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Scienze della Comunicazione
e dell'Economia

Reggio Emilia: networking creative entrepreneurs around a new media cluster

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The context of Reggio Emilia at a glance

Reggio Emilia is a medium sized city (160,000 inhabitants) located in Northern Italy (130 Km south-east of Milan and 50 Km west of Bologna)

Reggio Emilia presents a flourishing economy:

- It is the Italian city with the highest occupational rate (70.8% vs. a national average of 57.5%)
- It is strongly based on manufacturing and agricultural activities (it is homes to one of the most important Italian mechanical districts, as well as famous companies operating in the food industry)

The research's background

In the last four years, the City Municipality has implemented several cultural policies as ways to renew the city's image and develop local economy by exploiting the local cultural scene

The City Municipality asked the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia to run an analysis of the local creative scene in order to identify strengths and areas where to invest

The research started in Fall 2007

The research's methodology

We combined different data collection methods:

- *Qualitative methodology* (in-depth interviews with local experts, focus group, documental analysis)
- *Quantitative methodology* (questionnaire, cluster analysis, social networks analysis)

We surveyed 305 professionals operating in Reggio Emilia in the creative milieu (music, publishing, photography and video-making, theatre and dance, figurative arts, graphic design)

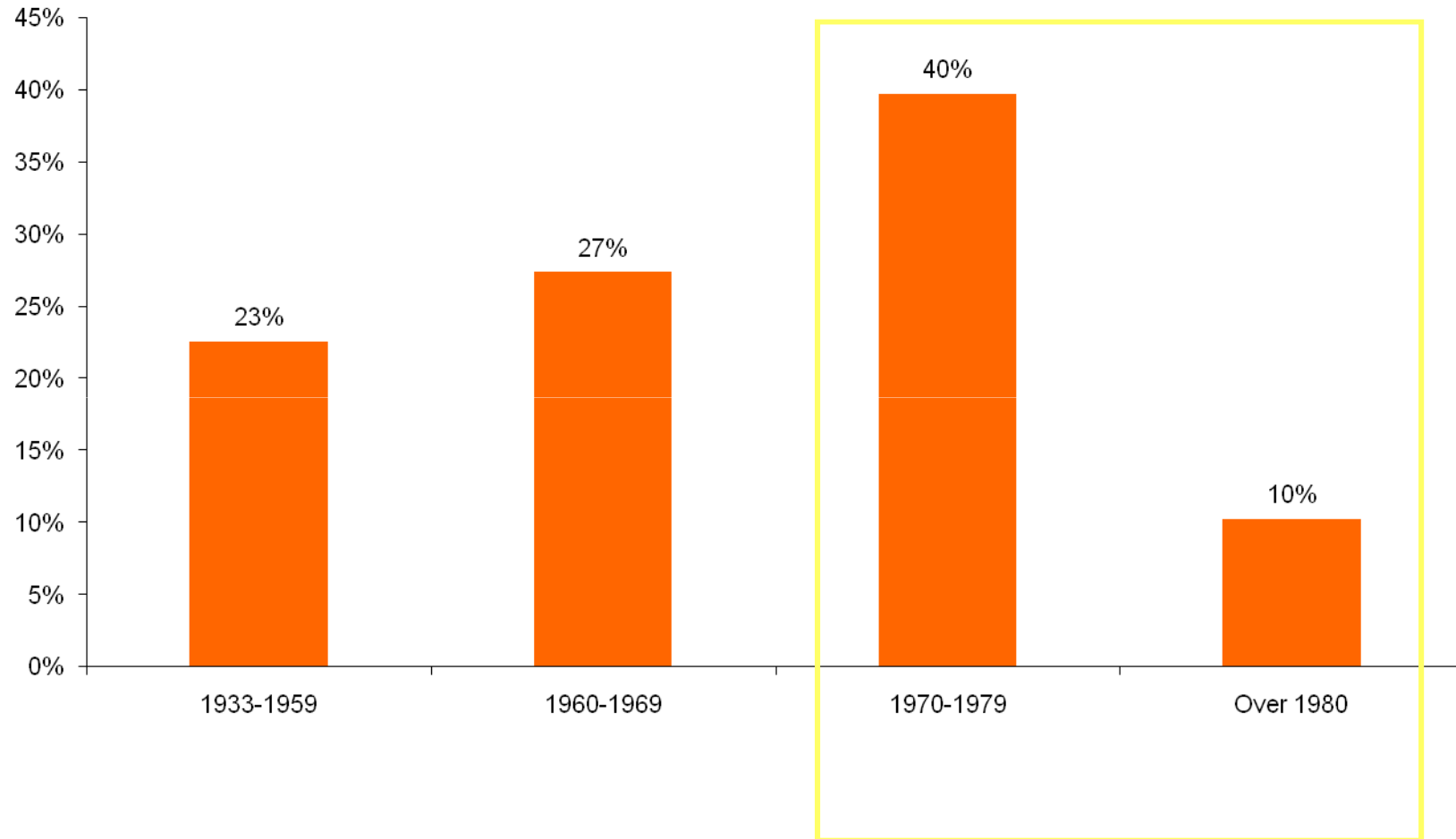
The research's methodology

We collected data about both:

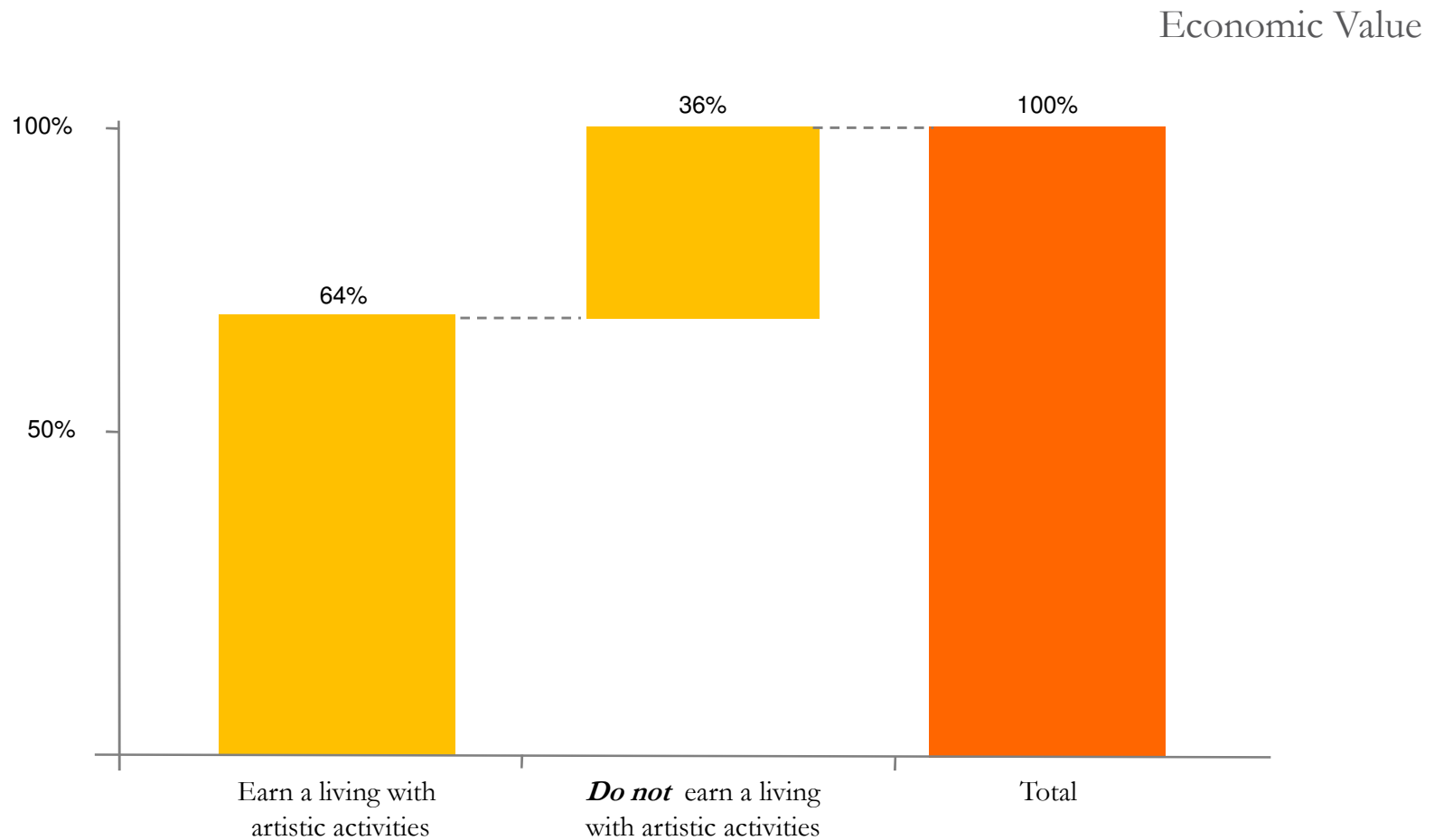
- *Human capital* (e.g., education, past experience, awards)
- *Social capital* (relational patterns developed both among the actors involved in creative scene of Reggio Emilia and with external actors, local places where they mostly exchange ideas)

Creative talents in Reggio Emilia are young: 50% is less than 40 years old

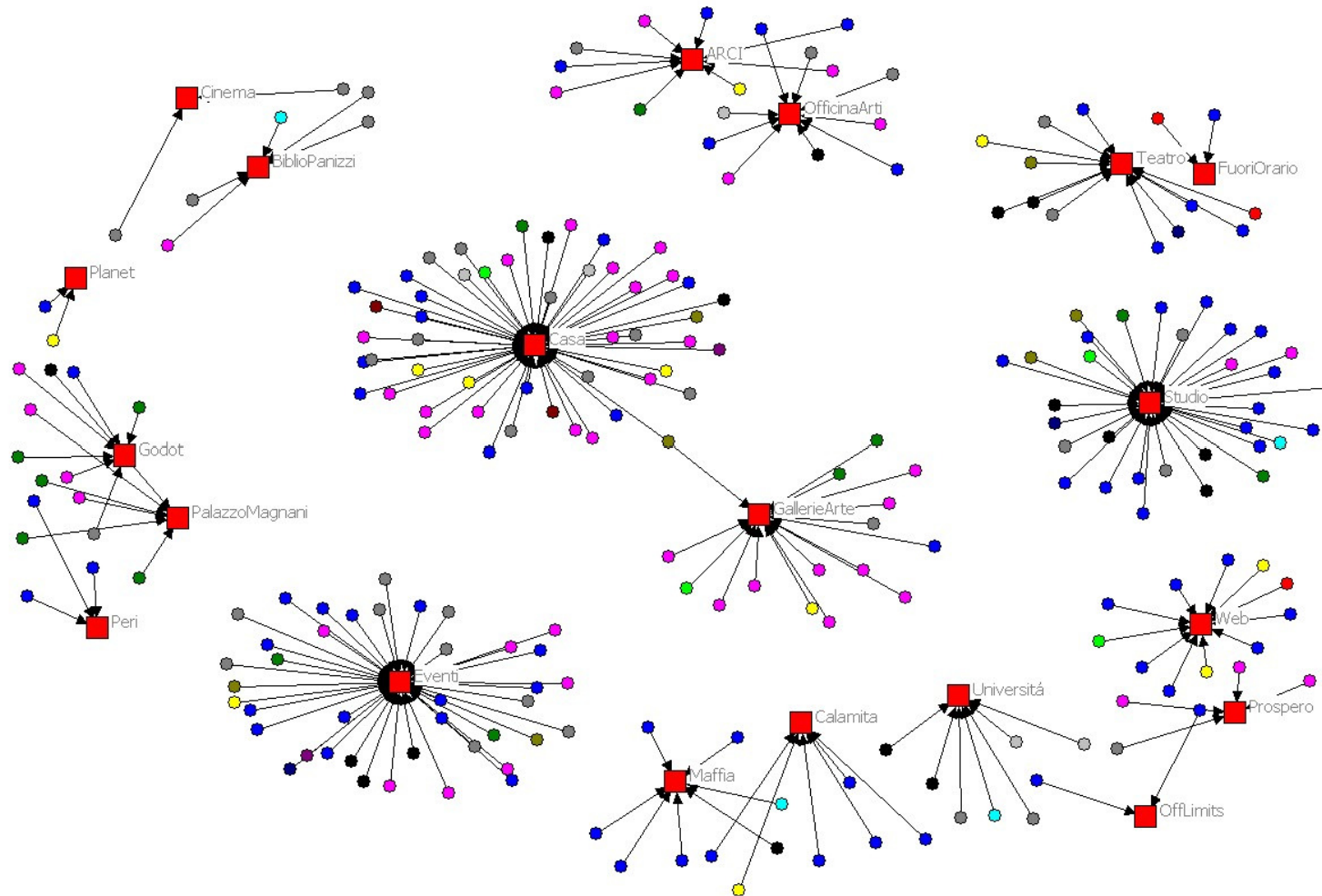
Sample Statistics



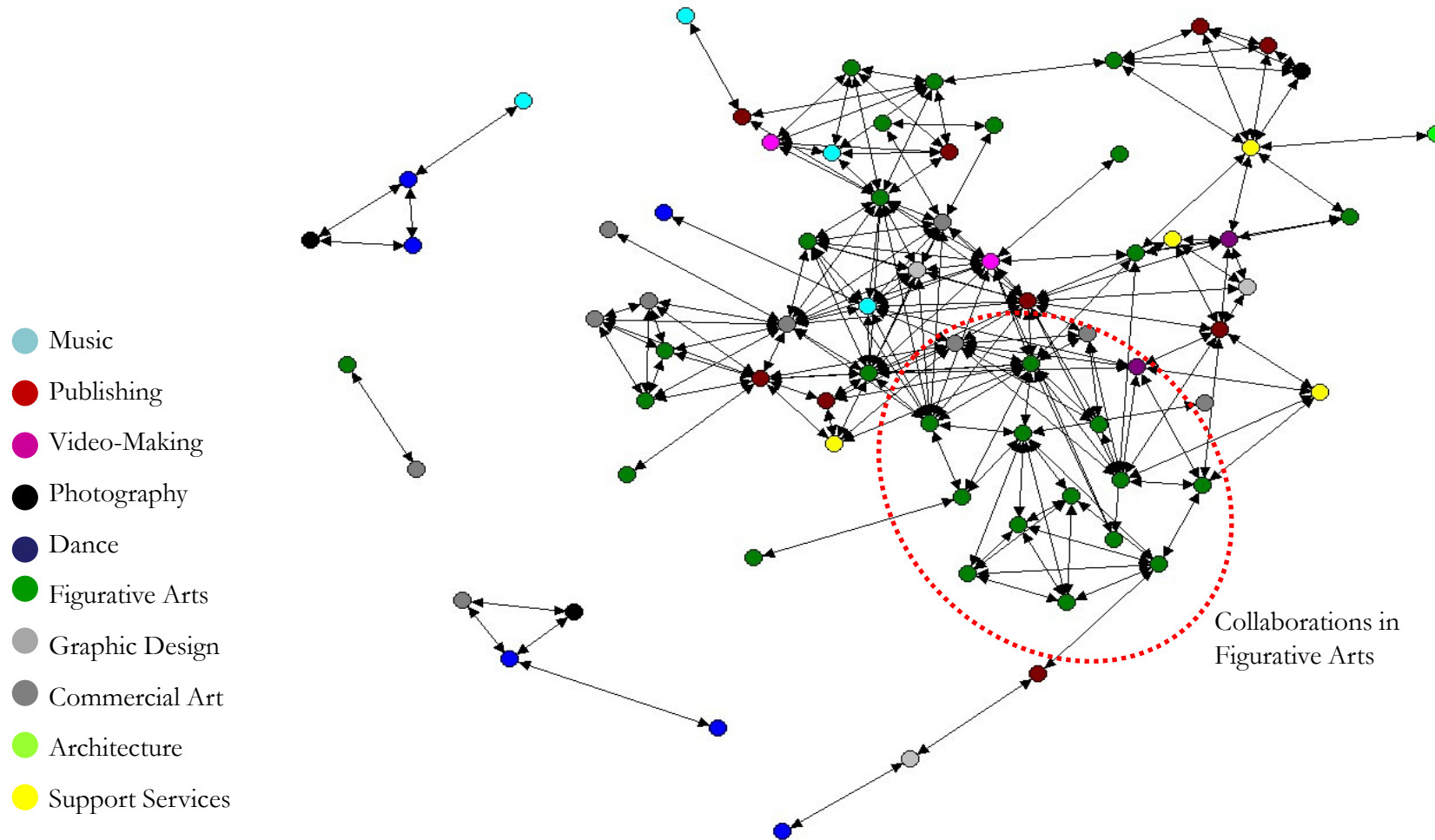
64% of Creative talents in Reggio Emilia earn their living with artistic activities



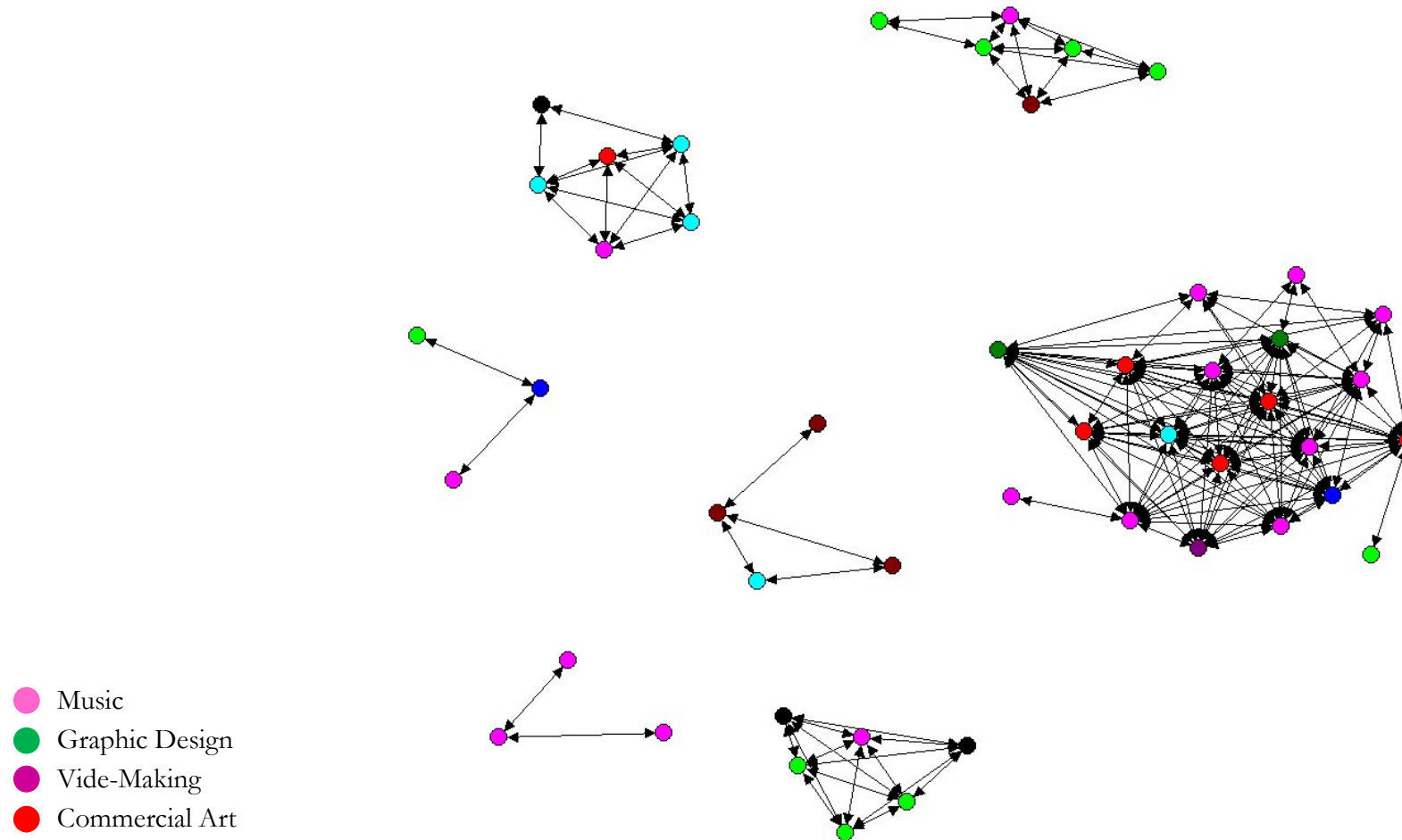
Places where Creative Talents exchange ideas are accessible just to established members



Dense collaborations just in few sectors



Cross-fertilization among sectors, is common only for few groups



Needs emerged

- 1) More professional courses (in particular regarding managerial topics)
- 2) Reinforcement of local network of connections (perceived too much fragmented)
- 3) Enhance visibility in the local context (e.g., more established ones would like to have more chances to share their professional experience with others by participating at the educational activities organized by the University)
- 4) Creation of new links with professionals who operate in different and complementary fields

Strategic directions

- 1) Focus on **New Media**
 - The most successful and innovative professionals operate in the field of new media
 - Such a focus would differentiate Reggio Emilia from neighbor cities

- 2) Development of **Strategic Partnerships** with other cities and other institutions (e.g., Universities, companies)

- 3) Improvement of Reggio Emilia's **visibility** both in the national and international context through the creation of a **city's Brand**

Actions

- 1) Implementing workshops and professional courses in order to enhance the identity of the local creative cultural cluster and satisfy the needs of creative talents (e.g., New Master in Science in New Media Management in collaboration with Copenhagen Business School)
- 2) Sustaining and improving the social network of creative talents by promoting the creation of new connections among professionals that operate in different sectors

A dense network is crucial for developing a creative city

The power of cultural economics is to create innovation into traditional cluster through the unique network it can be developed by its actors (Currid, 2007)

It is crucial:

- To highlight micro-networks of each cluster (Scott, 2006)
- To highlight the connection between cultural and traditional clusters (Currid, 2007)
- To make easier for new-comers getting access to local cultural networks

A tool to strengthen local network and increase visibility: a GIS-based website of local creative players

We will map local cluster's best players and show their works and connections

The website will be make easier to know 'who is who' in the local creative and reduce barriers to access

It will help to create new connections between different clusters

View of a local map



View of international network

The screenshot displays a web application interface for an international network. The top header features the text "Creative business Social Network Reggio Emilia" and a logo. Below the header, there are two main sections: a "Preview Your Pace" section and a "Time to Start Line" section. The "Preview Your Pace" section includes a speedometer-like graphic with a scale from "SLOWER" to "FASTER" and a current value of "14.5 min/mi". The "Time to Start Line" section shows a dropdown menu set to "0" and the text "MINUTES AFTER 8am".

The central part of the interface is a map of the world. Several yellow arrows originate from a central point in Europe (likely Reggio Emilia) and point to various countries, including Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Poland, Ukraine, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, DR Congo, Tanzania, Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Madagascar, South Africa, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, and South America. The map also labels the "North Atlantic Ocean" and "South Atlantic Ocean".

On the right side, there is a sidebar titled "Settori Creativi" (Creative Sectors). It contains a list of sectors with checkboxes and corresponding colored circles:

- Deselect / Select All
- Street Labels
- Luoghi/fotografie
- Arte figurativa
- Musica
- Comunicazione
- Video Design
- web/software
- Editoria
- Servizi
- Teatro/cinema

On the left side, there are three small images: a person in a costume, a stage with purple lights, and a colorful, abstract structure.

The constitution of a Research Centre



Planning the activities to perform in Reggio Emilia

In the medium period	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ UE Project for Creative Clusters✓ Developing partnerships with actors outside Reggio✓ Organizing a summer school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Research Centre within the Department: partnerships with foreign universities, papers and presentation in International conferences✓ Digital Arts fair in Reggio Emilia✓ Found Raising among private companies
Within 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ New Master in Science in New Media Management, in collaboration with the publisher <i>Aliberti</i>✓ Scholarships for deserving students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Web-site on Creative Talents in Reggio Emilia✓ New city's Brand
	Already Active	To be Activated