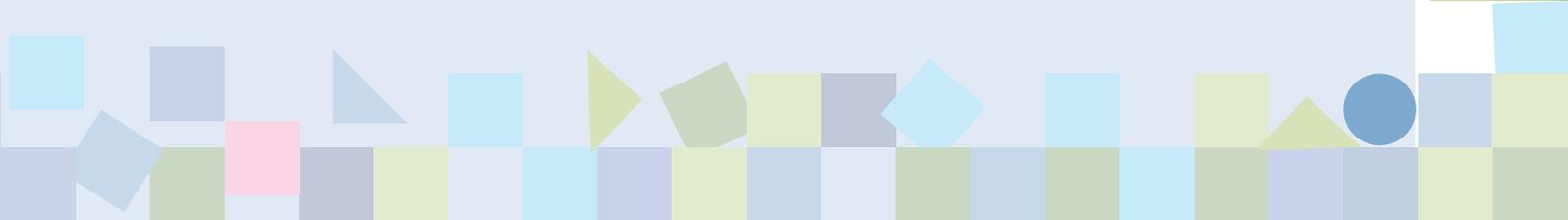
'Another purpose of the association is to create relationships between the parents of the school children. If you know them, you can speak to them. It makes things change. If the children have nothing to do, they drift (...). That's why we have created this association, to move a little ahead altogether. One could see that many things happen.' 'I think that the foreigners suffer more

than the French people here. The French kids and the foreign kids do not receive the same education.'

'Even though we could not respect your culture 100%, we really would like to fit in, starting by knowing how to read and write in French.'

“what is important is to make people participate and empowerment and make them understand public policies – and we need to rethink social policies aiming at migrant policies – need to review them – go back to public policy and to fight against discrimination and racism – and promote equality of opportunity and rights”GRDR

PAHRCA STEPS	
<p>Step 1.</p> <p>Partnership with NGOs</p>	<p>Connect with city hall (via social services) of the town Aubervilliers who recommended the NGO AVISA, which was recently created by migrant women from sub-Saharan Africa.</p>
<p>Step 2.</p> <p>Preliminary meet ups and meeting with participants</p>	<p>Three meetings with the members of the association AVISA in order to explain the objectives of the RE-InVEST project, then to talk about the main problems that they are facing, particularly since the 2008 crisis, and to have them express their own aspirations. We then understood issues specific to the members of this group</p> <p>Bring in GRDR (NGO with supportive activities aim at promoting capacity building programs for the migrant population in the Ile-de-France region)</p>
<p>Step 3.</p> <p>Developmental and capacity building: human rights and capability approach</p>	<p>GRDR support interactive meetings with several immigrant women associations to reinforce linkages and exchange of experience between them. Phase 2 worked with GRDR's social workers involved in the implementation of youth initiative.</p>
<p>Step 4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Inquiry — data gathering — analysis 	<p>Data collection methods focused on use of a snake time line & biographical story telling. The snake method was a fun technique which attracted people and made exchange easier</p> <p>Getting GRDR involved was an excellent idea and helped a lot to reach vulnerable people. GRDR reinforcing collective capability and agency, accompany people to meetings with the experts, working with women enabling them to re-engage with social network.</p>
<p>Step 5.</p> <p>Undertake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — voice — action — outcome 	<p>Action GRDR organised in January 2018 a public event named Forum « Dynamiques associatives des Femmes immigrées » (Collective Dynamics of women migrant associations”, in Aubervilliers. It gathered 10 associations created by women immigrant from Africa (including Avisia) on various themes. It was an opportunity for them to mix together and exchange practices, problems. In the public, there were Town hall representatives and social actors.</p>

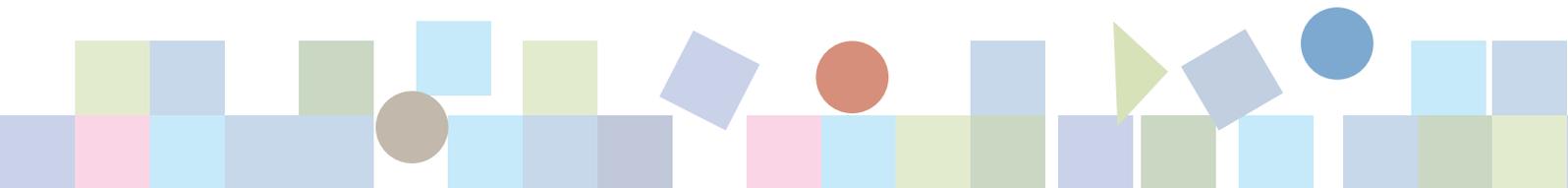


Impact / Empowerment

- 3 days of reflection and debate are part of this process of the public event where people went to City Hall and claimed their rights to developing their capabilities with city administration
- Process enabled participants talk about and analyse their history, they spoke about their results at the forum
- The PAHRCA process contributed to raise the people's consciousness about what could be done in the current complex situations; it helps to achieve political participation and the possibility of new contacts - it is a change in their positioning in society
- Improved well-being in some particular domains (education and knowledge).
- GRDR social workers were very interested by the process and found it useful for their work
- Discourse and textual analysis (software, Alceste) brought new insights
- New knowledge generation: – gave us new insights – the work gives more explanation and comprehension of the difficulties of the NEET in marginalized suburbs

Lessons

- The snake method was a fun technique which attracted people and made exchange easier
- Getting GRDR involved was an excellent idea and helped a lot to reach vulnerable people. GRDR reinforcing collective capability and agency, accompany people to meetings with the experts, working with women enabling them to re-engage with social network.
- The role of women NGOs and the activities that they organise and manage is the best way to overcome the difficulties, often with the help of municipalities who once contacted proved quite active towards vulnerable groups.
- Important way for academics to engage out with society, useful way to test methodologies in the field – for social workers and researchers
- Challenges to participation literacy non-French language speakers. Time constraints of workload and family care charge made it hard to undertake new commitments such as peer research.
- Improving their individual capabilities (training) requires enormous effort to do this – attending meetings – time with children etc.
- With the marginalised young people, It was quite difficult to keep a stable group of young NEET; this is linked to their current situation (family, social relationships, lack of training etc.) – trusting relationships were hard to set up between GRDR's social workers in a short time.



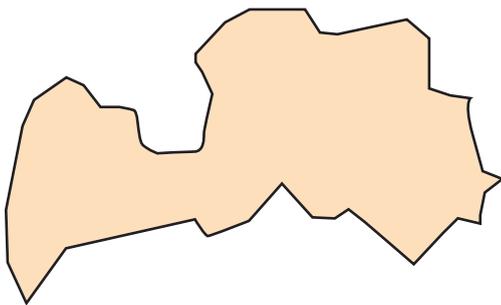
CASE STUDY:

The case of people with disabilities in Latvia

Researcher:
Tanya Lace

Participant group:

Persons with disabilities are one of the social exclusion risk groups in Latvia whose risk is very significantly influenced by employment and education problems as well as accessibility of health care services and the current social protection measures.



Rita who having worked all her life lost her job and then got ill, here she recounts her frustration with government rules

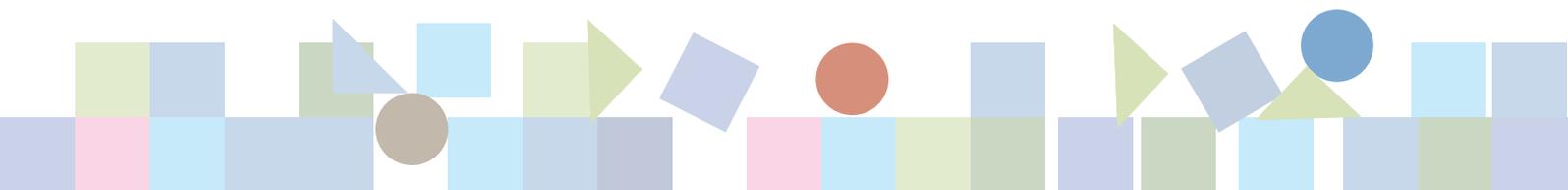
‘Everybody was laid off “according to the law” – everybody got an advance notice, everybody was given a document to sign a month in advance. The law provided that in the event of liquidation employees with a long in-service time were to receive three monthly salaries.’

‘Then after a few years I got ill and we started to look for places where to get the required medical examinations. Other people helped, I got on the waiting list in several places – wherever I could get first. I paid for consultations. I had magnetic resonance in Riga Hospital No.1; it was the most expensive examination, about 140 Euros.’

‘Last time when I went to have the ultra sonographic examination I was harshly reprimanded that I was standing at the counter for the disabled. I said I have Group I disability and got the answer that it was for those in wheelchairs that I had to get into the regular queue.’

‘At the time when I could neither sit nor stand, I as a person with Group I disability could not park my car in the parking lot for the disabled. Can you imagine what these laws are like? It is allowed only for those with motoric disorders or impaired eyesight and it is forbidden for the rest, if it is not respected – then you pay the large fine like everybody else. You must not park there! Nerdist!’

PAHRCA STEPS	
Step 1. Partnership with NGOs	Academic researchers selected and contacted two NGO's (the Latvian people with special needs co-operation organisation "SUSTENTO" and the organisation "Zvaigzne", an organisation for women with disabilities located in Jelgava, a city not far from Latvia's capital Riga).
Step 2. Preliminary meet ups and meeting with participants	SUSTENTO recommend individuals with disabilities for in-depth interviews. Interviews and group discussions were also undertaken with the participants of Zvaigzne".
Step 3. Developmental and capacity building: human rights and capability approach	From September 2015 till April 2016 we organised 5 group sessions. The total number of participants involved was 16. The first meeting discussed some theoretical concepts simplifying them to bring them closer to daily life.
Step 4. — Inquiry — data gathering — analysis	A later meeting focused on how rights might be guaranteed by the society or the state. In the case of the disabled we pay attention to their "right" to universal human rights, services and preferential treatments that are guaranteed for this group only. The participants feel that inequality during the crisis has increased: between the political elite and ordinary people. Their rights are not granted, they have to fight for each right. Experience of people with disabilities shows that it is essential to fight for their rights and also to know them, otherwise they are not implemented in Latvia situation.
Step 5. Undertake — voice — action — outcome	The Latvian research was successful in initiating contact with policy and parliamentary actors and over time in aspects of the lessons from the case filtered into policy change.



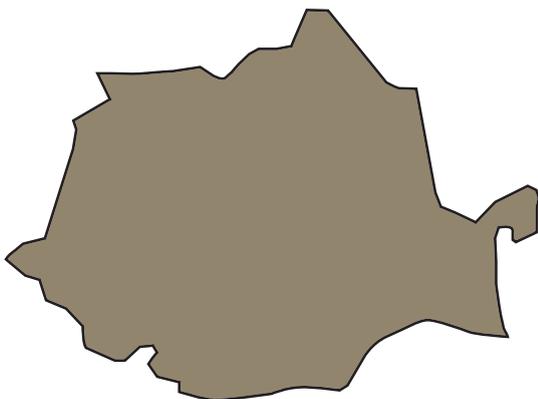
CASE STUDY:

The case of the Romanian diaspora

Researchers:

Patrick Van Nienwenhof
and Cristina Cert

and project participants and NGO Open Network for community development (TON) Romanian umbrella organization, which gathers local women, men and youth movements and stimulates the creation of social medical centres, stimulates social economy initiatives and involves citizens in local decisions



C. R. was born in 1977 and lived for 20 years in Berbești:

“Because I lost my job in 1996, I was looking for new possibilities. These I couldn’t find in Berbești or in the region because of the restructuring of the total mine industry. In that time we heard that Greece was in a deep need for low skilled labour. More specifically, workers are needed in constructions, in agriculture for collecting olives and oranges, as well as in restaurants. In other words, it needed low skilled people.

In 1996 I left Berbești together with a group from our region, not exactly knowing what would come but with a hope for a better future. Some parts of the way to Greece we did by feet others by train or car. We went by train through the former Yugoslavia to Macedonia (FYROM). We got off the train 5 or 6 stops before the customs point. It was quite far from the border, the closer one got to it, the more frequent the control was. We crossed the border in Macedonia and then we took a taxi to the Greek borderline. The taxi drivers were very nice and they showed us how to go from there. We got here illegally. It was me who came first, then my wife in 1999. After a bit more than one week I arrived to my destination, a small village near Thessaloniki.”

Immigrants who came to Greece before 1998 legitimized their stay owing to the presidential decrees of 1997 which inaugurated the first regularization programme, or within the framework of the second regularization program, under law 2910/2001. It appears that the initiative of ‘doing their papers’ belonged to the immigrants and that there were instances in which the employed immigrants were supported by their employers with the necessary procedures. This was for C. R. certainly not the case during the first years of his stay in Greece:

“We were perceived as slaves. We had to work in the orange garden without contract and not

being sure that we were getting paid. The owner instead of paying for our work was putting the police on us as if we were thieves. Living in a house without a decent roof and the risk to be captured by the police was our life during the first 2 years.

In 1998 things started to change, finally I could start working for a good manager, he protected us from the police but still we had to work without papers. One year later my wife was coming to Greece. Our living conditions didn't improve: living with 25 persons in the same house, daily work agreements and depending on seasonal work. Only in 2002 we arranged our papers, but the man who was helping with the papers was asking to work for him for free as a compensation for his help.

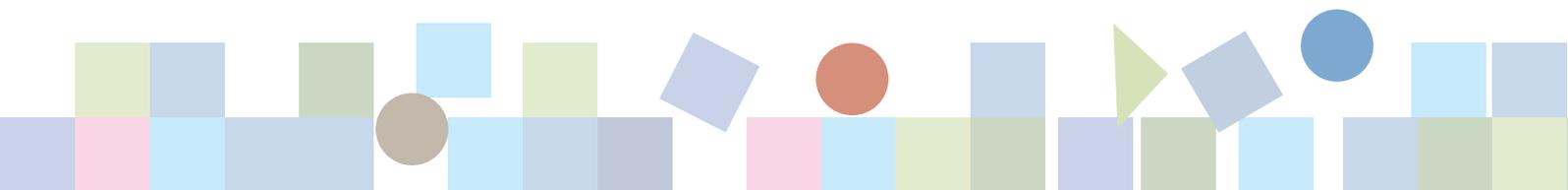
Almost in the same period Greek banks were offering credits. It was very easy to get a loan, because the only thing needed was an identity card. We took a loan in order to buy a small house. In 2006 my wife got pregnant and in 2007 our son R. was born. During this period my wife couldn't work officially and took some bad paid jobs as a cleaner or housekeeper. All of this on the black market, so she was working without papers. And the child allowance was only 80 euro a year.

On top of this the crisis affected Greece very hard: loss of jobs, more hours for less money... During these times our problems started to pay back the loan to the bank. After doing some smaller jobs, we decided to go back to Romania in 2013. But also here troubles were growing in Romania: we experienced difficulties to reintegrate in our 'own' home place. Certainly our son had difficulties in the school to be accepted by other children.

By the end of 2015 I was engaged by Govora, the mine company, but they paid only on an irregular base my salary. So I couldn't keep this job. And still our loan needs to be paid back in Greece.

We don't see many possibilities anymore for the future: our son needs to go to school and our grandmother is very ill and needs personal assistance. But we don't have resources to help our own family."

The day after this interview (April 3 2016) the couple left Romania again for Greece to find a solution for their financial duties in Greece, leaving their son and their grandmother behind with no knowledge of when they can return to Romania.



PAHRCA STEPS	
Step 1. Partnership with NGOs	Academic researcher selected and contacted Identify with the NGO, TON, to identify and then network with two communities with a strong migrating history and population, namely Dumitresti (village) and Berbe ti (city).
Step 2. Preliminary meet ups and meeting with participants	SUSTENTO recommend individuals with disabilities for in-depth interviews. Interviews and group discussions were also undertaken with the participants of Zvaigzne". The snake method was used successfully to develop trust and get to know the participants.
Step 3. Developmental and capacity building: human rights and capability approach	Three focus groups involving internal migrants and returnees alongside people from local authorities and civil society
Step 4. — Inquiry — data gathering — analysis	A number of persons were selected for an in-depth interview for personal testimonies about migration.
Step 5. Undertake — voice — action — outcome	A public meeting of key policy actors and NGOs as well as RE-InVEST participants was held in Iasi in November 2017 where key policy was discussed and proposals for change developed.

CASE STUDY:

The case of working with young unemployed people in Portugal

Researcher:
Graça Costa

Participants:
young unemployed people, in search of a first job



B. a young unemployed person describes their interaction with:

'I went this morning to know my situation, if everything was all right...if there was any labour supply...The employment servant simply said 'Go to the website and see'. It is the second time they gave me the same answer.'

'I can apply for the social insertion income in March. Before that I can't have it because I have received unemployment benefits, so I am not entitled to receive it. They ask for last three months bank account... She tried different sorts to get financial support: I resorted to banks, friends, acquaintances and family. All refused. I ask for food assistance in social canteens. They just gave me an option: go to the social canteen if I want it! (...) I'll get lunch and dinner every day, at the time they want, and the food most of the time is cold. The food containers (...) spoiled... and I don't have microwave to heat the food and it goes like ice cold for the 'little mouth...'

'If we use the heater then the electricity bill is expensive. The washing machine is from the landlady and is broken. And she won't fix it. I do the laundry in the tank by hand. The landlady has to do works on the roof... but she doesn't want to do anything (...) and when it rains, it rains inside the house.'

My father left me when I was only two months... never supported me. He is abroad I don't know anything about him. I'm his daughter and I went to court a few years ago to have some financial allowance. Regarding to family support she pointed out the fact of being victim of domestic violence: If I tell my story, you stay open-mouthed. The mother who beats her own daughter... I let it happen twice, the third... I did not let her do it again and I slammed against the wall, with my grandmother watching... I called the police.

'(...) Because of that (domestic violence), last year I had two depressions one after another and the doctor says if I stay like that I'm going to have another one. I take four different pills per day. If weren't my friends... With my mother not so much, we had our peaks. But now friends, that's why I like to play arrows...'

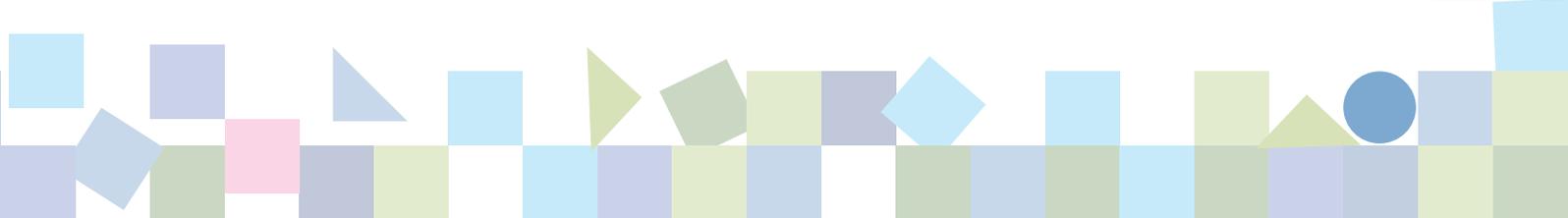
'My boyfriend is trying to get health care for free. And we can't benefit from any of that. You don't have no rights to social security, employment centre, has nothing... I also go to Syria (...) and then I come back... Why don't they go to the richest countries nearby? They have no crises... it has small crises... If I have 5 or 10 thousand euros for a trip to Greece... they have more money than us.'

'I think that it's more important than having someone here to talk about what our rights are ... it would be much better to happen but there will be no changes soon in my opinion... More than that, it would be more useful if someone give us tools to deal with the current society...'

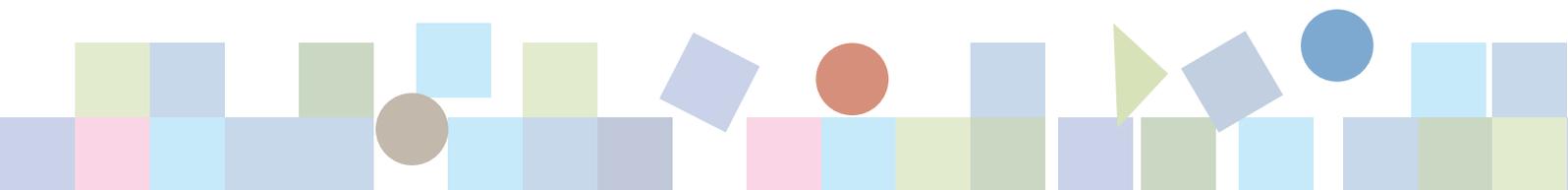


PAHRCA STEPS

<p>Step 1. Partnership with NGOs</p>	<p>Contact with The 'Youth Association of Urban Echoes' (Associação de Jovens Ecos Urbanos) was the NGO gatekeeper, a grassroots organisation which works with young people in poverty and social exclusion and is a member of EAPN Portugal. The first contact with the NGO was established by phone and e-mail with executive director to explain the aims of the project; the activities to be undertaken; the timetable and profile group to be involved.</p>
<p>Step 2. Preliminary meet ups and meeting with participants</p>	<p>NGO provided a list of 10 participants, each was contacted to confirm his/her interest in the project</p> <p>In November of 2015 three meetings were held at Ecos Urbanos office in order to have the group formed. In the first meeting only three females attended, in the second meeting 7 young people participated and the third meeting was attended by 10 persons.</p> <p>During the first meeting the aim of the project was presented, after the participants had introduced themselves. Furthermore, the principles of participation were discussed, namely the guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity during all the research stages. Participants filled in an applicant form which stated the confidentiality of data collected. Participants also consented to record the sessions. Last, but not least, as a first approach to freely debated youth unemployment, each of the participants made a drawing about the impacts of unemployment (feelings, attitudes, consequences) on their lives, and shared its meanings.</p>

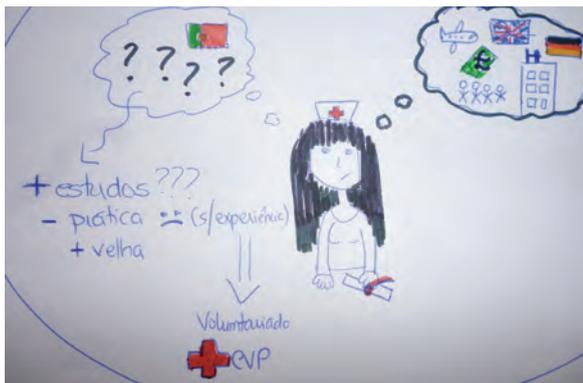


PAHRCA STEPS	
<p>Step 3.</p> <p>Developmental and capacity building: human rights and capability approach</p>	<p>Meeting No 2 took place with 7 new persons (who met during lunch time which created a good atmosphere) to whom we briefly explained the aims of the project. In the meeting we started with a dynamic introduction of the participants (ice-break) and proceeded with the drawing methodology and the Snake exercise at individual and at collective level. In the former, it worked as a crucial instrument to identify chronological most important life events since the starting of the economic crisis and how affects individual, family and friends lives. Each participant reflect upon the most relevant events and why. At same time it was developed a collective snake exercise after being shared the most significant austerity measures in Troika period taken by government and to what extend it was linked to each particular events.</p> <p>Meeting No 3 allowed for the ten new participants to meet informally during lunchtime 'Freehand Drawing' enabled participants to express visually their present constraints and future challenges about being unemployed through image interpretation and discussion, and encouraged a reflexive engagement to generate alternative perspectives.</p>
<p>Step 4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Inquiry — data gathering — analysis 	<p>Four more group meetings with ten participants that took place in November, December 2015 and January 2016 with the aim to implement the developmental human rights and capability approach and inquiry/data gathering.</p> <p>A steering committee was set up and composed of two members of the focus group, one researcher and the executive director of 'Youth Association of Urban Echoes'. They met in May 2016 main findings of the present report.</p>
<p>Step 5.</p> <p>Undertake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — voice — action — outcome 	<p>Action</p> <p>A public event was held with national MPs in Lisbon about the social impacts of economic crisis in young unemployed people as well as an informative session about the Youth Guarantee by local PES staff and the CLDS employee. There was a stimulating direct dialogue with job centre staff and CLDS programme responsible for the employment dimension, questioning the special requirements for each particular situation. Afterwards young people debated and reflect about the adequacy of the measures to their profiles – without the presence of professional staff.</p>



Impact/Empowerment

- Vulnerable people not usually heard made their voices heard.
- Young people started to see each other as part of neighbourhood which did not happen before;
- Young people gathered a sense of identity as a group who participated in RE-InVEST project during different meetings and also in more informal moments during lunch time Gradually they get interested to create an association to perform recreational and sport activities the ones they like most like dancing



Lessons

- Drawings were very effective to translate the impact and consequences of unemployment in young people lives in different well-being dimensions.
- Meetings (and particularly more informal moments like lunch time) and focus groups promote dialogue and reflection about sense of identity, a voice of vulnerable and recommendations.
- Dialogue begins with the first contact before the “formal” meetings started, in ways people are introduced and how they are welcome and respected to share their knowledge and experience about poverty. Dialogue is present during all the participatory process, by putting the emphasis on responsibility to make recommendations and develop ways of distributing power in order to enhance a transformative learning.
- When a new group is formed it is imperative to create trust and an emphatic atmosphere to allow vulnerable people to talk about their experiences, without feeling that they are being judged and take a step forward to shape new ways of thinking and identity.
- The knowledge generation was achieved through participation – this is a key step – the next step, action (or what to do with that knowledge), is harder - participation, agency
- Social workers identified a range of barriers to participating in projects including no transport to come to the meetings, they also noted that role of social work could not be empowering people to fight for their rights because political local authorities would not support and finance families at a poor neighbourhood.

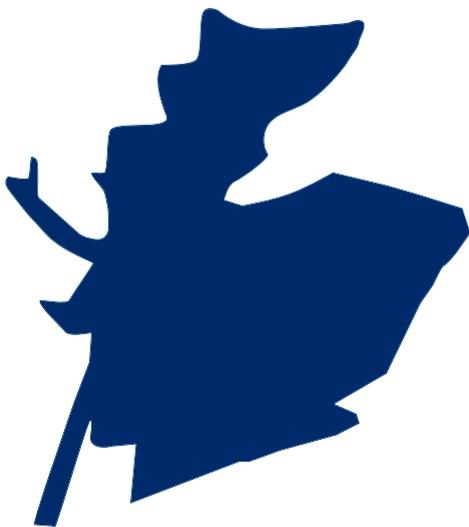
CASE STUDY:

The case of lone parents in Scotland

Researchers:
Fiona McHardy

Participant Group:

Single parents, and had a range of different experiences including mental ill health, unemployment, low waged employment, housing problems, caring responsibilities



Lucy a lone parent with two children one of them ill:

'When I moved into temporary accommodation – that turned into a long convoluted process with DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) and housing. Obviously with a European passport [non UK], it was difficult to get things done. I was getting letters from the school to say that the kids weren't at school and finally got that all sorted out.'

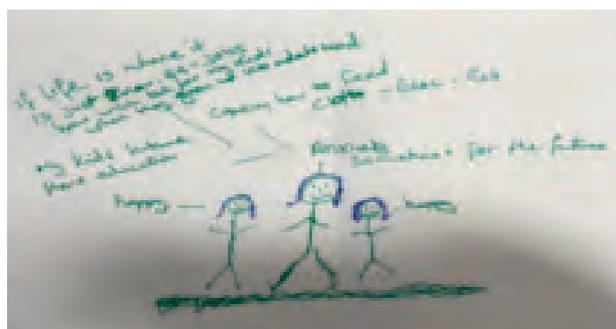
'Because you have two other girls who you have to make sure in some way are still getting to school, looked after, fed, etc., all whilst running back to the hospital for the one who is actually sick.'

The voluntary organisation assisted with the costs of attending the hospital.

'They deal with everything, especially with their transition, ... they had all sorts of help because obviously the extra funds and taxis and bus fares were quite a lot and back and forth were quite a bit. The work programme advisor was unsympathetic to my needs.'

'The first advisor I got after the first few appointments she kind of realised my limitations in time and from then on tried to push going self-employed, which was really frustrating, because obviously with self-employment you need a strong plan. You need a strong idea and you need to know what direction you need. This is what she seemed to push.'

PAHRCA STEPS	
Step 1. Partnership with NGOs	<p>The Poverty Alliance (the anti-poverty network for Scotland involved in a range of policy, campaigning and research activities) contacted and had preliminary meetings with a partner voluntary organisation: One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS).</p>
Step 2. Preliminary meet ups and meeting with participants	<p>To recruit for the project, lone parents were drawn from OPFS service delivery projects across Glasgow. The group selected were all single parents, and had a range of different experiences including mental ill health, unemployment, low waged employment, housing problems, caring responsibilities.</p>
Step 3. Developmental and capacity building: human rights and capability approach	<p>One Parent Families Scotland provided a support worker for the session to address and identify support where needed. This allowed for a deep exploration of issues impacting on the group to be conducted in a supportive environment and to embed ethical research practice when working alongside with vulnerable groups.</p>
Step 4. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Inquiry — data gathering — analysis 	<p>Delivery of the project involved participative processes to allow the co-researchers control and direction over the research process. A variety of techniques were used to facilitate the crossing of knowledge. This included ensuring the setup of the room allowed full participation, using interactive tools such as red cards and the use of visual techniques. The project ended with seasonal fun activities to provide an emphasis on self-care from the project.</p>
Step 5. Undertake <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — voice — action — outcome 	<p>OPFS are a charitable organisation whose primary focus is on supporting and campaigning for the needs of lone parent family organisation in Scotland. As a vulnerable and marginalised group lone parents have been affected by the crisis and other changes due to their demographic position and the ongoing barriers they face. It was expected that some difficult personal issues for the women involved in the project would arise during the research. Discussions were had with OPFS in order to be sure that the women involved in the project were properly supported during the research. We identified issues related to the timing of the field-work, winter 2015, as potentially problematic due to the seasonal pressures that people may experience. It was also acknowledged that the nature of this phase of the project - reflecting on potentially traumatic periods from each individuals past – could be difficult.</p>



(above): Picture reflecting on fears for the future
(left): Drawing illustrating effects of increased conditionality

Events of the crisis reflection and context	Using images to stimulate discussion about the impact of the economic crisis and austerity on lone parents
Drawing and modelling exercise on the effects of the crisis	The group were issued with paper and building clay materials and were asked to provide illustrations and models of the impacts of the crisis on women and lone parents. These were then discussed by the group.
Timeline – your own narrative	Snake timelines were provided for groups to populate with their own narrative with key events over the last ten years during the austerity crisis. (Used within biographical narrative interviews)
Introducing Rights and Capabilities	The concept of capabilities and human rights were introduced verbally in terms of thinking broadly about society and how it shapes our lives this was then used to explore an initial discussion around this.
Exploring Capabilities	Using Nussbaum's concepts of capabilities these were used for exploring aspects of people's lives using the theoretical approach of the capabilities approach.
Exploring Human Rights	Group drew up a list to define what human rights they felt had been breached in the last ten years and discussed their feelings and experiences around this.
Action Planning	Group had a discussion about the next steps from the project including interest in an exchange between other RE-INVEST groups. To feed into Poverty Alliance and One Parent Families policy and campaigning.

Lessons

- The opportunity to participate in the project was viewed positively by the group as was the opportunity to collaborate and highlight issues and the importance of speaking out about social injustices was emphasised by the group in recognition of the context families were experiencing
- Research sessions were held in a community venue to allow for a relaxed and informal environment for discussion. Sessions were held weekly, with a crèche and lunch provided. A support worker from the NGO attended all sessions to assist with supporting the co-researchers.

CASE STUDY:

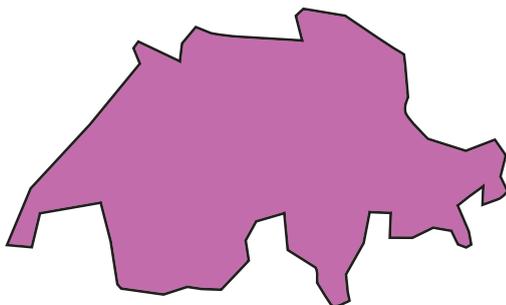
The case of early school leavers in Geneva, Switzerland

Researchers:

**Jean-Michel Bonvin
and Francesco Laruffa**

Research group:

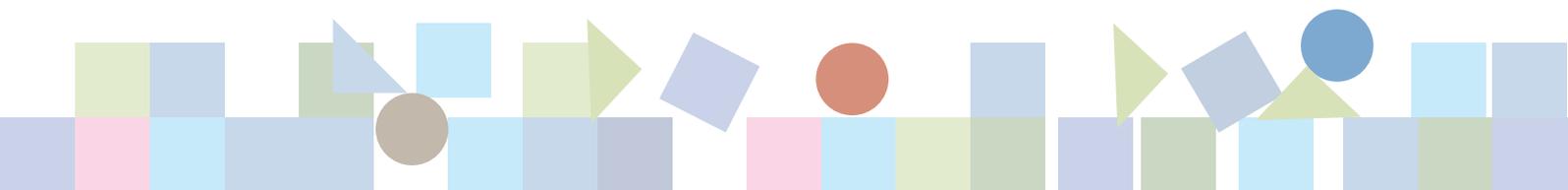
Vulnerable young people experiencing difficulties in their transition from school to work



H. has a social worker who takes care of her. Thanks to her, H. has a dossier in the office for the protection of the child and she lived one year outside her home, where there were problems with her father. Hence, H. left and she lived first with her boyfriend, then with a cousin and later with her best friend. In this period however she was not good at school because she always went out or watched the TV with her friend. Thus, the social worker advised her to go back home. However, in order for H. to come back home, her mother had to sign a formal promise that she would have no longer contacts with her husband, who then went back to the US. Now H.'s father has no longer the right to see H. Also, thanks to the social worker H.'s mother plays less in the casino.

Yet, this kind of support would have been much more helpful for H. if it would have started sooner. She asked for help to the social worker for the first time when she discovered that she had no papers (passport or permit of residence) while she was looking for an apprenticeship. Before that moment, she did not know that she had no papers because in Switzerland you can go to school even without papers but in order to get a work contract - even if it is only an apprenticeship contract - you must have them. Her parents never told her that she had no papers - and indeed the whole family does not have papers. H. would have preferred to know that from her parents instead of discovering it like that. It was at this point that H. asked for help to a social worker, who then became very important for her: 'the social worker changed my life' (...) 'she is like a mum'. For example, she brings H. to her free-time activities and she advises her on many issues. She initiated the procedure to get official documents for H. and thanks to her now also her mother and her brother - who is studying to become a hairdresser - will have soon the papers they need to live in Switzerland legally. Furthermore, it was the social worker to propose H. to go to Scene Active. She is also helping H. to find an internship. Since H. thinks that becoming a singer is a dream, which is very difficult to attain, she is looking for an internship in a kindergarten. This is a job that H. would like to do if it does not work with the plan of becoming a singer.

PAHRCA STEPS	
Step 1. Partnership with NGOs	<p>Access to the target group was given via personal knowledge of the people responsible for the implementation of the program the director himself wanted the project to be assessed and evaluated against the normative framework of the capability approach. The project 'Scene Active' is a one-year program aimed at the composition of a theatre play: through the theatre and the different ateliers (for example the young people designed their own costumes and the scenography), the aim of the project is to let them (re)discover their talents and (re)gain their self-esteem.</p>
Step 2. Preliminary meet ups and meeting with participants	<p>We had four collective meetings with the group of young people, where In order to stimulate reflection on the individual experience and the debate on common subjects, we used some visual and interactive methods.</p>
Step 3. Developmental and capacity building: human rights and capability approach	<p>We let the young people tell the story about their personal experience and the subjects that they would like to discuss through a drawing and then comment on their drawings. We then prepared some posters on the most important themes they wanted to work on. In another session we used some sentences, formulated as newspapers' titles, expressing different and conflicting viewpoints on young people's situation in a provocative way to stimulate the discussion. We also undertook games and role-taking activities, which allowed launching a collective debate on the selected topics. In the fourth section, we brought some statistical material and newspaper articles describing and commenting the situation of school-leavers in Geneva. The aim was to strengthen the coherence of young people's arguments and to raise their consciousness and understanding of their common situation.</p>
Step 4. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Inquiry — data gathering — analysis 	<p>Data collection methods focused on use of a snake time line & biographical storytelling. Individual interviews with young people belonging to the group enabled us to go more in depth and helped them to further strengthen their own arguments.</p>



PAHRCA STEPS (Continued)

Step 5.**Undertake**

— voice

— action

— outcome

The public action: We organised two events. The first involved a discussion between a group of young people participating in “Scène Active” and two administrative heads. The second event was public, in the context of the “Week of Democracy”. For the first event the invited persons were selected on the basis of an initial discussion between the youngsters and the research team. Somehow, the invited persons had to symbolise the ‘adult world’ and the ‘institutional world’, such as a politician or an administration head officer, etc. At the end, we managed to invite for the first session (which took place in June 2016) two administrative heads, responsible of two public services linked to professional guidance (the first) and information for young people on social assistance (the second). The second confrontation was organised as a public event with politicians and especially the minister of education and took place in September 2016 in the context of the so-called ‘Week of Democracy’ at the University of Geneva. It consisted of a public debate between six young people representing the group, the ministry in charge of the education system in the Canton of Geneva and the responsible of the cantonal employment services, aimed at supporting labour market inclusion. The group of young people not only presented their experiences at school and their difficulties in finding a job or an apprenticeship but also formulated some concrete proposals and submitted them to the politicians and high civil servants. The proposals developed by the young people included the reform of the school system towards a more inclusive and difference-sensitive school, the establishment of a guaranteed apprenticeship for all young people in search of a training, the reduction of the importance attached to school grades both within and after the school and the improvement of the supporting services in terms of psychological support and of taking care for extra-school problems such as family or migration-related legal issues. Their interlocutors were highly impressed by the maturity of their proposals and their ability to sustain a public confrontation of ideas.

Impact / Empowerment

The impact of the collective research project was important in terms of raising participants’ consciousness. It was the first time for them to have the opportunity to talk directly with politicians and have their views taken seriously. We reached the goal of raising “critical consciousness” and we managed to give the participants the opportunity to raise their voice in the public sphere thanks to the public event. Through participatory research, we think that we could raise both the sense

of agency and the (subjective) well-being of the participants. There was a symbolic power of participating in the public event to a discussion with politicians.

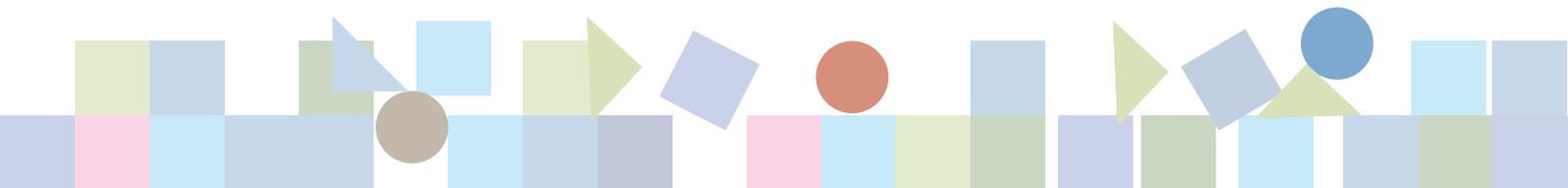
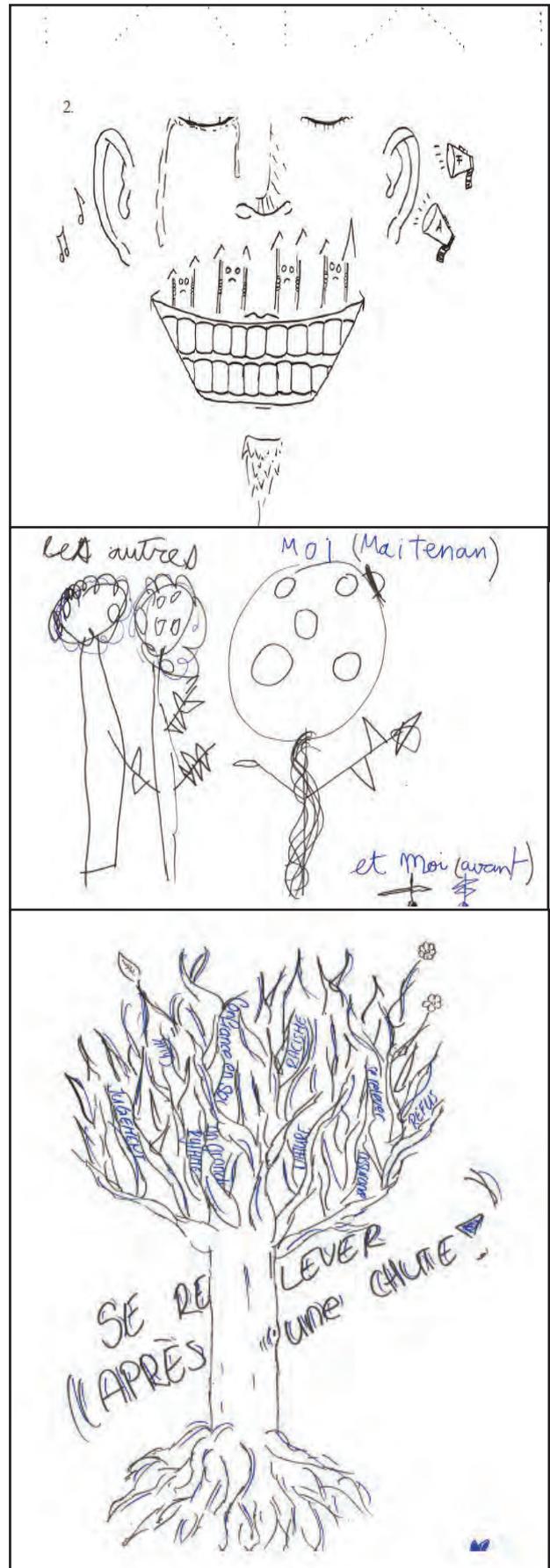
Challenge

The main challenge we had in achieving greater degrees of participation, especially in terms of transformation and political change was the limited time of the research and of the programme itself. We think that the crucial factor for achieving higher degree of participation is time. A long-lasting and

deeper relationship with the participants would have allowed building greater opportunities for social transformation.

Lessons

The public confrontation showed young people who were present are able to be full citizens and that being an active citizen can be even enjoyable. This positive result was achieved thanks to their participation in the project Scene Active and to their involvement in the research process, which succeeded in reawakening their desire to actively contribute to the construction of the future. Group discussions were the strongest in terms of participation and co-construction of knowledge.



CASE STUDY:

The case of working with the long-term unemployed in Germany

Researcher:
Rudiger Mautz SOFI



Otto aged 61 long-term unemployed

In 2012 Otto was unemployed again and had to live on Hartz IV benefits¹. He was 58 years old and did not get any job since then. He reports that meanwhile he was “sorted out by the job agency, because they don’t see any chances that I will get a job somewhere anymore. I am now 61”. But it was not just because of his age but of his health restrictions, too: “I have a disabled person’s pass and a 70 percent degree of disability”. Given his age and his limitations of health Otto does not expect to get a (paid) job anymore. Instead he sees himself already as a retiree (and introduces himself as such if asked).

An important aspect of Otto’s biography was and is his nearly thirty year-long membership in the ALI initiative of unemployed people. He tells that he never lost contact to the initiative, not even during times he had a job: sometimes he came around then visiting the ALI café, or saying hello. Moreover, since long he fulfils a function within the initiative: as an assessor of the managing committee. In his eyes the initiative not least serves as help for self-help, as a place to come in contact with other (unemployed) people, to have discussions, to listen to and discuss popular lectures on specific (political, social, economic, etc.) issues once a month. From Otto’s point of view “it is difficult to say” whether the crisis of 2008 had personal consequences for him, for his living conditions or his employment opportunities. At that time he had ran a little café – the fact that he had to give it up is not attributed by him to the crisis but primarily to his worsening health back then. However, he considers indirect consequences of the crisis: “The breakdown of banks (“Bankenkladderadatsch”) mostly affect the socially deprived and unemployed people, because a huge amount of money has been spent for bank

¹ German labour market policy in 2005 (“Hartz reforms”) have dis-criminated against VLTU : the combination of stronger activation rules on the one hand and austerity measures on the other, reducing benefits for LTU. Combined social disinvestment went hand in hand with (increasing) financial, social and psychological restraints.’

bailout – money that could have been used somewhere else instead. At present there's the problem – especially for Hartz IV people – that the funding of advanced training or re-education measures have been cut down brutally". However, as Otto adds: "This won't affect me personally anymore because they (*the job agency; R.M.*) probably would not invest money in me anyway", the more so as many people of his age group have already been sorted out by the job agencies.

Otto knows from personal experience that Hartz IV benefits leave little leeway in everyday life, as regards the provision with groceries, for instance. He indicates that he learned since long – since the days he had a wife and two children – to be money-saving when buying food or other things of everyday need. This apparently helps him to cope with the present situation. His scarce financial situation is also due to the fact that his small "reduced earning capacity pension" ("*Erwerbsmin-*

derungsrente") of 290 Euros is fully discounted from his Hartz IV benefits and "thereby is for the birds".

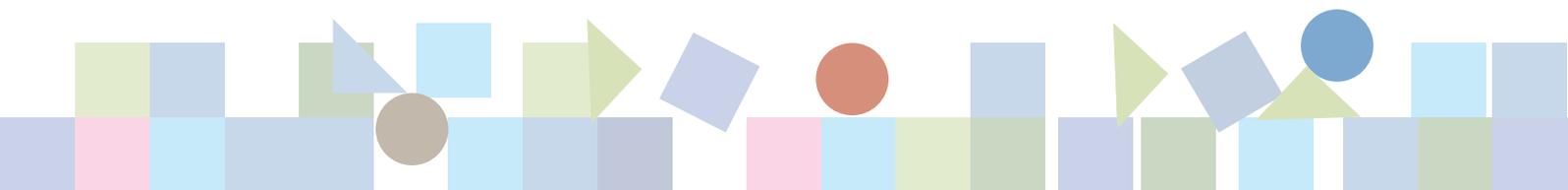
Otto has acquired a specific coping strategy against resentments and social devaluation: For two times in his life he suffered from severe mental health problems. He learnt to deal openly with his disease: "Well, I don't try to make a secret out of it, because hiding it will cost too much strength and energy". The more people with mental disease would openly stand for it, Otto adds, the more other people would know about it and the stigmatisation could be reduced by this. "With unemployment it's quite similar: there are a lot of people who try to hide it. (...) In my case it's different." Furthermore, Otto tries to release himself from social devaluation by calling himself a "retiree" – a social role which is much more accepted by the German public than the status of long-term joblessness.



PAHRCA STEPS	
<p>Step 1. Partnership with NGOs</p>	<p>Contact by academic researcher from SOFI with ALI a long standing NGO which is a self-help initiative of unemployed people with a drop in ALI café, the recruited participants were all involved in local bottom-up initiatives of jobless people.</p>
<p>Step 2. Preliminary meet ups and meeting with participants</p>	<p>An initial workshop with a group of long-term unemployed people (10 persons), most of them are participants of a bottom-up-initiative of unemployed persons. It was a 3-days-workshop at a place where all participants could stay overnight.</p>
<p>Step 3. Developmental and capacity building: human rights and capability approach</p>	<p>Bottom-up initiatives of unemployed people can be considered as collective resources which support the strengthening of individual resilience, for instance in terms of self-efficacy and self-empowerment. Moreover, such initiatives can help with the building-up of individual capabilities regarding activities or forms of social participation and integration beyond work. Forms of self-help can enhance individual capabilities of their participants, for instance with regard to the efforts of job seeking, or the handling of requirements and measures prescribed by the job agency.</p>



PAHRCA STEPS (Continued)	
<p>Step 4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Inquiry — data gathering — analysis 	<p>A qualitative three-day-workshop and personal interviews with long-term unemployed to gather a deeper comprehension of the impact that crisis as well as crisis-related politics and socio-economic changes have on the lives, experiences, or personal perceptions and claims of vulnerable people.</p> <p>The following gives a good example of the evolving and iterative research practice as the researcher Rudiger uses a shared base camp to update colleagues and reflect on the process to date (late 2015).</p> <p>'today I shortly inform you about the state of my field work (a more comprehensive response I will give to you later). Things have started well: Two weeks ago we had the initial workshop with a group of long-term unemployed people (10 persons), most of them are participants of a bottom-up-initiative of unemployed persons. It was a 3-days-workshop at a place where all participants could stay overnight, so we could sit together and talk in the evening, too. The workshop was very intensive and moving: the participants told about their (mostly frustrating) experiences with long-term unemployment, their struggles with the German "Job Centers", their struggles of coping with an aggravating financial situation, with illness, hopelessness etc. We also worked with some creative elements, for instance with the biographical snake we already tried out in Maynooth, or with designing large human figures which express the experiences of unemployment and a burdening life. On the last day of the workshop we intensively discussed at first individual and collective coping strategies with regard to unemployment; at second we had a discussion about political solutions, mainly addressed to the German policy (on the federal as well as on the regional and local level). For me the workshop was a good opportunity for building up confidence among the participants. Nearly all of them agreed to have a personal interview with me. Last week I could interview seven persons; some more interviews will follow in the coming weeks. In December I will have a first feedback meeting with some of the workshops participants respectively with my cooperation partners of the ELAN-initiative of unemployed people.'</p>
<p>Step 5.</p> <p>Undertake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — voice — action — outcome 	<p>The creativity of the three day event which combined life drawings and snake time lines evident in the accompanying visual images which allowed participants express feelings and emotions in ways that words alone would not enable, thus allowing a deeper understanding of the impact of disinvestment and empowering participants to express themselves</p>



Project Partners:

Ides Nicaise et al

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (HIVA) (BE)

Project Coordinator: HIVA-KUL, E-mail:

www.hiva.be
info@re-invest.eu

Robert Salais et al

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (FR)

www.cnrs.fr

René Lehwiss-Litzmann et al

Soziologisches Forschungsinstitut Goettingen e.V. (SOFI)(DE)

www.sofi-goettingen.de

Ortrud Lessmann et al

Internationales Forschungszentrum für Soziale und Ethische Fragen (IFZ) (AT)

www.ifz.salzburg.at

Jean De Munck et al

Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL) (BE)

www.uclouvain.be

Mary P. Murphy et al

National University of Ireland, Maynooth (IE)

www.maynoothuniversity.ie

Jeremy Leaman et al

Loughborough University (UK)

www.lboro.ac.uk

Mahmood Messkoub et al

Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam (NL)

www.eur.nl

Marja Elsinga et al

Technische Universiteit Delft (NL)

www.tudelft.nl

Michael Lavalette et al

Liverpool Hope University (UK)

www.hope.ac.uk

Jean-Luc Dubois et al

Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (FR)

www.ird.fr

Rita Baeten et al

Observatoire Social Européen (BE)

www.ose.be

Jean-Michel Bonvin et al

University of Geneva (CH)

www.unige.ch

Tana Lace et al

Rigas Stradina Universitate (LV)

www.rsu.lv/eng/

Michel Debruynne et al

Beweging vz (BE)

www.beweging.net

Sandra Araujo et al

EAPN Portugal (PT)

www.eapn.pt

Cristina Chert et al

Fundatia The Open Network for Community Development (RO)

www.theopennetwork.ro

Peter Kelly et al

The Poverty Alliance (UK)

www.povertyalliance.org

Cinzia Brentari et al

Coordinamento Nazionale Comunità di Accoglienza (CNCA) (IT)

www.cnca.it

Contact details:

Dr Rory Hearne, rory.hearne@mu.ie

Dr Mary P. Murphy, mary.p.murphy@mu.ie

Dr. Nuala Whelan (editorial and production)

**Department of Sociology &
Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute**

North Campus
Maynooth University
Maynooth, Co Kildare, Ireland



**Maynooth
University**

National University
of Ireland Maynooth

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