



Scuola Superiore  
Sant'Anna

Phd in Management

## **“Action-Research”: researchers or consultants?**

### **Course Description**

This seminar will discuss some of the key aspects of “action research”, an unconventional methodological approach that is characterized by some significant degree of researchers’ participation to the social process that is the object of research. This approach may be especially fruitful for practice-oriented research activities in business and policy studies. In particular, the seminar will discuss the theoretical and institutional assumptions, the profile and motivation of “action-researchers”, the main characteristics, the possible outcomes (for both practice and science) and some critical issues: trans-contextual generalization of findings, subjectivity, integrity. The discussion will also help in re-defining more accurately the borderline between research and consultancy.

### **Main contents**

#### **Lesson 1**

- Defining action research. Antecedents and present practice.
- The epistemology of action research
- Action research in policy making

#### **Lesson 2**

- A multi-disciplinary, multi-method approach
- Mapping the actors
- Participative learning processes

#### **Lesson 3**

- Communication skills and tools
- Problems: subjectivity, political dimensions, validation

### **Suggested reading:**

- Greenwood, D.J., Levin, M. (2007). *Introduction to Action Research: Social research for Social Change*. 2nd Edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

**Lecturer:**

**Nicola Bellini** is Professor of Management at the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna in Pisa (Italy). Previously he worked as research fellow, Nomisma - Economic Research Institute, Bologna (1982-1990), and at the Office of the President of the Regione Emilia-Romagna, Bologna (1990-1991).

He was visiting or affiliate professor at the Stanford University Center in Florence, University of Sassari, University of Pisa, GSSI L'Aquila and Grenoble Ecole de Management. From 2014 to 2018 he was Director of the Tourism Management Institute at the La Rochelle Business School (France). From 2009 to 2011 he was the Director of the Regional Institute for Economic Planning of Tuscany – IRPET. From 2007 to 2014 he was Director of the Galileo Galilei Italian Institute in Chongqing (PRC) and Co-Director of the Confucius Institute in Pisa.

From 1997 to 2002 he was also chairman of the board of Pont-Tech, technology transfer agency in Pontedera (Italy). From 2012 to 2016 he also served as an expert for the EU Commission on Regional strategies for smart specialisation.

He is author and editor of books and articles on industrial policy, local and regional development, business support services, place branding and tourism.

**Course Schedule:**

<b>Date</b>		<b>Teacher</b>
February 25, 3pm-5pm	Lesson 1	Nicola Bellini
February 26, 3pm-5pm	Lesson 2	Nicola Bellini
February 27, 11am-1pm	Lesson 3	Nicola Bellini